Michigan Public | By Tracy Samilton
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Many Ann Arbor trees to become furniture and flooring, not mulch and compost, in new program

The city of Ann Arbor has to cut down storm-damaged or diseased trees every year from its parks and other properties.

Until now, the trees were made into mulch or compost.

A new program will send many of the trees to a lumber mill.

Ann Arbor will partner with Urban Ashes, which will locate furniture, flooring and other companies that want the wood.

"Everyone understands the value of planting and maintaining trees," said Urban Ashes CEO Paul Hickman. "We do not understand the value of that wood after it comes down. It has the potential for a larger impact on the environment than when that tree was alive." That's because wood can trap carbon for hundreds of years under the right conditions.

Before each log is sent to a producer, it will have a QR code showing how much carbon it has sequestered. "So we can ultimately track all the carbon involved and we report that back to the city in quarterly reports so they can include that in their carbon goals," Hickman said.

Hickman said he has big plans for the state of Michigan, and is in talks with Washtenaw County Road Commission and several other cities in the county about joining the program.

Hickman said both in Michigan and nationally, there's a dramatic potential to reduce emissions by salvaging city trees in this way.

Data Provided by Urban Ashes

Michigan's Annual Urban Wood Potential

- 1.7 MILLION metric tonnes of quality urban lumber is mostly chipped, burned or landfilled

*https://www.fs.usda.gov/nrs/pubs/jrnl/2019/nrs_2019_nowak_004.pdf *page 6, table 5*

- Equals about 263 MILLION board feet that could be produced

**https://www.fs.usda.gov/nrs/pubs/jrnl/2019/nrs_2019_nowak_004.pdf *page 6, table 5*

- Equals about 115,239 metric tonnes of Carbon that could continue to be sequestered

**industry standard dried hardwood weight to carbon calculations less standard average of 40% loss of material during manufacturing.*

- Equals about 422,501 metric tonnes of CO2e emissions that could be avoided

**standard carbon to CO2e calculations*

- Capturing only 40% of that would equal planting about 2.8 MILLION trees and growing them for ten years

*https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator

America's Annual Urban Wood Potential

- 46 MILLION metric tonnes of quality urban lumber is mostly chipped, burned or landfilled

*https://www.fs.usda.gov/nrs/pubs/jrnl/2019/nrs_2019_nowak_004.pdf page 6, table 5

- Equals about 7 - 8 BILLION board feet that could be produced

**https://www.fs.usda.gov/nrs/pubs/jrnl/2019/nrs_2019_nowak_004.pdf *page 6, table 5*

- Equals about 3.84 MILLION metric tonnes of Carbon that could continue to be sequestered

**industry standard dried hardwood weight to carbon calculations less standard average of 40% loss of material during manufacturing.*

- Equals about 14 MILLION metric tonnes of CO2e emissions that could be avoided

**standard carbon to CO2e calculations*

- Capturing only 40% of that would equal planting about 93 MILLION trees and growing them for ten years

**https://www.epa.gov/energy/greenhouse-gas-equivalencies-calculator*