

I. INTRODUCTION

Many street tree management programs are run as a cost burden to municipalities because little economic return is generated from street tree management activities.

Street trees improve our quality of life and enhance the beauty of the communities we live in.

Some of a municipality's street tree removals can generate income.

Many municipalities and local governments are currently experiencing budgeting problems in meeting community needs. Street tree management and maintenance budgets are among those becoming strained. As a result, the quality of our street trees cannot help but suffer as economic considerations continue to reduce tree management budgets.

Presently, much of the wood generated from street tree removals brings little economic return to tree management budgets. Because of this, most tree management and maintenance programs are being run as a cost burden to municipal budgets. Although most tree management crews are hardworking and efficient, the products rendered from street tree removals are usually low-value, which returns little money

to municipality coffers. In fact, in New Jersey, it is estimated that more than 50 percent of an average municipality's tree management budget is spent on the cost of tree removals alone.



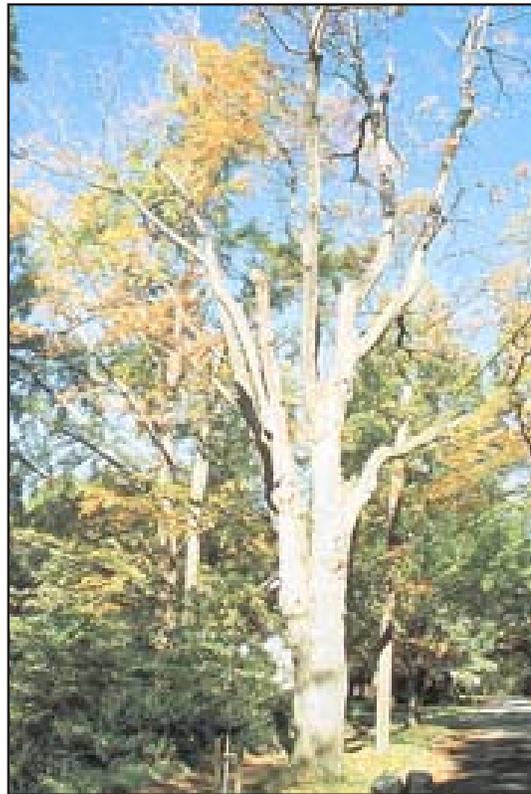
Tree mortality from natural occurrences like insects, diseases, and storms plus a myriad of man-made circumstances such as roadway widening, right-of-way maintenance, and utility construction activities, takes a huge toll on street trees. This results in a continuing need for tree maintenance on a municipal level. Much of this harvested wood, if produced and marketed effectively, can generate income for municipalities to help support tree management and maintenance programs.



Storm damage can generate large quantities of woody material. One method of reducing the volume of wood a municipality handles is to market the larger size material to companies that can process it into usable products, such as lumber or landscape ties.

This publication is designed as a guide for municipal officials who deal with disposal of street tree removals. Ideas and suggestions in this guide are offered as potential alternatives for current tree management and disposal practices. They may or may not work in a particular area. But, given the success that several municipalities had in New Jersey by exploring these ideas and suggestions, we believe they are certainly worth examining (see Case Studies on pages 24-31).

The focus of this guide is to emphasize the potential marketability of sawmill-size logs from municipal tree removals. Advantages of merchandising salable sawlogs include:



This dying tree will eventually need to be removed. The trunk is a potential sawlog capable of producing salable lumber products. If sold as a sawlog, the municipality will save itself the work of processing that part of the tree into firewood and save money in the overall cost of disposal.

- potential income generated from selling logs or developing barter arrangements,

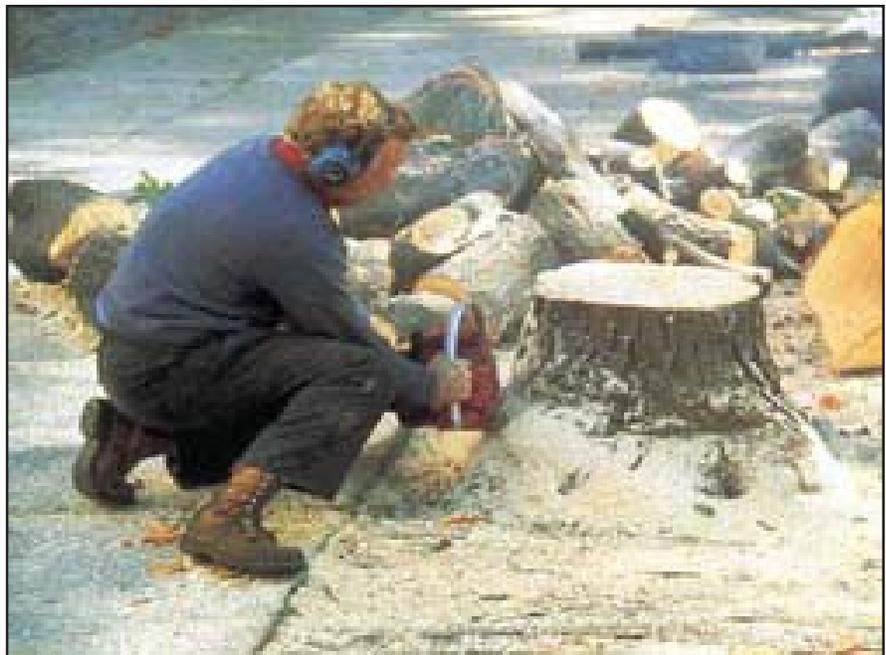
- reduction in labor cost by reducing the amount of time work crews need to process logs into firewood,
- reduction in amount of woody material going to landfills,
- reduction in landfill costs for disposal of material,
- reduction in volume of firewood material that must be stored in municipal maintenance yards until it is sold, and
- conservation of forestland resources by generating sawlogs from street trees that must be removed anyway.

Merchandising salable sawlogs from street tree removals provides many advantages to municipalities.

Many municipalities, particularly the ones located in urban and suburban areas, are already recycling and marketing street tree removals to some degree. In most cases, the use of tree removals involves providing products directly to residents in the municipality. For example, leaves and twigs are composted and used by residents as fertilizer. Small branches are chipped and used residentially as mulch, and for some municipal operations. Large branches and tree trunks are cut into firewood.

Firewood is the most common product produced from street tree removals. Usually, this material is left at the roadside for local residents to pick up, or it gets transported to a central yard or storage site where it is piled for future processing. Firewood production generally involves tree material from every size class, quality type, and species group.

Street tree removals are costly and time consuming.



Whatever there is to be removed, whether it's oak, sycamore, ash, maple, pine or spruce, usually goes into the firewood pile. In addition, many municipalities split the larger pieces, thus further adding to the labor and costs of removing street trees.



Many municipalities transport their tree removal material to maintenance yards for further processing.

The premise for writing this guide is that there must be a better way; a better way for street tree management than *maximum cost - minimum return*. The removal work itself must be done, but there is a potential opportunity for

changing this cost-burden scenario into one that is more cost efficient by exploring the ideas in this guide. Instead of sawing a good log into firewood, leave it "as is" — a



Firewood splitting operations are usually time consuming and labor intensive.

readily marketable commodity. The dollar return potential of selling the log for lumber products exceeds the return potential of selling the log for firewood by at least two to four times.

II. THE MARKET

The concept of utilizing street trees in sawmills is not new. Some sawmills have been sawing products from street trees for many years because they have found a unique niche for using street tree sawlogs. These mills process both hardwoods (trees which lose their leaves every year, i.e., oaks, maples) and softwoods (trees with needle-like leaves that do not fall off in the dormant season, i.e., white pine, Norway spruce).

The dollar return potential of selling a good street tree log for lumber products exceeds the dollar return potential of selling the same log for firewood by two to four times.
