15 Tordale Crescent - Application to Remove a Private Tree

**SUMMARY**

This report recommends that City Council deny the permit for an application to remove one (1) privately owned tree. The owner has requested tree removal due to concerns with the tree interfering with the electrical service line coming into the house and roots damaging the driveway.

The subject tree is a Colorado spruce (*Picea pungens*), measuring 39 cm in diameter, located at the front of the property. This tree is in fair to good condition. Urban Forestry does not support removal of this tree.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. City Council deny the permit to remove the privately owned Colorado spruce tree at 15 Tordale Crescent.

**Financial Impact**

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

**COMMENTS**
An application was received for the removal of a 39 cm diameter Colorado spruce tree located in the front yard of 15 Tordale Crescent. The property owner is requesting tree removal due to concerns with the tree interfering with the electrical service line coming into the house and roots damaging the driveway.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and found that it is healthy and in fair to good condition, with some minor dieback in the crown. The tree has been pruned to approximately 4 m above ground level. There are some branches touching the electrical service line to the house. It would be appropriate to prune branches to provide clearance around the service line, using proper arboricultural techniques.

The roots of spruce trees are not usually aggressive. No evidence has been provided to conclude that the cracks in the driveway are due to tree roots. Asphalt and concrete can crack for many reasons such as age, insufficient base material, an incorrect mix of paving material, and freeze and thaw cycles as we experienced this past winter. It is not uncommon for pavement to crack where there are no trees in the vicinity. Cracks as evidenced in Attachment 2 are sometimes caused by heavy equipment or vehicles being driven or parked next to the edge of a driveway. A suitable response to cracked pavement is to check for tree roots when making repair. If tree roots are found once pavement has been lifted, a qualified arborist can properly cut small roots and if larger roots are found, determine if it is possible to shave down the larger roots to provide a flat surface under new pavement.

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 from the community.

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

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, approval must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. The property owner provided $583.00 as cash-in-lieu of tree planting, requesting that Urban Forestry plant a replacement tree elsewhere in the community. However, in the interest in expanding the City's tree canopy, it is more appropriate to require replacement planting on private property. Should Council approve this request for tree removal, approval must be conditional upon the owner agreeing to plant one large maturing tree on the property, and the cash-in-lieu of tree planting payment be returned.

Trees filter the air, removing small particulate matter (e.g., dust, ash, dirt, pollen, smoke) from the air and releasing oxygen in return. Coniferous trees such as spruce are particularly efficient at removing particulate matter from the air.
Trees are a community resource, which can make the city more attractive to investors, tourists and prospective residents, thus contributing to growth and prosperity.

The Colorado spruce tree at 15 Tordale Crescent is a significant and valuable part of the urban forest. With proper care and maintenance it should continue to provide benefits to the property owner and the surrounding community for many years to come. Urban Forestry therefore cannot support removal of this tree.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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Jason Doyle
Director of Urban Forestry

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1  Photo of 39 cm diameter Colorado spruce tree at 15 Tordale Crescent
Attachment 2  Photos of electrical service line through tree branches and crack in driveway
39 cm diameter Colorado spruce tree fronting 15 Tordale Crescent
Electrical service line through the branches of 39 cm diameter Colorado spruce tree fronting 15 Tordale Crescent

base of 39 cm diameter Colorado spruce tree

crack at edge of driveway