

131 trees will fall while HRSD replaces sewer pipe — but they'll be replaced



An excavator removes the trees from the median along Warwick Blvd. between Boxley Blvd. and Maxwell Lane Wednesday morning November 2, 2016. The trees are being removed to make way for a sewage pipe project that will run down Warwick.



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The Hampton Roads Sanitation District is razing 131 trees on Warwick Boulevard to build a new sewer pipeline, but don't fret — 170 will be planted in their place.

The sanitation district, which treats the region's wastewater, is in the middle of an estimated \$8 million project to install a new sanitary sewer pipeline. Once finished, it will reroute flows from a pipeline built in the 1970s that runs along Scufflefield Road and straight west toward Riverview Park, according to the project information page on the HRSD website.

The new, 10,300-foot pipeline will essentially go around the current one. It will run under the median of Warwick Boulevard near Scufflefield, up toward Boxley Boulevard, west toward Menchville Road, past

Menchville High School and ending near Riverview Park, an HRSD project map shows.

"Pipelines have a targeted life of 50 years, so those constructed in the 1970s are nearing the end of their anticipated life," said Nancy Munnikhuysen, HRSD spokeswoman.

On Tuesday, crews started removing the holly and crape myrtle trees along Warwick's median between Boxley and 200 feet past Scufflefield to prepare for construction, Munnikhuysen said.

Crews have removed trees they won't replace around the M.D. Express Urgent Care facility and the Dairy Queen on Warwick Boulevard near Boxley, Munnikhuysen said. They won't be replaced because HRSD needs to be able to access the pipeline somehow for repairs or emergency situations.

Crews will start the second phase of tree removal in three to four weeks, which will be past Scufflefield and end near Peninsula Memorial Park, she said.

HRSD's project will pay to replace those trees and add 40 more. Newport News city staff made recommendations on what the new 170 trees should be: 70 muskogee crape myrtles, 24 hightower willow oaks, 22 Chinese pistaches, 14 brandywine red Maples, 30 bosque lacebark elms and 10 regal prince columnar oaks, according to a statement from HRSD.

The city chose a much more diverse group of species so that diseases and pests can't take over the whole lot — something that can happen easily with one or two types, said Carolyn Talbert, a landscape planner with the city, in an email. They also considered the look of each tree and chose ones that "we've had good success in establishing and sustaining the street adversities of hot, dry, salt tolerant," she said.

The replanting will happen after the project is done next winter at a "seasonally optimal time of the year," according to the statement.

So far, crews have installed segments of the pipeline along Menchville — done this past spring — and have been working on Boxley, Munnikhuysen said. There are still two sets of crews working on Boxley.

The current pipeline won't be removed and will instead be filled with concrete so that it doesn't collapse, Munnikhuysen said.

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