



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

397 St. Clements Avenue – Application to Remove a Private Tree

Date:	October 19, 2015
To:	North York Community Council
From:	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	Ward 16 – Eglinton-Lawrence
Reference Number:	P:\2015\Cluster A\PFR\NY10-111015-AFS#21946

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located in the front yard of 397 St. Clements Avenue. The owner is requesting removal to address concerns over falling needles and sap onto their driveway and vehicle, conflict with overhead wires, and damage caused to an adjacent walkway and retaining wall. The owner has also raised concerns that the tree may be unsafe due an easterly lean towards a neighbouring driveway and school.

The subject tree is a Colorado blue spruce (*Picea pungens* var. *glauca*) measuring 44 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry does not support removal of the subject tree as it is healthy, maintainable and growing in an appropriate location.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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 397 St. Clements Avenue.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

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

COMMENTS

An application was received from the property owner to remove one (1) privately-owned Colorado blue spruce tree measuring 44 cm in diameter, situated in the front yard of 397 St. Clements Avenue. The application for tree removal was made to address the property owner's concerns over falling needles and sap onto their driveway and vehicle, conflict with overhead wires, which run through the tree crown, and damage to a walkway and retaining wall. The property owner also raised concerns that the tree may be unsafe due to an easterly lean towards a neighbouring driveway and school.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined it is healthy both botanically and structurally. Minor defects observed include branch tip dieback, early stage *Cytospora* canker and a slight trunk lean to the east. The property owner advised that a large branch failure occurred during a wind storm in November 2014. At the time of inspection, Urban Forestry did not identify any defects that would indicate the tree is likely to fail.

The tree is growing in an appropriate location. Minor heaving of a walkway and displacement of a 0.5 m high retaining wall adjacent to the tree was observed; however, repairs can be made to the wall and walkway without requiring removal of the tree. Concerns regarding conflicts with overhead utility wires can be addressed through pruning to provide additional clearance if required.

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

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 approval 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 owner 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 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 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.

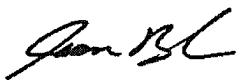
It is the goal of the City of Toronto to increase the city's tree canopy to 40 percent. The loss of trees in the city due to the ice storm experienced in late December 2013, the Asian longhorned beetle and the emerald ash borer make the preservation of all healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The Colorado blue spruce tree at 397 St. Clements 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. Urban Forestry, therefore, does not support removal of this tree.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE



Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Photograph of the 44 cm Colorado blue spruce tree.
Attachment 2 – Photographs showing damage to retaining wall (left) and walkway (right).