



## **LIBERTY PARK CHERRY TREE INSPECTION INFORMATION**

I inspected the cherry tree that is the subject of the new library construction and its relationship with the improvements proposed. I also inspected this and the other cherry last year. Both trees continue to decline to various degrees from the basket weave grafting. As the normal tree stem, now hidden inside the outer weave, has continued to grow larger in diameter and the basket weave stems continued to grow around the hidden main stem, the two trees are slowly “choking” off water and nutrients up the tree resulting in a gradual decline. The cherry tree that is in the octagon concrete planter is markedly healthier than the other tree.

The other cherry tree, the subject of my inspection, is 9-inches in diameter measured 54 inches above grade. It is in a shrub planter with a herbaceous groundcover. It is in a much larger growing space area compared with the other cherry so it should be doing better but is doing worse. Because of suspected root problems, competition from the other plants, and growth deformities, the tree is declining from various stress factors such as insects and disease. There is one large fungal conk on the south face of the tree (see photo with pruning knife) and a few minor ones elsewhere. Where the tree branches grow out of the basket weave, there are two depressed pits at the base of the branches that accumulate water and debris, which I suspect contains more decay/disease. The west (left) pit has a crack running down the north side of the tree, continuing the decay column. Nearly the entire basket weave diameter contains numerous frass piles (orange-brown in color), indicating bark beetle feeding activity. The stem girdling by the basket weave is contributing to the dieback of branches in the tree crown and weakening of the tree which makes it more attractive to the disease and insects invading it.

This is not a healthy tree and left remaining could contribute to the decline of the other cherry tree (or other cherry trees in the park) as it is serving as potential breeding ground for bark beetles and inoculum source for disease organisms to spread. While I would otherwise recommend taking action to save this tree, there isn't anything that can be done as the cause for its declining condition is primarily the basket weave branches that were wrapped around the main trunk years ago. My recommendation would be to remove this tree in the interest of saving other park trees from the potential spread of bark beetle insects and disease as the tree continues to decline.

It will be paramount that the other cherry tree be well protected during the construction process to increase its chances for survival following completion of construction. It is good that the area it grows in will be increased in size (less concrete).

Please see the attachments for more details and let me know if you have further questions.

Terry Flatley  
City of Renton  
Certified Arborist - Municipal Specialist  
Urban Forestry and Natural Resources Manager  
1055 S. Grady Way, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Renton, WA 98057  
425-430-6600