LAKE COUNTY
Investing in People
and Our Communities

# Tree and Native Plant Program Research

Energy & Environment Committee
September 2, 2020

# Background

- E&E directed the sustainability team to explore options for a Lake County administered tree program aimed increasing biodiversity and providing increased stormwater mitigation for the unincorporated areas.

- Since that time, the sustainability team has researched existing tree and native plant programs operating within Lake County.

# Findings

- 11 municipalities in Lake County offer residential tree and native plant programs and incentives.

- 6 of the 11 municipalities have programs focused on residential properties:
  - 1 program provides residents with a one-time grant through the Chicago Region Trees Initiative to purchase a tree
  - 2 programs partner with Openlands through their Conservation@home program
  - 3 programs have a 50/50 cost share structure
  - 1 municipality offers residents an array of co-pay programs (native seeding program, invasive shrub removal, natives planting, etc.)

- The remaining programs focus on plantings within rights-of-way

# Findings Cont.

Budget:

- Budgets for individual programs range from $500 to $15,000

- Annual program budgets are often set based on the level of participation in recent years.

Residential interest level:

- Varies municipality to municipality.

- Participants appear to prefer when programs offer flexibility in where the trees or native plants can be planted (ex. front vs. back yard)

# Findings Cont.

Partnerships, management, and staff time:

- Existing programs are housed within various departments.
- Limited staff time involved; work can be accomplished by minimal staff:
  - Bulk of staff time is program development, preparing list of acceptable trees and plants, determining program requirements/structure, marketing of program, etc.
  - Ongoing management is more administrative duties than technical expertise
- Grants may be available through various nonprofit and governmental organizations.
- Partnering with an existing organization or program may be beneficial.

# QUESTIONS?