



Department Source: Parks and Recreation

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: November 7, 2016

Re: Hazardous Tree Removal Report: A. Perry Philips Park and Frank G. Nifong Memorial Park

Executive Summary

The Parks & Recreation Department is requesting Council approval to remove a hazardous tree located at A. Perry Philips Park due to the current state of decline and the potential hazard for park users. Staff is also notifying the Council that a hazardous tree was recently removed that presented a high level of danger at Frank G. Nifong Memorial Park. The white oak tree at Philips Park is located near the walking trail, park restroom and parking lot. It qualifies as a large tree due to its 35.5-inch diameter at breast height (DBH). The tree presents a high risk of public safety due to the current condition of the tree canopy, proximity to the walking trail and restroom, and potential for falling branches. A sugar maple tree with a 32-inch DBH was removed at Nifong Park on September 12, 2016 due to extensive canopy dieback and the potential risk to the park patrons, the Maplewood Home, and festival patrons at the 2016 Heritage Festival. Forestry staff will plant replacement trees in both locations during the fall 2016 planting season. Tree Hazard Evaluation Forms and photos are attached.

Discussion

In February of 2009, the Parks & Recreation Department was asked by the City Council 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 immediate danger to the public shall be removed immediately.

Park staff is proposing to remove a white oak tree adjacent to the parking lot and restroom at A. Perry Philips Park due to the continued loss of tree canopy, falling branches, and existing lean of the tree. The mature white oak with a DBH of 35.5 inches is located adjacent



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to multiple park amenities visited by park patrons, shows multiple signs of decline and requires removal due to numerous factors that will eventually result in the falling of the tree. The tree has been monitored by our forestry staff over the past several years, and the tree canopy has now reached a point of 95% death. The majority of the dead wood in the canopy is covered with hypoxylon canker which rapidly deteriorates the wood and makes the branches extremely brittle and prone to failure. Several limbs have already fallen from the tree, and staff has also noted fungus growth at the base of the trunk and root flare which indicates internal rot. The tree has the potential to hit several targets if it fails, including the walking trail on the perimeter of the lake, park restroom, parking lot, and has the potential to fall on park patrons and vehicles if it fell during park hours.

The Parks and Recreation Forestry staff removed a mature sugar maple tree with a 32-inch DBH at Nifong Park on September 12, 2016 due to the continued failure of the tree and the potential for immediate danger to park users. The tree had been monitored by staff for the past couple of years to observe canopy dieback, foliage loss, and the presence of disease and insects. The tree began to show rapid signs of decline over the past three growing seasons; and, upon inspection, borer insects and woodpecker damage was found to be prevalent throughout the tree. The scaffolding branches of the tree showed significant signs of decay and death which presented a clear safety hazard for park patrons and adjacent buildings. The tree was located on the south side of the Maplewood Home in an area utilized by park patrons and vendors at the annual Heritage Festival. Due to the current state of decline, staff had increasing concerns about leaving the tree in the existing location due to potential safety hazards for park patrons and potential damage to the Maplewood Home. The Parks and Recreation Director gave staff the approval to remove the tree before the Heritage Festival to avoid any potential issues associated with the tree.

After the completion of the white oak removal at Philips Park, park staff will replant a tree of similar species in the area of the removal to replace the tree loss at the park. Staff will also replace the sugar maple removed at Nifong Park during the fall 2016 planting season.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: No fiscal impact

Long-Term Impact: No fiscal impact

Vision & Strategic Plan Impact

[Vision Impacts:](#)

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



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Strategic Plan Impacts:

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

Comprehensive Plan Impacts:

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

Legislative History

Date	Action
03/16/2009	2009 report regarding the removal of hazardous trees in the park system: http://www.gocolumbiamo.com/Council/Bills/2009/mar16bills/ReportG.pdf

Suggested Council Action

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