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DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
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October 18, 2010

Dear Members of Council,

Lakewood's Forestry Department estimates that we own approximately 14,000 trees within the City right-of-way or on other City property. Currently Lakewood spends about \$50,000 per year on its Reforestation Program which plants over 200 new trees each year.

This communication is to bring to your attention the declining condition of a number of large trees on Clifton and West Clifton. City Arborists have identified about 55 trees on Clifton and 11 on West Clifton that should be targeted for removal in the near future due to their condition. We realize that the trees are somewhat of a landmark on these streets, however, they have become a hazard and the City is responsible for them, whether they are standing up or lying down.

Trees are adversely affected by a number of factors that are a consequence of their unnatural urban environment and when they are nearing the end of their lifespan. One of these factors is new and updated construction of roads, curbs, sidewalks, gas lines, and waterlines. Damage to the root system caused by nutrient deficiencies in the soil, soil compaction and deicing chemicals can cause the trees to stop growing. The trees are also affected by root rot fungus, and wound diseases that start decay in the living trees. When a tree becomes stressed by any of these factors and stops growing, it is most likely the beginning of the end. Trees that are a hazard need to be brought down in a controlled manner before they damage property or injure someone. The storm that effected Lakewood on May 7th this year was a small example of the damages that can be done by hazardous trees.

The City Forestry Department will have great difficulty keeping up with these removals over the next couple of years on top of the usual maintenance and removals that occur throughout the season. This communication is intended to begin the public policy discussion regarding this looming problem, and your input would be appreciated.

Please refer this communication to the appropriate committee.

Sincerely,

Edward FitzGerald
Mayor

Joseph J. Beno
Director of Public Works