



Department Source: Parks and Recreation

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: February 7, 2022

Re: Hazardous Tree Removal Report: Columbia Cosmopolitan Recreation Area

## Executive Summary

The Parks and Recreation Department is requesting Council approval to remove a hazardous tree located at Columbia Cosmopolitan Recreation Area (Cosmo Park) due to the current state of decline and the potential hazard for park users. It qualifies as a large tree due to its 36.5-inch diameter at breast height (DBH). The tree presents a high risk to public safety due to the current condition of the tree canopy, proximity to Steinberg Playground and Burford Shelter, and potential for falling branches or entire tree. Forestry staff will complete the tree removal this winter and plant a replacement tree once the Burford Shelter capital improvement project is completed in fall 2022. Tree Hazard Evaluation Form and photos are attached.

## Discussion

In February of 2009, City Council asked the Parks and Recreation Department to develop a report relating to the removal of larger trees within the park system that may be perceived as significant to the public and/or the use of the park. The report recommended a policy that outlined the procedures to be followed whenever large trees were to be removed due to either being a public safety hazard or due to park development. A link to the 2009 report is included in the legislative history section of this report; and in summary, the P&R tree removal procedure for hazardous trees now includes the following key elements:

1. Tree Risk Assessment Forms will be completed by the Department's certified International Society of Arboriculture Forester and staff.
2. Trees larger than 20-inch diameter at breast height (DBH), but smaller than 30-inch DBH must have the approval of the Park Development Superintendent and the Park Services Manager to be removed.
3. Trees larger than 30-inch DBH must have the approval of the P&R Director, who will notify Council that the tree or trees will be removed.
4. Any size tree that presents an imminent danger to the public shall be removed immediately.

Park staff is proposing to remove a silver maple tree adjacent to the Burford Shelter and Steinberg Playground due to the complete loss of the leaf canopy, falling branches, and proximity to park amenities. The mature white oak with a DBH of 36.5 inches is located adjacent to Burford Shelter and extends over a sidewalk from the shelter to Steinberg Playground. The tree is dead and requires removal to eliminate any concerns related to park patron safety. The tree has been monitored by P&R forestry staff over the past several years, and the tree canopy has now reached a point of 100% death. Several limbs have



already fallen from the tree, and staff has also noted root decay, loss of bark and sapwood decay.

Staff will remove the tree by the end of March 2022 to avoid any conflicts with spring shelter rentals and use of the playground at Cosmo Park. Park staff will plant a new tree in the area of the removal after the replacement of Burford Shelter. The replacement of the shelter is shown as a CIP project in FY2022 and staff anticipates completing the replacement by winter 2023. Planting the new tree after the replacement of the shelter will avoid any potential construction damage to the new tree.

## Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: None

Long-Term Impact: None

## Strategic & Comprehensive Plan Impact

### Strategic Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Safe Neighborhoods, Secondary Impact: Not Applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

### Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

Primary Impact: Environmental Management, Secondary Impact: Not applicable, Tertiary Impact: Not Applicable

## Legislative History

Date	Action
3/16/2009	2009 report regarding the removal of hazardous trees in the park system: <a href="http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/Council/Bills/2009/mar16bills/ReportG.pdf">http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/Council/Bills/2009/mar16bills/ReportG.pdf</a>

## Suggested Council Action

Unless Council directs otherwise, park staff will proceed with the tree removal as outlined in this report.