

Oaklyn Residents,

We have received several emails and have seen posts on social media regarding the removal of trees on our streets here in town because of the ongoing sewer project.

In the plans for the sewer project it shows 36 trees and 3 stumps being removed and 38 new trees being planted to replace the old trees. The new trees will be 1 1/3" to 2" diameter caliper and 8' to 10' high.

We have been in communication with our borough engineer and they will continue notifying all residents daily before the tree removal process commences on their properties.

The residents of Oaklyn, including mayor and council, value the importance of these trees that line our streets and the positive impact they have here directly in town and in the bigger worldwide environmental picture. We also respect the ideas, opinions and priorities of Oaklyn residents.

We hear and understand residents' concerns and realize many are upset that trees are being removed. They have voiced that they are unhappy with the changes which will occur to the look of their streets, the impact on local wildlife and effect on our environment.

We have evaluated the pros and cons related to a project of this size including, the vital importance of these sewer upgrades, the impact on the community and the cost to our residents.

With that in mind, there are several key reasons why these trees are being removed as part of our sanitary sewer collection systems rehabilitation project.

The roots of these trees pose a significant threat to the longevity of the sewer being installed while also posing a continued risk of causing a backup for homeowners due to root intrusion. Not to mention, the roots also affect the water, gas and sewer laterals of our residents. We also noticed a couple of the trees were starting to rot at their bases which would pose potential home and power line damage.

While protecting the sewer is the primary reason for the tree removals, the other factor to consider is the condition and safety of the sidewalks. Some of these large trees have lifted the sidewalks more than 6 inches above the surrounding sidewalk elevations, creating a significant hazard for pedestrians, bikers, etc. While maintaining the trees and sidewalks is the homeowner's responsibility, we often try to remedy these issues whenever practical to eliminate hazards to local residents. In areas where the sidewalk, curb, or gutter has been damaged by the existing tree, it is often not possible to replace the curb and sidewalk without significantly compromising the root system. Therefore, despite the trees being healthy, they must be removed. We make every effort to retain as many trees as possible. However, if there is any risk of damage to the newly installed infrastructure, or any risk of compromising the existing tree, the only reasonable path forward is to remove the trees.

Again mayor and council understand how concerned and upset some residents are right now and we want everyone to know that we value and love the trees for which our town is named. We wish we could have saved them all, but that was not a feasible option in rehabilitating our outdated sanitary sewer system. Our hope is that we have an updated sewer system for many decades to come along with newly planted trees that will grow and line our streets.

Sincerely,

Mayor Brandley and Oaklyn Council