



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Downtown Tree Replacement Project Considered

A recent review of the condition of existing trees in the downtown area revealed several need to be replaced. City Planner Ben Rhoads said several trees have outgrown their original frames and are causing damage to nearby sidewalks.

“The city remains committed to supporting and improving our downtown, and we have taken a look at the trees several times over the past couple years at the request of nearby business owners,” Rhoads said.

“Several of the tree frames and areas of the brick paver sidewalk have begun to lift, and I’m concerned about this becoming a trip hazard for pedestrians,” Rhoads said. City staff and local arborists agree the problem will likely worsen as the trees continue to mature and their root systems expand.

The Downtown Parking and Oversight Committee (DPOC) supports the project and recommends the trees be removed. The group first considered the tree removal as a part of the Downtown Siloam Springs Parking Plan in September 2006.

Trees under consideration for removal are Maple and Locust trees planted on Broadway Street between University and Mount Olive Streets. Smaller trees, like a Pink Dogwood or Serviceberry tree would likely be chosen as replacements. These trees are much less likely to damage area sidewalks, Rhoads said.

Of the 20 trees evaluated, 12 trees have been identified as problematic. A four-year process of gradually replacing the trees has been proposed, and the timing of the project will depend upon available funding and recommended planting schedules. The first phase of the project could begin this fall pending Board of Director’s approval and community support for the project.

The city is currently in the process of gathering feedback on this project from the downtown business owners, residents, and concerned citizens. If you have a question or would like to comment please contact Ben Rhoads, City Planner, at 479-238-0932.

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