

# PROPER TREE CARE

July 22, 2022

Newberry Station HOA  
c/o Lisa Horton, Property Manager  
Lorton, VA 22079

RE: Tree Assessment: 2022 Update

Dear Ms. Horton,

I have completed my review of the trees and forests at Newberry Station HOA. What follows is a summary of my observations and discussion of the relevant issues. Included in this report is the list of trees identified as priorities for work in 2022, a pdf map of each tree location, a spreadsheet with the detailed data and pricing estimates for each tree, and a set of specifications for bidding and completing the work recommended. All the trees identified for work have been marked with an aluminum numbered tag which will be referenced in our detailed reports. All the work we identified will be broken down into different priorities, which should help with your budgeting and timelines for completing the recommended tasks.

All work was prioritized in the following manner:

**Priority 1:** Tree should be addressed as soon as scheduling may allow due to potential safety risks.

**Priority 2:** Tree should be treated as soon as scheduling and budgets allow to improve health and vigor and to prevent the loss of an asset to the property. With enough time, these trees will deteriorate to the point they need to be removed.

**Priority 3:** Tree should be addressed as budgets allow due to significantly poor aesthetic or other subjective considerations that warrant its treatment in relation to the community.



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**Summary of work**

After visiting the property, my assessment is that the trees in community natural areas are generally in good health, while many of the street trees are in poor to fair condition. There is also the concern of the mature pines that are in generally fair condition, but have structural concerns due to their location.

There were few priority 1 items compared to priority 2 or 3, which is a good sign for the health of the trees in your community. The work with the most immediate priority consists of identifying hazardous trees and making recommendations to mitigate their risk to the community, so the less priority 1 work we find, the more proactive the community is being about their tree health, investing in their trees through things like fertilization, pest treatments, and mulching.

These proactive treatments fall into the category of priority 2 work, which is detailed for each tree and broken down by different treatments to help communities like yours improve the health of important landscape trees which are showing signs of stress. More general recommendations for your community include expanding the mulch beds of significant trees and removing the vines from trees in the natural areas.

**Budget**

Estimated Budgets for Newberry Station Square Tree Work 2022

Priority	Remove	Treat Pests	Fertilize	Cambistat	Prune	Total
1	\$3,500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$	\$3,500
2	\$575	\$8,460	\$7,896	\$3,348	\$8,100	\$28,379
3	\$8,250	\$0	\$	\$	\$1,600	\$9,850
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,325</b>	<b>\$8,460</b>	<b>\$7,896</b>	<b>\$3,348</b>	<b>\$9,700</b>	<b>\$41,729</b>

The costs associated with each item are estimates. The spreadsheet detailing the list of work is attached both as a .pdf and as an excel file. You can use these as appropriate to secure contracting services to carry out the work.



## Discussion of Listed Work

Your community has relatively few priority 1 items, but due to their danger, this work should be completed before any other to prevent damage or injury.

The priority 1 items consist mainly of removing hazardous trees (dead or declining trees that are in an area where their failure has a significant chance of causing property damage or injury) or pruning back hazardous branches and/or dead wood.

Priority 2 work is mostly concerned with safety pruning treating the large oaks, pines, and maples in and around the community. Treatments in this category include pruning, fertilization, pest control, Cambistat treatments, and mulching. These items in combination will provide the best opportunity to help the identified trees overcome the obvious stress they are under. I have identified the trees that are stressed and if left untreated, will start to decline and will eventually have to be removed. I mentioned in the field that pin oaks are very often affected by BLS (bacterial leaf scorch), which is caused by a bacterium that blocks vascular tissue, leading to stress and if not treated, decline of the tree. There is no cure, but research has shown Cambistat to be a very helpful therapeutic treatment to improve the health and vigor of these trees.

Mulching the trees in these circumstances should not be overlooked. It looks as if this has been done regularly in the well-travelled areas, but the mulch beds are much smaller than recommended in certain areas and nonexistent in others. Increasing the size of the beds to those noted in the contractor specifications or as close as you can get to them will help the soil retain moisture, increase soil organic matter over time, and reduce erosion, which will provide a much better growing environment for the trees in addition to removing the thankless task of growing grass so close to a tree, which will just compete with the tree for nutrients.

Existing grass does not need to be removed when mulching, since mulching to the depth specified should eliminate the turf without herbicides, tilling, or sod cutting. Though we recommended mulching for each tree we identified as currently stressed and in the landscaped beds, expanding all the mulch beds until they match the listed specifications would help other trees in a similar fashion. I also recommend using the wood chips generated by the removal of the hazardous trees as mulch where possible, which will help limit the amount of new mulch the HOA will have to buy for this project.

Fertilization is necessary in the landscaped areas where leaves are removed regularly, interrupting the natural cycling of nutrients. Nitrogen is the primary nutrient that limits tree growth and vitality, which can be replaced with a slow-release fertilizer. There are several trees listed for fertilization in the spreadsheet that are stressed and will benefit from additional nitrogen applied consistent with current standards. The contractor should follow the fertilization requirements in the specifications provided. I would also recommend spreading a slow-release 10-10-10 fertilizer around all landscape trees (all areas that are covered in canopy) in the spring every couple of years at a minimum. You can spread it on top of the ground or under the mulch whenever you put new mulch down.

If a tree becomes stressed, it will be more susceptible to secondary and tertiary problems, including insect attack. A prophylactic treatment has been recommended to raise the stressed trees' resistance to insect



attack, since once a tree gets borers, its removal is inevitable in most circumstances. Therefore, this preventative should also be addressed with the fertilization and Cambistat treatments to prevent additional stress to the trees and prevent them from declining further.

If these proactive items in the recommended work listing are not addressed, additional trees will die that could have been kept, and their contribution to the landscape and character of the community will be lost. Budgets spent to maintain this asset are more important than many people realize. Research clearly shows that trees contribute significantly to property values and to the health of the neighborhood. It is important to maintain the large significant trees and to replace them when they die in order to maximize the benefits they contribute to the overall health of the community.

I mentioned a few recommended tree species in the field during our walk-through, but I'll reiterate them so you have a record. For smaller trees I recommend sassafras, common serviceberry, and American holly, and for larger trees I recommend black gum as a showy tree, or a weeping willow since they have an extensive root system that would help with erosion. I wouldn't plant willows around drainage structures though for the same reason.

A less prominent, but still important, issue to address is the vines growing up many of the trees in the natural areas. These vines weigh down the tree's branches especially during frost or snow events, increasing the likelihood of branch failure and stressing the tree they are growing on due to competition for light. Simply cutting the vine near the base of the tree and allowing the vines to die naturally is a sufficient treatment for this problem. I haven't added a line item for this because it should be included in your invasive removal contract. The board will have to have this line item on the contract annually to keep the invasives under control over time.



### Specific Concerns of the Community



- Bradford pears (#112-114): very poor condition and these trees are invasive. Recommend removing and replacing with another species.
- Red maple in front of 8237 station house ct (no tag): low limb with hollow pockets over cars- recommend removing limb at trunk.
- Dogwood at 6944 Hamilton court (#133): very poor condition, recommend fertilizing and watering at a minimum
- Spruce at 8217 stationhouse ct. (no tag): suppressed by adjacent trees, recommend watering and fertilizing and seeing if it perks back up
- Red maple in backyard of 6908 Hamilton (#130): large dead wood, dieback in canopy, generally poor condition. Recommend treating with insecticide, fertilizer, and watering during the summer. I also recommend monitoring this tree due to its size and location.



- Cherry trees on 6902 Hamilton, front and back (no tag): tree in front should have vines removed, tree in rear yard should be removed
- Cherry tree in front of 8301 Stationhouse ct (no tag): fertilize and water at a minimum
- Off-site trees: write a letter to the owner of the trees asking them to remove or prune them. If they say no, send them another letter making them aware that they are liable for damages
- General notes on pine trees: There are a number of trees that we discussed in the field as possible hazardous trees. I have listed the trees with no glaring structural problems as priority 3 in the spreadsheet since they aren't immediately hazardous. I believe that they are a valid concern though due to species, condition, location, and in some cases lean. These trees are a

## Conclusions

Though these trees have been maintained relatively well throughout the years, there are a few things to focus on over the next year. First, removing the hazardous trees, then implementing the recommended treatments in the attached excel sheet and applying fertilizer and expanding the mulch beds in the spring. Make sure that any contractors you hire are following the specifications for pruning, and start removing trouble vines from trees in or near the natural areas as the budgets allow. Planning ahead and budgeting for all of this will help you save the assets you have and improve the quality of the community for the future. If you have any specific questions about items, please contact me. I am very happy to respond.

Respectfully,



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