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Village to Demonstrate Value, Practical Application of Tree Inventory Project

Any resident with a question about any tree on any parkway anywhere in the Village will likely find the answer from 7 - 8:30 p.m., Tues., May 11, at Village Hall, 123 Madison St. That's when representatives of the Village's Forestry Division and internationally recognized tree expert Mark Duntemann will unveil the results of a comprehensive tree inventory that identified by species, measured, assessed the health and noted the location of every single one of Oak Park's more than 20,000 parkway trees.

Duntemann, who heads the Worchester, Vermont-based forestry consulting firm of Natural Path Urban Forestry, compiled the inventory by walking every street in the Village. The information Duntemann entered into a handheld computer tablet has since been combined with five years of existing in-house data on pruning, plantings and removals, creating a comprehensive historical database that will guide future care and renewal of the trees in the Village's urban forest.

The data is being managed through a computer software system that can maintain information and maintenance records on an unlimited number of trees. The system can apply the latest International Society of Arboriculture's tree appraisal formula to calculate the value of individual trees should they be damaged by construction or weather; allow for easy updates of maintenance records; automatically create lists for stump removal and replacements following removals; analyze up to 25 different factors affecting specific trees; and more easily monitor problem trees and species.

Purchased with a state grant, the software program, called *Canopy*, also will interface with most standard Geographic Information Systems (GIS), which create sophisticated data management tools from sources such as maps, aerial photos, satellites and surveys.

The Village expects to see the first practical application of the new system in contract tree removal operations this summer, and its budget for next year's tree trimming contracts. When contracts are let for trimming, the Forestry Division will know exactly what the costs should be since fees are based on tree measurements, data that already will be contained in the inventory system.

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Tree Inventory

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Another application with near immediate value will be the information to select trees for future planting based on the existing species mix and site conditions.

For more information on the new tree inventory management system or the public presentation, contact the Forestry Division of the Public Works Department at 358.5700 or email publicworks@oak-park.us.

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