

Removal of London Plane Trees on Corfield Street North

Beginning March 16, BC Hydro initiated work as part of ongoing clearance of power and telephone lines will be performed in the Community Park by contractor, Davey Tree Service. Work includes general pruning/shearing with the removal of seven London Plane trees and one fir tree beside the lacrosse box on Corfield Street being the most significant part of the work. The cost to remove these trees will be shared between the City and BC Hydro.

The trees on Corfield have been an issue for BC Hydro for many years and upon recommendation of the City's arborist, will be removed for these reasons:

- London Plane trees are now considered inappropriate for the space. At the time of planting, London Plane trees were chosen for this location as the hydro and telephone lines were intended to be underground.
- A decision was made to no longer plant London Plane trees in parks or boulevard areas. Young leaves covered by short stiff hairs are a significant breathing irritant and can exasperate breathing for those with asthma. When pruning for an extended period, it is necessary for staff to wear dust masks and as well, eyes can quickly become irritated. The City believes pickle ball and lacrosse users, pedestrians and staff will benefit from the removal of the trees.
- Pruning efforts over the years have produced trees which on one side are severely pruned and on the other side, there is extended branching over the lacrosse box play area.
- Tree roots have caused cracking in the asphalt walkway and removal will reduce maintenance and tripping issues.
- Elimination of the annual cost to the City to prune these trees.
- The leaves are a significant portion of the fall leaf clean-up budget and staff must spend considerable time during the summer to blow tree debris from the lacrosse box.
- Removal of the trees will improve the grass area beneath.

One fir tree nearby the London Plane trees will also be removed. Although it has naturally grown with a lean towards the hydro lines and the base seems to be stable, there are signs of stress in the trunk several feet above the ground which may indicate cracking from the weight of the tree canopy. The tree has a poor branching structure and BC Hydro pruning will remove at least half of the canopy and subsequently no longer provide an aesthetic benefit or a safe tree.

BC Hydro pruning is legislated by the provincial government and the City works closely with BC Hydro to make the best of a situation. Should pruning or shearing weaken the tree or eliminate aesthetic or privacy value, alternative solutions, including removal are considered.

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For more information:

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