

Let's work together to save the Davis Meeker oak and create something beautiful

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To: Alyssa Jones Wood <AJonesWood@ci.tumwater.wa.us>

Alyssa,

Below is a letter I sent yesterday to Mayor Sullivan and Council Members about the Davis Meeker oak. Could you please forward it to the Tree Board? I would really appreciate it.

Thanks!

Nancy

Dear Mayor Sullivan and Council Members,

I see that the city is in the process of hiring another arborist to assess the health and safety profile of the Davis Meeker oak. No matter what the results of that assessment show, I would like to ask that every effort be made to save this tree.

When I read the initial assessment of the Davis Meeker oak, I was very sad but resigned to the possibility of the tree being cut down. But as I have learned more about this tree's deep importance in Tumwater's tribal and pioneer history, and its integral role in the still extant Bush Prairie oak grassland ecosystem, it is my feeling that the city and Port should move heaven and earth to protect this tree.

Having been an environmental activist in Tumwater for many years, I've never seen so many people come together to protect anything, let alone a tree. Also, as a Pacific Northwest native and a lifetime birder, I can't tell you how excited I was to see American kestrels nesting in a hollow in the Davis Meeker oak, which they have undoubtedly been doing for decades. Not once have I seen birds of any species use the natural hollow in a Tumwater tree to nest, let alone such cool birds as falcons!

It's not difficult to understand why. These days, we almost never let trees get old enough to develop hollows in their trunks for wildlife. The Davis Meeker oak is a happy anomaly to that trend for the very reasons that Tumwater has protected and honored it as a Heritage Tree since 2001: its age and history. The importance of that heritage does not change just because the tree starts dropping branches.

Su Sikora posted an idea on the Save the Oak facebook page for shielding Old Hwy 99 from falling branches. I think is a good one. She proposed creating a protective steel structure like this over the roadway:



Such a structure could easily be turned into an art installation similar to Olympia's Gateways Public Art project:

[https://www.olympiawa.gov/community/arts,\\_culture\\_\\_\\_heritage/public\\_art/gateways\\_public\\_art.php](https://www.olympiawa.gov/community/arts,_culture___heritage/public_art/gateways_public_art.php)

What a city asset that would be!

Plus, if necessary, the framework could be partially camouflaged like the wonderful trees and sky that have been painted on the Tumwater Hill water tower at Overlook Park.

Creative ideas for such a structure could be solicited from local artists and residents. I'd love to see what kids could do with this idea. A temporary protective scaffold could be set up until the artwork was ready.

The healing underlying message of this sculpture would be, *"We came together to protect people and our heritage tree."*

So much money and angry energy has been expended on the conflict over the Davis Meeker oak. It's not good for our community.

Isn't it time we stop fighting, and work together to create a positive solution? It would not be a capitulation by anyone, but a collaboration for everyone, and I think a deep sigh of relief would be breathed by all.

Thanks for listening,

Nancy Partlow

*We do not fear this tree  
We revere this tree.*

