



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: January 20, 2022

From: Karen Kinser, Deputy Director of Public Works

Noreen Leek, Parks & Recreation Director

Subject: Community Park Festival Tree Replacement

Community Goal/Result

Community Building, Ecological Sustainability

Purpose

Preserve a long-standing tradition valued by the community while encouraging connectivity and demonstrating environmental stewardship.

Recommendation

Consider the recommendation from the ad hoc Subcommittee of Open Space and Ecology Committee (OSEC) and Parks & Recreation (P&R) Commission members regarding replacement of the City's Festival tree and provide direction to staff.

Background

For more than three decades, the deodar cedar tree at the Community Park has served as the focal point for Brisbane's annual Festival of Lights event and has been an asset cherished by the community. It became apparent many years ago, and was subsequently affirmed by arborist assessments, that the tree's overall health was progressively declining, attributable to a variety of factors.

A joint ad hoc subcommittee, comprised of members of OSEC and the P&R Commission, was established to review the issue and provide recommendations. In preparation for future Festival tree needs, a 20' Sequoiadendron was planted in late 2019 at the corner of San Francisco and Old County Road. The hope was that this tree would have time to mature in place and be established when the decline of the original tree became prohibitive to its use. Unfortunately, an undetected irrigation system leak caused a rapid decline in health and untimely removal of the new tree in early 2021. The leak has since been isolated, with a full review and repair of any irrigation issues scheduled.

In November of 2021, when certified arborist Tim Chang and his crew arrived onsite to prepare the original deodar cedar tree for the Festival of Lights event, he observed that the tree had developed a significant lean after heavy rains and winds, and he recommended its removal. City staff consulted a second certified arborist, who confirmed the assessment and the recommendation for removal. Both expressed their concern regarding public safety. The tree exhibited a 15% lean and displayed movement at the trunk during a pull test, indicating its instability. That day, Public Works staff placed barricades and caution tape in the area

surrounding the tree. It was determined that with the area protected, the tree would remain through the 2021 Festival of Lights and holiday season and be removed shortly thereafter.

Discussion

The joint subcommittee met in December 2021 to discuss various alternatives. They discussed placement options, ideal tree species, and how best to achieve a long-term solution. The subcommittee was in consensus that the following criteria are essential to a successful outcome: a native species that would both thrive in Brisbane's climate and achieve the appearance of a holiday tree, a small grove of 3-4 trees that could grow in community and provide protection from the elements (i.e., wind), and trees that were young/small enough to take root with a lesser risk of transplant shock. Inclusion of an establishment period in the tree planting was requested. Douglas Fir tree species were recommended as meeting all the requirements.

If Council were to direct the planting of a total of 3-4 new trees, two trees would need to be planted on the opposite side of the existing walking path. Modifications would be required to irrigation and electrical lines and systems, as well as the installation of a concrete border between the new trees and lawn area. Trees on the far (east) side of the concrete path would cause partial consumption of the grass area, which is typically used for events such as the Farmer's Market and Day in the Park. Also, staff has identified limitations on the lack of current availability of suitable Douglas Fir trees.

Fiscal Impact

Depending upon the number of trees and locations planted, costs could range from \$2,000 for two trees up to \$20,000 for four trees because of modifications needed to park infrastructure.

Attachments

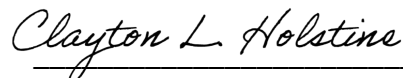
1. Photo of proposed species



Karen Kinser, Deputy Director of Public Works



Noreen Leek, Parks & Recreation Director



Clay Holstine, City Manager

ATTACHMENT 1

