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To: redriverbird@mac.com
Subject: Voigt Park

Key Points for talking about Voight Park

There seems to be a clash of values when it comes to park renovations. Many of the city parks are being revamped and changed. One of the things that I love about the City of Detroit is that there is a wildness to it. Some people think that natural spaces need to be tamed and well manicured. Some people, would prefer that nature have its way with natural spaces.

Detroit's parks have largely been left alone for the past 40 or so years. This has been great for the trees in these parks as trees prefer less maintenance to more. They like leaf litter beneath their canopies, deadwood and cavities offer homes to wildlife, the absence of pruning allow the trees to do the maximum amount of photosynthesizing, and less stringent concrete and asphalt maintenance allows roots to grow where they like and take up water from where they need to.

It sounds like many of the residents around Voight Park like the wildness of the park as it is, they like the mature trees full and healthy, they like that there is no interference from brightly colored structures, they like the wildlife that a space like this supports.

Overall, the trees on this site are healthy. Trees benefit us in many different ways, please visit <https://www.arboday.org/> for more information. You can use some of the statistics here to make a case for why mature trees should not be sacrificed in order to make changes to the park.

Additional things to consider and advocate for while undergoing changes are as follows.

1) Stay outside of the drip zone.

If there are going to be new structures or construction of any kind, including additional sidewalks, the construction should be as far away as possible from the trunk of the tree. The drip zone is the outer reaches of the canopy, construction should take place outside of the drip zone of all trees, farther out than that is even better.

2) Compaction is a threat.

Heavy machinery can impact the soil. It can compact soil under trees and make it inhospitable for the tree to continue living. Heavy machinery has no place in a park with mature trees and landscaping. If heavy machines are necessary, they also should stay well outside the drip zone of each tree.

3) No grade changes.

Mature trees cannot handle grade changes. Park replanning should not involve changes to the grade of the soil.

4) Mature trees help manage excess water.

A mature tree drinks between 5,000 and 15,000 gallons of water per year. This is per ONE tree. The benefit of these trees should not be overlooked when considering solutions to drainage problems on site.

Hope this helps. Let me know if you have any questions.

Best,
Emily Brent

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Quality tree and soil care

