
PRESS RELEASE

City's Urban Forestry Division to replace 79 ailing street trees

Missoula's urban forest is getting some much-needed attention this fall as City arborists work with residents to replace 79 dead or dying boulevard trees in neighborhoods throughout Missoula. Adjacent property owners have been notified the failing trees will be removed in the next several weeks. Missoula Parks and Recreation's Urban Forestry Division will plant replacement trees in the spring of 2014.

The failing trees will be replaced with fast-growing species like linden, honey locust and bur oak which are better suited to Missoula's arid climate and boulevard growing conditions. Many of the replacement trees are slated for the University District and the Slant Street neighborhoods, where the first boulevard maples were planted in the early 1900's. The average lifespan of a maple tree in an urban setting is about 60 years, according to City Urban Forester Chris Boza.

"The trees selected for removal have reached the end of their natural lifespans and show significant die-back or damage to more than 50 percent of the tree," says Boza. "In this weakened condition, boulevard trees represent an unacceptable level of risk to citizens. High-risk tree removal is an important part of urban forest management. When we're required to remove a high-risk tree, we make every effort to plant an appropriate replacement tree as soon as possible." City arborists will work with adjacent property owners next spring to ensure the new replacement trees are properly sited and cared for.

The City Council and neighborhood representatives understand the importance maintaining the urban forest and are supportive. "Missoula's urban forest is one of our city's wonderful features, and we need to take care of it. Unfortunately a lot of the trees are dying all at the same time. Although it is hard to see, we need to take out the dying trees to make room for the young trees. The urban forest will be healthier and more resilient if there is more age diversity," says Marilyn Marler, Ward 6 city council representative and botanist at UM.

The tree removal project will begin the week of November 4 and will take approximately six to eight weeks to complete. Residents can expect minor traffic delays and limited restriction of on-street parking to protect motorists, property and people between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., weekdays.

CITY'S URBAN FORESTRY DIVISION TO REPLACE 79 DEAD OR DYING STREET TREES

The Urban Forestry Division cares for Missoula's approximately 32,000 trees in public right-of-ways and parks through a comprehensive planting, pruning and risk management program. "The Urban Forestry Division's mission is to maintain a healthy urban forest for the maximum benefit of city residents," says Boza. Residents can learn more about planting and caring for street trees at www.missoulaparks.org. In addition, the Urban Forestry Division has a Cost Share Tree Planting program to help property owners plant new boulevard trees.

Trees For Missoula, a non-profit citizen advocacy group which supports Missoula's urban forest, welcomes new members at www.treesformissoula.org. Trees For Missoula also accepts tax-deductible donations of any amount to support tree planting throughout the Missoula valley.

The removal project and the replacement trees are funded by the annual city Park District assessment as allocated for pruning, risk management and tree planting. A map of the scheduled removals is available at www.missoulaparks.org. For more information about the project, phone Urban Forester Chris Boza at 552-6270.

(end)

MEDIA NOTE: PLEASE SEE ATTACHED PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

Fall, 2013 Urban Forestry Tree Replacement Project Frequently Asked Questions

November 5, 2013

For more information, please contact:

Chris Boza

Urban Forester

Missoula Parks and Recreation

Phone: 552-6270

cboza@ci.missoula.mt.us

www.missoulaparks.org

Who manages the urban forest?

- Missoula Parks and Recreation's Urban Forestry Division cares for Missoula's approximately 32,000 trees in public right-of-ways and parks through a comprehensive planting, pruning and risk management program. The Urban Forestry Division's mission is to maintain a healthy urban forest for the maximum benefit of city residents. One of the City Council's budget priorities in recent years has included funding enhancements for sustainable urban forestry activities.

What's the project all about?

- Certified arborists with Missoula Parks & Recreation's Urban Forestry Division have evaluated hundreds of public street trees and located 79 trees throughout the city which show significant die-back or damage to more than 50 percent of the tree, making them structurally unsound. These 79 trees represent an unacceptable level of risk to citizens and property, and have been scheduled for removal and replacement.
- Some of these trees include Silver and Norway maples which were planted in boulevards throughout the City over 100 years ago. There has been a marked decline in the condition of many of these centurion trees over the last several years as they reach the end of their natural life span, which averages about 60 years in an urban setting

How does the Urban Forestry Division decide which trees to replace?

- City arborists use nationally accepted ANSI and International Society of Arboriculture tree-risk guidelines in making the replacement recommendations.

- Trees containing large deadwood and structural flaws such as internal decay and root rot create an unacceptable level of risk to the adjacent roads, private property, and residents using streets and sidewalks.

When will these trees be replaced?

- The trees identified for removal will be replaced in May and June, 2014, with fast-growing species like linden, honey locust, sugar maple and bur oak which are better suited to Missoula's arid climate and boulevard growing conditions.
- The Urban Forestry Division will work with affected property owners to assure that the new replacement trees are properly sited and cared for.
- The Urban Forestry Division replaces all trees removed from city boulevards whenever space allows.

Does the adjacent property owner play a role?

- The Urban Forestry Division has notified adjacent property owners of the removals and replacements, and has conducted second site visits and additional evaluations where requested by property owners.
- As stated above, City arborists will work with residents next spring to make sure the replacement trees thrive in their new homes.
- Residents are encouraged to learn more about the benefits of the urban forest at www.missoulaparks.org.
- The urban forest needs your help! City ordinance requires that property owners water boulevard trees adjacent to their property and report any disease or defect.

Can't some of the older trees be saved?

- Older trees can sometimes be treated for disease or defect, but like all living things, trees have a natural lifespan. Boulevard trees often have shorter lifespans due to the harsh urban environment. Street trees often grow in a narrow, restricted area that limits root growth. The soil is usually compacted and limits nutrients, oxygen, and water. Underground and overhead utilities often share the same limited space, causing further problems. Street trees are also directly impacted by heat and pollution from roads and vehicles.
- In addition, trees grow weaker with age. Older trees have a longer time to develop defects than younger trees. They also have a lower living-to-dead mass ratio. Older trees are often the first to be damaged in a storm.

- Defects such as decay, bark inclusions, and cracks are more common in older trees. While young trees can be placed on a preventive program to help them develop a sustainable structure, older trees are placed on a "track and treat" program as needed to manage risk.

What else should residents know?

- The tree removal operation will begin in November, 2013 and will continue for six to eight weeks. Minor traffic delays and daytime restrictions prohibiting on street parking are expected to protect motorists, property and people from tree work hazards.
- The removal project and the replacement trees are funded by the annual city Park District assessment as allocated for pruning, risk management and tree planting. A map of the scheduled removals is available at www.missoulaparks.org. For more information about the project, phone Urban Forester Chris Boza at 552-6270.
- Learn more about planting and caring for street trees at www.missoulaparks.org.
- The Urban Forestry Division has a Cost Share Tree Planting program to help property owners plant new boulevard trees.
- Trees For Missoula, a non-profit citizen advocacy group which supports Missoula's urban forest, welcomes new members at www.treesformissoula.org. Trees For Missoula also accepts tax-deductible donations of any amount to support tree planting throughout the Missoula valley.