

TO: City Council  
FROM: Lisa Parks, City Administrator  
DATE: July 2, 2024  
SUBJECT: Davis Meeker Garry Oak Tree RFQ Briefing

---

1) Recommended Action:

No action is requested. This item is for review and discussion only.

---

2) Background:

Located adjacent to the Olympia Regional Airport and within the right of way of Old Highway 99 is a large Oregon White Oak (*Quercus Garryana*) tree that is estimated to be at least 400 years old. Named the "Davis Meeker Garry Oak Tree", it has been a fixture in the community and a treasured landmark located along the historic northern branch of the Oregon Trail – the Cowlitz Trail – including serving as a significant trail of trade and commerce for Native American tribes in the area.

In the spring of 2023, an 18-inch-diameter branch fell from about 50 feet above the ground, landing partly in the southbound lane of Old Hwy 99. Because of the amount of visible decay in the failed branch and in the main stem at its connection; its proximity to several structures; and due to the large number of vehicles and people that move near and under the tree on a daily basis, the City commissioned a detailed analysis of the tree's health.

A Level 3 Tree Risk Assessment was performed by a team of ISA Certified TRAQ Arborists, led by the City's contracted tree professional with assistance by two subconsultants including a climbing arborist to assess the upper canopy and a sonic tomography specialist to help evaluate the presence and extent of decay in the tree's interior. The results of the assessment concluded there was a high risk of future failures impacting surrounding targets, and although mitigation options were considered, the final recommendation from the City's contracted tree professional was to remove the tree. Based on the Level 3 Tree Risk Assessment, the Mayor initially directed staff to remove the tree.

Because of the Davis Meeker Garry Oak tree's importance to the culture, history and environment of the region, there have been numerous requests to consider alternatives to removal of the tree. While the City remains confident in the team of arborists' expertise and professionalism in conducting the initial assessment of the tree, the Mayor has determined further assessment is warranted before making a final decision.

Although it is not required for this project, staff has prepared a Request for Qualifications (attached) soliciting interest from qualified arborists to conduct a Level 3 Tree Risk Assessment to ensure transparency in the selection process. The RFQ outlines the minimum qualifications required to perform the assessment, as well as identifying a scope of services and a timeline for making a decision to hire the consulting arborist. The RFQ will be issued on Wednesday, July 3, 2024, with selection of the arborist expected to occur by July 24, 2024. Council Member feedback at the meeting is appreciated.

---

3) Policy Support:

Provide and Sustain Quality Public Safety Services

---

4) Alternatives:

Not applicable.

---

5) Fiscal Notes:

The cost of the second Level 3 Tree Risk Assessment is unknown at this point but is expected to be within the delegated authority of the Mayor.

---

6) Attachments:

- A. Final Draft Request for Qualifications
- B. RFQ Distribution List