



CITY OF HARRISONBURG PUBLIC WORKS

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City to Replace Aging Court Square Spruce Tree In Coming Days

HARRISONBURG, Va. – The City of Harrisonburg has made the decision to replace the aging and in-decline spruce tree on the south side of Court Square that has long served as the gathering place for the City's Holiday Parade & Tree Lighting celebration each December.

The tree, a familiar piece of Downtown that has been a part of families' holiday celebration for many years, has reached the end of its viable lifespan. Harrisonburg Public Works will plant in its place a 22-foot Japanese cedar (*Cryptomeria japonica 'Yoshino'*), a fast-growing, large specimen tree known for its resilience and minimal insect and disease concerns. Harrisonburg Electric Commission has taken down holiday lights from the tree, with its removal scheduled for the week of Jan. 26.

This work will be done in accordance with a long-term landscape planning effort focused on tree health, sustainability and the future of Downtown green space – and aligns with a new Court Square landscape plan currently being developed in partnership with the Virginia Tech Community Design Center. The full landscape plan is expected to be finished in the spring of 2026.

Community members who have photos or memories of the tree they would like to share are invited to email them to Public Works Outreach and Communications Specialist Maya Waid for possible posting on the City's social media accounts.

"The Court Square spruce has been an important part of Downtown traditions for many years, and we understand the connection many in our community, and certainly within our own department and organization, have to it," Harrisonburg Public Works Greenspace Manager Jeremy Harold said. "It's been important to our team to make sure its removal and replacement is done with that history, and the importance of this as a gathering place for all in The Friendly City, in mind. Replacing the tree now allows us to responsibly plan for the future of Court Square while continuing holiday traditions with a healthy, long-lasting tree for years to come."



Harrisonburg City staff and Rockingham County landscape staff selected the replacement tree (above) from Grelan Nursery in Orange County, VA.

City staff have partnered with Rockingham County landscape staff to select a replacement tree from Grelen Nursery in Orange County, Virginia. The new planting will complement recent landscape improvements completed by Rockingham County around the courthouse building.

Following removal, the existing spruce tree will be repurposed through Harrisonburg's Urban Wood Program, which gives new life to trees removed from public spaces by transforming them into usable wood products. More information about the program is available at harrisonburgva.gov/urban-wood-program.

The new Japanese cedar is anticipated to be planted by Feb. 27, 2026. Public Works is coordinating with Parks and Recreation to continue the tree lighting tradition during the holiday season.

For more information about this project, community members are encouraged to contact Harrisonburg Public Works.

Written or oral questions and comments may be submitted to Public Works Outreach and Communications Specialist Maya Waid by emailing maya.waid@harrisonburgva.gov or calling 540-434-5928.

The City of Harrisonburg is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to approximately 56,879 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is available online at www.HarrisonburgVA.gov.

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