



City of Spokane—Media Release

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**CITY CAN'T AVOID TREE REMOVAL ON BERNARD;
NEIGHBORHOOD WILL GET NEW TREES**

After consulting with the City's Arborist, the City has determined that it will have to remove 22 street trees along Bernard Street as part of a project to rehabilitate Bernard between 14th and 29th avenues. The City will plant 24 new trees along this stretch to make up for the loss and enhance the neighborhood for future generations.

"Street trees are great assets in our neighborhoods, and we've struggled with the decision to remove these trees," says Mayor Dennis Hession. "We certainly appreciate all the input we've received from neighbors and other citizens, but in the long run, this is the right decision."

Citizens have provided many thoughtful comments on this project at two neighborhood meetings, a meeting of the Citizens Street Advisory Commission, and at the Community Assembly as well as through phone calls and email.

Many of the trees, which are located primarily on the east side of Bernard between 17th Avenue and 24th Avenue, are in poor health because of root systems that are too shallow and damage from past storms and improper trimming. They have caused sidewalk and street damage and are interfering with utilities in the area.

These particular trees were an inappropriate choice for the 18- to 24-inch planting strips along this section of Bernard. Trees of this size and species require a much larger planting strip. The City standard for new planting strips is 5 feet.

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“As with all of the projects approved by voters as part of the 10-year street program, our goal is to rehabilitate streets, improving safety and drive-ability for all citizens,” Mayor Hession says. “We have determined that there is no way to save the trees and build a road that is safe and durable.”

A report by the City’s arborist determined that half the trees were too damaged to be saved regardless of whether the street is disrupted for repair. The arborist also concludes that the remainder of the trees likely would not survive reconstruction of the street.

Although a decision has been made to remove the trees, the City is very interested in working with neighborhood residents on a way to provide additional street and pedestrian amenities to the neighborhood through the local improvement district (LID) process. Several citizens have approached us with creative ideas.

“We certainly appreciate the concerns of our citizens; this isn’t a perfect solution,” Mayor Hession says. “But this will give us a much-improved street with new street trees that will enhance the neighborhood for years to come.”