

From: Samuel Lord <charlielord26@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 18, 2023 5:43 PM
To: Arborist
Subject: Dozens of mature trees threatened by City's own plans for Park Ave

Attention: External E-mail – regardless if the sender is known DO NOT open any attachments or links unless you are expecting them from the sender

To: Tree Commission, through the City Arborist

Dear Members of the Tree Commission,

I would like to make sure that you are aware of the number and quality of trees that are, according to the City's own plans, threatened by the \$11 million "Great Streets" public works projects being considered for the 100, 200, 300, and 400 blocks of Park Avenue and adjoining sections of N. Washington, N. Maple, and N. Virginia.

The 60% design plan for the Park Avenue project has now been submitted by the City to the Virginia DOT. It was uploaded to the City website last week and can be found here:

<https://www.fallschurchva.gov/2155/Park-Avenue-Great-Streets>

The plans show the location and critical root zones of all existing trees and designate the likely construction harm to be caused to each tree under the current plan. Category "A" is a tree that will be "minimally" impacted, Category "B" is a tree that will be "moderately" impacted, Category "C" is a "tree requiring further protective measures in design development," and Category "X" is a tree to be removed outright.

Based on my review of the plans, approximately 4 trees will be removed outright, 15 trees are in Category C, and 21 trees are in Category B. The plans superimpose the proposed right of way and streetscaping work on the existing critical root zones of the tree. In many instances 30-60% of the CRZs are within the work zone.

The trees in Categories B and C include many mature trees that give shade, character, and beauty to this important part of our City. The following list contains only those trees in "Category C"--i.e., those which under the current plans with "require further protective measures" in order to survive construction. The information below about species, diameter at breast height (DBH), address, and calculated annual economic benefit is taken from the City's online "Treekeeper" tree inventory. As you know, a tree with a DBH over 20 inches is a large tree that is decades old. Trees above 30 inches in DBH are exceptional.

- (1) Northern Red Oak at 301 Park with a DBH of 38 inches
- (2) Red Maple at 300 Park with DBH of 34 inches
- (3) Red Maple at 300 Park with DBH of 30 inches
- (4) Red Maple at 300 Park with DBH of 27 inches
- (5) Willow Oak at 207 Park with DBH of 28 inches
- (6) Willow Oak at 200 Park with DBH of 24 inches
- (7) Laurel Oak at 115 Park with DBH of 36 inches
- (8) Laurel Oak at 115 Park with DBH of 28 inches

- (9) Laurel Oak at 115 Park with DBH of 26 inches
- (10) Laurel Oak at 115 Park with DBH of 21 inches
- (11) Laurel Oak at 115 Park with DBH of 34 inches
- (12) Willow Oak at 105 Park with DBH of 39 inches
- (13) Willow Oak at 137 N. Washington with DBH of 28 inches

The above are ONLY the Category C ("further protection needed") trees. Over 20 other trees, including mature trees that are decades old, are in Category B ("moderately impacted").

According to the Treekeeper program, the annual environmental benefit of just the 13 trees listed above is over \$10,000 taking into account shade and property benefits, stormwater benefits, carbon emissions avoided, and carbon captured.

Similarly, many of the trees on the list are "Gold Medal Trees" according to Treekeeper, which I understand to mean those trees in the top 7% of most important and valuable trees in the city inventory.

I request that each member of the Tree Commission walk Park Avenue with the City 60% plans in hand to see for yourself the trees that are threatened by this plan.

I next ask that the Tree Commission insist that the design and construction plans be modified as necessary to save these important trees on this important street. Removing these trees and replacing them with saplings would be a terrible loss to our City. If undergrounding utilities is an issue (note that the utilities in the 100 block of park are already underground) there are technical solutions that should be explored, such as the use of moling equipment to safely install utilities without trenching. If streetscaping or right of way is an issue, there should be much more public discussion about the costs and benefits of the current design plan.

It is only within the last few weeks that the public has had any access to the 60% design plan, and there should be more public comment on the merits of the current design now that there is an actual design plan to review that shows the likely loss of so many significant trees.

Thank you for your dedication to protecting Falls Church's trees.

Sincerely,

Charlie Lord
charlielord26@gmail.com