

Date: October 17, 2008



**TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board**  
**FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: Stanley Park Hollow Tree**

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## RECOMMENDATION

*THAT the Board receive the following report for information.*

## BACKGROUND

Windstorms starting in December 2006 accelerated the rate of decline of the Hollow Tree in Stanley Park. In November 2007 staff responding to an increasing rate of lean of the snag, fenced the site off and retained a structural engineer to examine stabilizing solutions to render the snag safe for public examination.

On March 31, 2007, the Board received a staff report on the Hollow Tree and passed the following resolution:

*“THAT the Board approve the taking down of the Hollow Tree as it has become a public safety concern.”*

Following a presentation from a sub-committee of the Vancouver Heritage Commission on June 9, 2008, the following motion was put to the Board and was defeated:

*“THAT the Board reconsider the decision made at the March 31, 2008 Park Board meeting regarding the Hollow Tree.”*

At the Board meeting of July 7, 2008, a motion was raised under new business and was passed by the Board:

*“WHEREAS there has been concern about the Hollow Tree being taken down in Stanley Park; and*

*WHEREAS the Vancouver Park Board has previously voted to have the Hollow Tree taken down; and*

*WHEREAS the Vancouver Park Board needs an engineering report confirming that the Hollow Tree can be stabilized and made safe in an upright position on its current site;*

*THEREFORE be it resolved that the Board delay taking down the tree for 150 days to allow for a committee chaired by Lorne Whitehead to obtain from an independent*

*engineering firm a suitable answer to maintain the Hollow Tree in its current location in an upright position within 90 days, and the committee has a further 60 days to raise funds required to implement an approved plan; and*

*Be it further resolved that the Board will not provide any funds for the retention of the Hollow Tree in its present position.”*

As a result, staff ceased work on the Hollow Tree, leaving behind a structurally engineered steel attachment collar for temporary external bracing and two internal wood diaphragms to hold the separated members to the trunk together and prevent their collapse when the snag was being moved.

Subsequently, the Stanley Park Hollow Tree Conservation Society began the work on the Hollow Tree as outlined in the attached report (Appendix).

Wooden braces were attached to the previously installed collar to temporary stabilize the tree, and the overgrowing hemlock tree was felled and disentangled from the remaining Hollow Tree root structure. This root structure was partially excavated and the findings make up part of the attached report.

## **DISCUSSION**

The attached report from the Stanley Park Hollow Tree Conservation Society was received by staff on October 14, 2008 for their review. The report proposes that the Hollow Tree would be returned to a vertical orientation, using two hydraulic jacks installed within the current bracing system, and that once in position it would be stabilized by discreet metal attachments to a foundation made of steel micro piles and the temporary external braces would then be removed. For staff to assess this proposal two components are needed; first a detailed procedure signed off by a structural engineer for the process of moving the snag into a vertical position. Secondly, there is a need for a sealed set of drawings and specifications for the design of a supporting structure which will safely retain the Hollow Tree in its new vertical condition. Without these facets of the report, staff cannot comment on the stability of the proposed solution, and any approval should await this material, as was intended in the enabling Board resolution.

Staff note that any substantive landscape change for the area implied in the fundraising plan (Appendix A, page 26) should await a detailed staff report once the engineering reports have been received and approved.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the absence of critical structural engineering components of this report, there remains inadequate information for the Park Board staff to judge the merits of the conservation proposal and provide advice to the Board.

Prepared by:

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