



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### 115 Prince George Drive - Application to Remove a City Owned Tree

<b>Date:</b>	January 19, 2015
<b>To:</b>	Etobicoke-York Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
<b>Wards:</b>	Ward 3 –Etobicoke Centre
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:\2015\Cluster A\PFR\EY04-021815-AFS#20421

#### SUMMARY

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This report requests that City Council deny the application to remove one (1) City owned tree in front of 115 Prince George Drive. The applicant is requesting permission to remove the tree for several reasons, including sap and cones falling onto vehicles, roots damaging an asphalt driveway, and competition with neighbouring trees and vegetation, impeding the growth of grass.

The tree in question is private Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) measuring 55 cm in diameter. This tree is healthy and maintainable. Urban Forestry does not support the removal of this tree.

#### 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 Norway spruce tree fronting 115 Prince George Drive.

#### Financial Impact

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

## COMMENTS

An application was received from the property owner of 115 Prince George Drive for a permit to remove two trees, a City owned Norway spruce tree measuring 55 cm in diameter, and a private catalpa tree in the rear yard measuring 60 cm in diameter. A permit was issued for removal of the catalpa (*Catalpa speciosa*) tree due to its poor condition. The application indicates the reason for removal of the City owned Norway spruce tree is due to the dropping of sap and cones onto parked vehicles, tree roots heaving the asphalt driveway and competition between the tree and other vegetation leading to unsightly turf in the front yard.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and found the Norway spruce to be healthy and in good condition structurally and botanically. There is insufficient justification to support tree removal. A permit to remove the tree was denied. The owner is appealing this decision.

All trees shed debris such as leaves, twigs and fruit that some consider undesirable, but is part of the necessary upkeep required of all property owners.

It is a fallacy that roots from an individual tree can absorb all water and nutrients from the soil leaving little behind for turf or other vegetation. Roots from turf typically grow within the top several inches of soil and most tree roots are located in the upper 0.6 m of soil. Turf will exhibit symptoms from lack of water much sooner than a mature tree would. Where vegetation is suffering from lack of water, the solution is to provide adequate watering during hot, dry weather.

No damage to the driveway was evident at the time of inspection. The roots of spruce trees are not usually aggressive. Paving can lift and crack due for several reasons. Tree roots are often not the cause. Should any paving develop cracks an appropriate response 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.

Should City Council approve this request for tree removal, in accordance with *Section 813-10 of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees, Article II*, approval is conditional upon payment for the appraised tree value and the costs for a replacement tree to be planted by the City. The applicant would be responsible for tree removal and all associated costs, as well as submission of an Agreement for Contractors to Perform Arboricultural Services on City Owned Street Trees prior to tree removal, to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

Trees improve the quality of urban life and contribute greatly to our sense of community. They are aesthetically pleasing and 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 directly 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 rain water 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 break the winter cooling effects of wind.

Trees are a community resource, which can make the city more attractive to investors, tourists and prospective residents, thus contributing to growth and prosperity.

Urban Forestry cannot support removal of this tree as it is in healthy and maintainable condition and there are viable alternatives which would see the tree preserved.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**



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Jason Doyle  
Director of Urban Forestry  
Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division

## **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1 - Photograph of the 55 cm diameter Norway spruce tree fronting 115 Prince George Drive.

55 cm diameter City owned Norway spruce tree fronting 115 Prince George Drive

