

Maintenance of Memorial Avenue Trees

Maintaining and enhancing the health and safety of the 34 elm trees along Memorial Avenue planted in memory of the men who gave their lives in World War I is important to the City. Planted more than 100 years ago, the trees have now reached what are senior years for an urban street tree and are showing signs of age. The City's priority is to preserve these trees for as long as we can ensure they are safe.

Arborist assessments were performed in 2012 and 2015 and in anticipation of streetscape upgrades to Memorial Avenue, a detailed inspection of the trees completed in 2019 confirmed some of the trees are failing or face significant issues to survival. The 2019 report also required an annual inspection of the trees and this year's inspection confirmed three trees now in advanced stage of declining health must be removed. In 2012, one elm was removed due to poor pruning practices in the early 1970's.

We are moving forward with recommendations from the 2020 arborist report that determined seven trees require a higher level of assessment which will include aerial and in-depth internal inspection by specific tree analysis equipment. Three trees now classified as hazardous, must be removed due to incurable fungal infections and poor health. Should there be any salvageable wood, we hope to be able to repurpose for possible future projects.

Through ongoing arborist inspections, the City will determine any further actions for specific trees which require further assessment and through limited pruning, we will continue to maintain and care for the trees. It is important to point out, the removal of three trees and ongoing treatment of the other trees is related to the current condition of the trees and not because of future work on Memorial Avenue.

Removal of the three danger trees is scheduled for Thursday, November 19 and Friday, November 20. During this time, parking will be limited on the north side of Memorial Avenue and a partial road and sidewalk closure may occur at times to ensure the public's safety. Detours will be provided. When trees are removed, the City will ensure replacement at a suitable time in the future. Further maintenance, crown cleaning and other works will be scheduled later. The City's budget now allows for an increase in the aeration in the ground around the trees, fertilizer and mycorrhizae treatments and to provide regular watering through the summer months.

The City's cenotaph was originally located at the end of Memorial Avenue in front of the McMillan Street School, now the home of the McMillan Arts Centre. After the First World War, Memorial Avenue was chosen to commemorate the men from Parksville who died serving overseas in the war. The street led to the cenotaph and the elm trees were planted in memory of the fallen soldiers.

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For more information:

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