

MEMORANDUM

TO: Development Review Board
Scott Gustin, Principal Planner

FROM: Wagner Hodgson LA, Project Designers
City Project Team

RE: City Hall Park Tree Planting Plan

DATE: February 26, 2018

Please see enclosed additional information for discussion at the March 7, 2018 DRB meeting regarding the tree planting plan for City Hall Park. These attachments include:

- A matrix indicating each existing tree's health, whether it is proposed to be removed or retained in the plan, the purpose for removal, and notes from two City arborists and the landscape team.
- A matrix indicating each proposed tree's species and anticipated size.
- A map that corresponds with the two matrices above to illustrate the location of trees to be removed and trees to be added.
- A shade study simulating the shading conditions in the park at 12pm and 4pm during the summer solstice.

In response to the DRB's comments and questions at the February 20 meeting, the City Arborist and the landscape team prepared updated notes on the condition of the trees to be removed, recommended two additional existing trees that may be able to be retained, and recommended two additional new trees to be added to the plan.

As such, the revised materials identify 56 existing trees, with 24 proposed to be retained, and an additional 14 proposed for planting, for an anticipated total of 38 trees in the proposed plan.

Design Goals Influencing the Tree Plan

The reconstruction of City Hall Park is intended to promote a healthy, functioning urban park, accessible to residents in all seasons, and an enhanced, historic park that meets the modern needs of our Burlington community. The plans for the park have evolved since 2012 based on public input on the current and future needs of the park. These priorities have been carefully balanced throughout the planning process, particularly in determining the park's ecological needs, the conditions that would best allow trees to flourish, and resulting in the current stormwater and planting plans.

The stormwater and planting plans were informed by former arborist Warren Spinner's annual updates to the Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Department's (DPRW) Tree Inventory. Additional assessment throughout the planning process identified the unique soil compaction and drainage issues that have impacted tree growth in City Hall Park, and informed the plan for how to best support healthy tree growth in the re-designed park.

The proposed tree plan strikes a balance among the many design considerations for the Park, including:

- Creating a more favorable and balanced growing condition for all vegetation in the park in the future—including trees, shrubs, flowers, and lawn. Healthier conditions for vegetation will not only provide ecological benefits but add to the seasonal visual interest of the park.
- Removing trees that are in poor or declining health, particularly those that are considered to be a public safety risk, and having an appropriate tree density in the future to ensure more sustainable growing conditions for trees.

- Managing the park's stormwater runoff, as well as some stormwater runoff from St. Paul Street, within the park footprint via two stormwater gardens; gardens are located to take advantage of the park's topography and drainage patterns.
- Slight realignments to path locations and paved areas to 1) improve grades for ADA accessibility and 2) ensure park infrastructure is placed appropriately to accommodate current and future uses to avoid repeated compaction of soil/turf.
- Balancing community input that indicated the desire to have both areas of shade as well as open sunny areas.

The health of the trees in the park vary. Based on ongoing evaluation throughout the planning process, it is evident that some are severely stressed or are in poor or potentially hazardous condition, and that some trees have experienced additional decline during this planning process, despite ongoing maintenance. It is important to note that the conditions are based on above-ground assessments of tree health. Other trees may be more stressed than an above ground assessment will reveal—such as the trees which were lost in the wind storm this past fall. The City Arborist will work closely with the construction contractor to manage and rejuvenate some of the trees in declining health during and following construction.

Thank you for your review of these additional materials. Our team looks forward to discussing these details with you at the March 7 meeting.