

BARTON SPRINGS POOL TREE ASSESSMENT BRIEFING

Austin City Council
April 23, 2009

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BACKGROUND

- The Parks and Recreation Department is a committed steward of the urban forest
- Annually PARD Urban Forestry plants 2300 trees, while removing 500 damaged or fallen trees
- Nationally, a goal is to treat public trees on a 7 year cycle
- With existing resources, the Austin treatment cycle is 40 years per tree
- At Zilker Park, tree work is handled monthly
- For decades, special efforts have been made to sustain aging trees in and around Barton Spring Pool
- Periodically, trees fail unexpectedly and are removed

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Tree failure at the pool



BACKGROUND

- Summer 2007, during the Barton Springs Pool Master Plan process, a local certified arborist identified trees of concern
- A Master Plan Short Term Goal was to hire a nationally recognized arboricultural company to professionally assess the trees around the pool
- Fall 2007, PARD Urban Forestry identified 7 unhealthy trees proposed for removal, and 46 trees of concern for additional assessment by the arboricultural company

•October 2008, Davey Resource Group (DRG) was hired to conduct the technically advanced assessment. DRG was the only bidder after 3 attempts to solicit bids

•The DRG used the industry standards to assess criteria including:

- Radar imaging of wood structure
- Foliar analysis
- Soil analysis
- Root condition analysis
- Pedestrian traffic and soil compaction
- Tree location
- Wind exposure
- Major pests and/or diseases
- Woundwood development
- Shoot growth
- Twig dieback

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ISSUES

•The DRG report was shared due to public safety, high levels of public use, and to allow for open discussion and review

•DRG recommended potential removal of 22 of the original 46 trees they evaluated

•PARD is very concerned about the public's safety regarding the trees in question

•A resolution is being sought through a public improvement process

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An example of Davey Resource Group's Tomography using Tree Radar Unit

From DRG report:

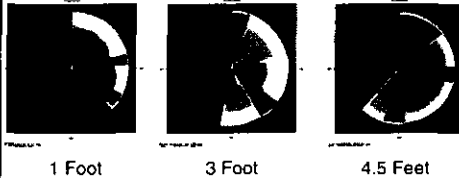
Pecan,

Carya illinoensis

Davey ID # 34

Tree Tag # 6286

Predicted Internal Trunk Cross Section Charts



- BLACK** indicates non-tree tissue
- BROWN** indicates solid wood
- ORANGE & RED** indicate decay
- GREEN** represents early-stages of decay



CURRENT REALITY

- No action will be taken on the trees until a full public review has occurred
- April 15, the DRG report was placed on the PARD website for public viewing
- April 15, a press conference was held to inform the public about the tree assessment
- April 20, the Joint Environmental Board-Parks Board Committee held a public meeting on the tree assessment
- April 23, City Council briefing

NEXT STEPS

Additional public meetings will be held

- April 28: Parks and Recreation Board at 6:00 PM, City Hall, Boards and Commissions - Room 1101, 301 W. 2nd Street
- May 19: Urban Forestry Board at 6:30 PM, Mexican American Cultural Center, 600 River Street
- May 20: Environmental Board at 6:00 PM, City Hall, Council Chambers - Room 1002, 301 W. 2nd Street
- June 15: Joint Environmental Board-Parks Board Committee will again review the proposed plan with staff recommendation at 6:15 PM, Mexican American Cultural Center, 600 River Street

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