
Council Meeting Date: November 19, 2001

Agenda Item: 7(b)

CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM
CITY OF SHORELINE, WASHINGTON

AGENDA TITLE:	Update on vegetation management activities scheduled at Richmond Beach Saltwater Park in the slope area below the Bluff Trail
DEPARTMENT:	Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
PRESENTED BY:	Wendy Barry, PCRS Director

PROBLEM/ISSUE STATEMENT: The purpose of this report is to provide an update on upcoming vegetation management activities that may raise questions from the community. The work includes tree removal and planting of low growing trees and vegetation on the slope located below the Bluff Trail at Richmond Beach Saltwater Park. The work to be performed will comply with the Vegetation Management Plan established in 1999 for this slope area as part of the permit requirements for the Bluff Trail project.

In October 2001, the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (PRCS) Department contracted with a certified arborist to review the March 1999 Vegetation Management Plan, and to visit the park and inspect trees to determine the health status of the trees in the third zone. The arborist concluded the Richmond Beach Saltwater Park Vegetation Management Plan, and the work done to date to implement the Plan, are consistent with best management practices and industry standards for park maintenance management and natural resources management. The arborist found a number of serious health deficiencies among the Maple and Fir trees on the slope. The arborist indicated that all of the trees on the slope would rate a high hazard rating and concluded that the removal and replacement of existing trees is consistent with best management practices for the establishment of a healthy, self-sustaining vegetation community.

Thirty-eight Maple and Fir trees will be removed and replaced. Five of the trees are less than four inches in diameter and the rest exceed four inches in diameter. They will be replaced with lower growing trees like Vine Maple and Dogwood trees. Stumps will not be removed. Removal would create disruption to the slope and increase risk of erosion. A variety of ground covers will be planted. The Pacific Madrona trees are in good condition and will not be removed.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: This work is being accomplished within the budget established for the Parks Maintenance division.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is necessary. This item is for discussion only.

Approved By: City Manager 

INTRODUCTION

Vegetation management activities are scheduled at Richmond Beach Saltwater Park in the slope area below the Bluff Trail. This work is in compliance with a vegetation management plan approved in 1999. In addition, the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (PRCS) Department contracted with a certified arborist to review the vegetation management plan, inspect trees on the slope and provide recommendations to ensure alignment with best management practices.

BACKGROUND

The Bluff Trail at Richmond Beach Saltwater Park was completed in the late fall of 1999. In addition to geo-technical engineering review and recommendations, a vegetation management plan was drafted and approved as part of the permit requirements for the trail project. The vegetation management plan includes three zones in which invasive vegetation and dead, damaged and/or diseased trees are to be removed and replaced with low growing trees and vegetation that will enhance slope stability.

The goals of the Vegetation Management Plan:

- Ensure a safe, healthy and rewarding park experience for visitors to Richmond Beach Saltwater Park
- Preserve and enhance slope stability and erosion resistance by encouraging a healthy blanket of vegetation and by discouraging foot traffic on steeply sloping, terrain.
- Eradicate and discourage non-native exotic vegetation in the park, which adversely compete with native plants and distract from the natural scenery
- Plan and encourage the development of native landscape plant material to increase the health and aesthetic qualities of the park
- Remove dead, dying, damaged and diseased plants from slope and other park areas.
- Create a visually pleasing landscape edge along pathways and use areas.
- Preserve view to Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains through careful selection, planting and maintenance of plant material.

Each year, work has been performed according to this plan. To date, work in two of the three zones has been accomplished. Work is about to begin on the third zone which contains several trees that have been repeatedly topped and damaged over the years making them more susceptible to disease and rot.

The arborist walked the site and closely examined the trees. He utilized a protocol of the International Society of Arboriculture for Hazard Tree Assessment. His report notes that all of the Maple and Douglas Fir trees are in poor condition. The Fir trees have been repeatedly topped. The Maple trees have been repeatedly topped or cut down to the ground. Many of the trees have been girdled. Almost all of the trees have base rot, center rot, and poorly attached leaders above rot pockets. This is a condition that

The arborist concluded that work to be performed and removal of trees on the slope is consistent with best management practices and industry standards

Tree removal work will be completed in December 2001 followed by tree planting in January 2002. Dogwoods, Vine Maples, Ocean Spray and Yew trees will be planted. Staff will complete plant propagation of ground covers by April 2002 including Oregon Grape, Currants, and other healthy native groundcovers already growing on the site.

RECOMMENDATION

No action is necessary. This item is for discussion purposes only.