



City of Columbia

701 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri 65201

Department Source: Parks and Recreation

To: City Council

From: City Manager & Staff

Council Meeting Date: October 3, 2022

Re: Hazardous Tree Removal Report: Stephens Lake Park

Executive Summary

The Parks and Recreation Department is providing this report to update the Council about the proposed plan to remove two hazardous trees located at Stephens Lake Park due to their current state of decline and the potential hazard for park users. The two trees qualify as large trees due to their diameter at breast height (DBH) being greater than 30 inches. The trees present moderate to high risk to public safety due to the current condition of the tree canopy, proximity to paths of travel, and potential for falling branches or the entire tree. Forestry staff will complete the tree removals this fall/winter and will plant replacement trees during the next appropriate season. A location map, Tree Hazard Evaluation Forms, and photos are attached.

The Parks and Recreation Department is also notifying the Council that one 39.75" DBH Pin Oak, located southwest of Riechmann Pavilion in Stephens Lake Park, and one 30" DBH Pin Oak, located on the east side of Stephens Lake Park, were assessed to be hazardous trees and were removed from the park because the trees presented an imminent danger to the public. The tree's immediate removal was deemed necessary by the Parks and Recreation Department's Forester due to the proximity to Riechmann Pavilion and the event area for the Roots N Blues Festival. The pavilion hosts multiple special events throughout the year and Camp Como Kidz takes place in this location from June through August.

Discussion

In February 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 that would 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.

40" Green Ash Tree

Park staff is proposing to remove a green ash tree with 40" DBH located near the southwest corner of Stephens Lake Park due to the complete loss of the leaf canopy, falling branches, signs of infestation from Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), and proximity to the walking trail on that side of the park. 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 due to damage by Emerald Ash Borer. The tree canopy has now reached a point of 95% death.

56" White Oak Tree

Park staff is proposing to remove a white oak tree with 56" DBH located near the south entrance of Stephens Lake Park due to the complete loss of the leaf canopy, falling branches, and proximity to the heavily used walking trail. 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 90% death.

39.75" Pin Oak Tree

Park staff removed a pin oak tree with 39.75" DBH located southwest of Riechmann Pavilion due to the complete loss of the leaf canopy, falling branches, and proximity to the location where Camp Como Kidz has open space play. The tree was dead and required removal to eliminate any concerns related to park patron safety. At the time of removal, the tree canopy had reached a point of 100% death.

30" Pin Oak Tree

Park staff removed a pin oak tree with 30" DBH located on the east side of Stephens Lake Park due to the complete loss of the leaf canopy, falling branches, and proximity to densely populated areas at the Roots N Blues Festival. The tree was dead and required removal to eliminate any concerns related to park patron safety. The tree had been monitored by P&R forestry staff over the past several years, and the tree canopy had reached a point of 100% death.

Forestry staff will complete the two tree removals this fall or winter and will plant replacement trees during the next appropriate season. Staff has already planted several trees around the area of the white oak tree on the south side of the park.

Fiscal Impact

Short-Term Impact: None

Long-Term Impact: None



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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
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 removals as outlined in this report.