

February 25, 2015

Downtown tree pruning scheduled for upcoming Sundays

As part of its annual street tree maintenance program, the City will prune the London plane trees along the Shoppers Row and Pier Street sidewalks in March.

Pruning will take place over three Sundays – Mar. 8, 15 and 22 – from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and local businesses, the Heart of the Downtown Business Improvement Association, the Pier Street Association and the Chamber of Commerce have been notified.

Tree trimming equipment will temporarily take up some parking spaces where the work is being done, and sidewalk areas could be briefly and temporarily closed when branches are being cut. The City will avoid working in areas near hotels on Sunday mornings.

“We’ll do our best to minimize any disruption for businesses open these days, and we ask people to respect any areas marked for public safety,” says Ross Milnthorp, the City’s general manager of parks, recreation and culture.

The trees will be pollarded, with all branches cut back to control the size of the tree and limit the reach of the tree canopy while promoting a dense head of foliage and sturdier branches to withstand high winds.

“London planes are very vigorous, and can produce long, heavy branches. Pollarding protects nearby buildings and signs and keeps the branches light, to prevent them from breaking off and falling on the sidewalk,” Milnthorp explains. *“By reducing the canopy, we also reduce the risk of the tree falling over in heavy storms.”*

The London planes are pruned this way approximately every three years, the last time in 2011.

“The trees have been consistently healthy, and we can expect to see new branches by mid to late May, and they’ll be leafing out in June with a full canopy by mid-July,” Milnthorp says.

The trees were planted during the downtown revitalization work nearly 30 years ago. The pruning program began when tree limbs grew too long and heavy.

Downtown street trees are part of the urban forest, and the benefits of this significant community investment include carbon emissions capture, shade, cooler temperatures and the attractive streetscape.

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