

## **Application to Remove a Private Tree - 56 Cassandra Boulevard**

**Date:** October 23, 2017

**To:** North York Community Council

**From:** Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

**Wards:** Ward 34 - Don Valley East

### **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned tree located at 56 Cassandra Boulevard. The application indicates the reason for removal is that the tree is too large and that a resident at 56 Cassandra Boulevard has an allergy to pollen from pine trees (*Pinus* spp.).

The subject tree is a white spruce (*Picea glauca*), measuring 41.5 cm in diameter. The Private Tree By-law does not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned tree located at 56 Cassandra Boulevard.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

### **DECISION HISTORY**

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There is no decision history regarding this tree removal permit application.

### **COMMENTS**

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Urban Forestry received an application for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned tree located in the side yard at 56 Cassandra Boulevard. The subject tree is a white spruce tree measuring 41.5 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns that the tree is too large and that a resident at 56 Cassandra Boulevard has an allergy to pollen from pine trees.

The arborist report that accompanied the application noted the tree had good health and structure and assessed this tree to be in good condition.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally. The Private Tree By-law does not have a mechanism that would allow the removal of the subject tree based on the concerns stated in the tree removal permit application, including the removal of a tree to mitigate the risk of an allergic response. Many individuals with allergies live throughout the City, including those that are sensitive to pollen produced by trees and other plants, including grasses. Thus it is essentially impossible to remove all the possible sources of plant-produced allergens.

Trees are essential to improving air quality as they provide a constant source of oxygen and filter harmful pollutants from the air we breathe. The direct benefits derived from improving the health of our urban forest helps to improve the lives of its citizens, especially those suffering from allergies and other respiratory disorders such as asthma.

When reviewing applications for tree removal, Urban Forestry staff are guided by City policies and by-laws including the *City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 813, Article III*, more commonly referred to as the Private Tree By-law. The Private Tree By-law does not have a mechanism that would allow the removal of the subject tree based on the concerns stated in the tree removal permit application.

As required under *Section 813-19 of City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 813, Trees, Article III*, a Notice of application sign was posted on the subject property for the minimum 14-day period in order to provide an opportunity for comment by the community. No comments were received in response to the posting.

A permit to remove the tree was denied by Urban Forestry. The owner is appealing this decision. Should City Council approve this request for tree removal, in accordance with *Section 813-20 of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees, Article III*, permit issuance must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. As a condition of permit issuance, the applicant is proposing to plant one (1) replacement tree. However, in this instance it would be appropriate for the applicant to provide five (5) replacement trees which can be achieved in a combination of on-site planting and cash-in-lieu of planting.

Trees improve the quality of urban life and contribute greatly to our sense of community. They help to soften the hard lines of built form and surfaces in an urban setting. Trees contribute to the overall character and quality of neighbourhoods. Studies suggest that social benefits such as crime reduction and neighbourhood cohesion can be attributed to the presence of trees.

The environmental benefits of trees include cleansing of air, noise and wind reduction, and protection from ultraviolet radiation. Trees reduce rainwater runoff thereby reducing soil erosion and lowering storm water management costs. They also contribute to moderation of temperature extremes and reduction of the urban heat island effect by providing shade during the summer.

Trees provide many economic benefits including the enhancement of property values. Homes with mature trees have higher value when compared to similar types of homes in similar locations without trees. Mature trees are associated with reduced home energy consumption. Air conditioning costs are lower in a home shaded by trees and heating costs are reduced when trees mitigate the cooling effects of wind in winter. Trees are a community resource which can make the city more attractive to investors, tourists and prospective residents thus contributing to growth and prosperity.

It is the goal of the City of Toronto to increase the City's tree canopy to 40 per cent. The loss of trees in the City due to the ice storm experienced in late December 2013, compounded with additional tree loss due to the presence of the Asian longhorned beetle and the emerald ash borer make the preservation of all healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The white spruce tree at 56 Cassandra Boulevard is a valuable part of the urban forest. With proper care and maintenance this tree has the potential to provide the property owner and the surrounding community with benefits for many more years. In accordance with the City Council-approved Strategic Forest Management Plan, Toronto's Official Plan and the Private Tree By-law, this tree should not be removed.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Jason Doyle  
Director, Urban Forestry  
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 - Photograph of the white spruce tree measuring 41.5 cm in diameter.

Attachment 1- Photograph of the white spruce tree measuring 41.5 cm in diameter.

