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PRESS RELEASE

Block pruning begins on South Third Street

Missoula Parks and Recreation's Urban Forestry Division will begin block pruning boulevard trees along South Third Street on Monday, August 22. The project, which includes about 137 trees between Higgins and Russell streets, will improve the trees' health, structure and aesthetics, remove dead branches and eliminate hazards.

Block pruning, or pruning trees on an annual cycle based on their location, is a standard urban forestry practice used to maintain a large number of trees in the most cost-efficient manner. By pruning all the trees on a block at once, crews reduce travel and setup time. Block pruning maintains the health of street trees while greatly reducing the maintenance cost per tree.

In addition to the pruning project, the City's urban forestry program has identified about 25 trees on Third Street which are dead or dying and must be removed. In this state, a tree's structural integrity is compromised and it becomes a hazard to pedestrians and motorists. The average life span of adequately watered Norway Maple in an urban environment is about 100 years, and many of the Norway Maples along Third Street are nearing the century mark and the end of their natural lifespan. Adjacent property owners have been offered the opportunity to receive a replacement tree that is appropriate for the site. Replacement trees will be planted in the boulevard in Spring, 2012, in locations where residents have agreed to water the new trees.

During the project, 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 5:00 p.m., weekdays. City crews will adjust parking restrictions and the traffic control plan each day to address safety and minimize public inconvenience. The project and the replacement trees are funded by the annual Park District assessment as allocated for proactive pruning, forest risk management and new tree planting.

The City of Missoula's Urban Forestry Division works to maintain, enhance and expand Missoula's urban forest. Over 20,000 trees line Missoula's streets and several thousand more shade our parks and open space. The Urban Forestry Division is responsible for tree planting, pruning, hazardous tree removals and other many other functions which improve the overall health of Missoula's urban forest and consequently the quality of life in Missoula.

For more information about the project, phone Parks Services and Systems Manager David Selvage at 552-6252.