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CITY OF CHICAGO

**CITY TREE-TRIMMERS DEPLOY NEW STRATEGY TO REDUCE  
OPEN REQUESTS FOR SERVICE**

*Department of Streets and Sanitation Forestry Crews Blitz Wards to Increase Productivity;  
Similar Strategy to be used by Graffiti Removal Crews*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the City of Chicago Department of Streets and Sanitation announced today that during the past three months it has reduced the backlog of open requests for tree trimming and removal services by more than 25 percent after instituting a new method of “blitzing” neighborhoods using a ward-based grid system to improve efficiency and increase productivity.

“Three months ago we faced an unacceptable backlog in tree trimming,” said Mayor Emanuel. “We instituted a new strategy aimed at efficiency and productivity and we have seen significant improvement. I am committed to a City where services are rendered effectively.”

Since November, forestry crews have responded to requests for service using a ward-based grid system in which the crews “blitz” the areas with the most open requests. Five forestry crews now each visit four wards a day to address the outstanding calls for service in a tight geographical area. Additional forestry crews trim in grids and are available for emergencies and public way obstructions.

“Under Mayor Emanuel’s direction, our Bureau of Forestry crews have implemented an action plan designed to maximize the efficiency of the tree trimming and removal crews,” said Department of Streets and Sanitation Commissioner Tom Byrne. “The result is a significant reduction in the number of outstanding calls for service.”

With the new system, there has been a significant increase in crew productivity, with each crew now averaging 20 tree trims per day, as opposed to 14 under the old system – an improvement of more than 30 percent.

In addition to being more efficient, the “blitz” method significantly reduces the amount of time and expenses associated with fuel and vehicle maintenance that occurred when crews



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used to drive around from one location to the next. The new plan allows for a “blitz” in each of the city’s 50 wards every 13 working days.

Since the implementation of this new method in November 2011, the number of outstanding requests for tree trimming services is down 26 percent and the number of outstanding requests for the removal of dead trees is down 36 percent.

Commissioner Byrne also announced that beginning on Monday, February 6<sup>th</sup> Streets and Sanitation graffiti removal crews will also be deployed in a similar manner, blitzing service requests in the same ward-based grids.

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