

November 1, 2024

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Director, Park Operations

SUBJECT : **Hemlock Looper Risk Mitigation Update - Helicopter Supported Tree Removal - Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

This memo is to update the Commissioners on the Phase 2 Hemlock Looper risk mitigation work occurring within Stanley Park – specifically, the area above the steep slopes adjacent to the northwest seawall. This area requires helicopter assisted removal and temporary Seawall closure.

Background

Phase 2 of the risk mitigation work includes the slopes above the seawall west of Prospect Point and extending to just north of Third Beach (see Figure 1). These steep slopes are a sensitive geotechnical area in which traditional tree removal techniques pose additional hazards to workers, the seawall, and the slopes.



Figure 1: Helicopter-Supported Tree Removal at Stanley Park northwest seawall

Rationale

The use of a helicopter for Phase 2 of the project is essential to address several key considerations:

- **Steep, Inaccessible Terrain:** Geotechnically sensitive slopes prevent machinery access and trees that fall on the slope during operations could trigger slope failures.



- **Worker Safety:** Removing dead trees, which may be structurally compromised, necessitates escape routes for on-the-ground workers to prevent injury if trees fail unpredictably during operations. Controlled removal of trees while supported from above with a helicopter significantly reduces the risk for workers on-the-ground.
- **Public Asset Protection:** Controlled removal of trees also mitigates the risk of logs rolling down-slope and potentially damaging the seawall and foreshore.
- **Geotechnical Considerations:** Careful, staged removal via helicopter will help mitigate risks of destabilizing the slope and increasing erosion.

Considerations

- All permits have been obtained and users of this shared airspace have been notified via the permitting process so they may proceed without interruption.
- All helicopter work will be periodic from Monday – Friday (8am - 5pm) in accordance with the City's noise control by-law.
- Traffic management plans supported by on-site personnel will be shared on social media and on digital signage set up around the park to inform and guide park users of potential impacts.
- Archaeological assessments have been completed and where required; archaeological monitoring protocols will be in place during the tree removal phase.
- Bird surveys will be completed prior to any required tree removal to adhere to Provincial and Federal laws and regulations.
- Each tree removal will be identified in advance by an accredited Tree Risk Assessor.

Timeline

The seawall will be temporarily closed from November 4 to December 6. The closure has been minimized such that the annual rock-scaling work program being undertaken by the Park Development team and the hazard tree removal will be happening concurrently.

The helicopter-supported work will take place periodically between November 14 and December 6 to safely remove and transport hazard trees from the cliffs above the seawall to the Prospect Point café parking lot for sorting. The Prospect Point café parking lot will be closed from November 14 – December 16 to support this operation. Key stakeholders are aware of the works and have confirmed that it will not impact their operations.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amit Gandha', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Amit Gandha
Director, Park Operations
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Copy to: PB Senior Leadership Team
PB Communications
Joe McLeod, Associate Director, UF Operations
Tina Fernandes, Project Manager II, UF Operations
Ben Ozols-Mongeau, Planner I, UF Operations