

Application to Remove a City Tree - 4 Clovelly Avenue

Date: December 8, 2017

To: North York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 15 - Eglinton-Lawrence

SUMMARY

The report recommends that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) City-owned tree located adjacent to the property at 4 Clovelly Avenue. The application indicates the reasons for removal are that the tree has a poor form, is unsightly and diseased, sheds branches, and leans.

The subject tree is a Colorado spruce (*Picea pungens*), measuring 37 cm in diameter. The Street Tree By-law does not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) City-owned tree located at 4 Clovelly Avenue.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

DECISION HISTORY

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

COMMENTS

Urban Forestry received an application for a permit to remove one (1) City-owned tree located adjacent to the property 4 Clovelly Avenue. The subject tree is a Colorado spruce tree measuring 37 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns that the tree has poor form, is unsightly and diseased, sheds branches, and leans.

The arborist report that accompanied the application assessed the tree to be in fair condition. The report further states that the tree has lost its central leader which may have been caused by spruce tip gall (*Adelges abietis* or *Adelges cooleyi*). The report also describes an infestation of bark beetles contributing to a sappy discharge, a heavy lean and falling branches.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it was healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally. Urban Forestry staff did not find any signs of spruce tip gall or bark beetle damage. Spruce tip gall is a disfigurement of the new growth of spruce trees caused by aphid-like insects. These galls may cause some distortion of the tree form in extremely heavy infestations, but do not cause significant damage to host trees. Bark beetles are insects whose larvae feed on the live wood of trees located just under the bark, which can lead to tree mortality in heavy infestations. The loss of the central leader has had a negligible effect on the overall health of the tree.

The subject tree has a slight lean, however, there was no evidence of heaving or other root damage that would indicate potential tree failure. At the time of inspection Urban Forestry did not identify any defects that would indicate that the tree is likely to fail and did not observe evidence of branches or excessive amounts of debris falling from the tree. Removal of debris such as leaf litter or other natural elements from the landscape, or from within eavestroughs and downspouts is considered part of performing routine property maintenance and is a responsibility of all property owners within the City of Toronto.

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, Trees, Article II*, more commonly referred to as the Street Tree By-law. The Street 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.

A permit to remove the tree was denied by Urban Forestry. The owner is appealing this decision.

Should City Council approve this request for removal of the City-owned tree, in accordance with *Section 813-10.B of City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 813, Trees, Article II*, permit issuance must be conditional upon the owner providing payment of the appraised value of the tree to be removed (\$1,884.00), agreeing to have the tree removed at their expense, as well as providing satisfactory replacement planting. In this instance, it would be appropriate for the owner to provide five (5) replacement trees,

which can be achieved in a combination of on-site planting and cash-in-lieu of planting. The owner will also be required to provide a tree planting security deposit to cover the cost of replacement for a period of two years for all trees to be planted on City property.

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 Colorado spruce tree at 4 Clovelly Avenue 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 Street Tree By-law, this tree should not be removed.

CONTACT

Tara Bobie, Supervisor Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry,
Tel: 416-395-6134, Email: Tara.Bobie@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Photograph of the Colorado spruce tree measuring 37 cm in diameter

Attachment 1 - Photograph of the Colorado spruce tree measuring 37 cm in diameter

