



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

41 Ferncroft Drive – Application to Remove a Private Tree

Date:	October 19, 2015
To:	Scarborough Community Council
From:	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Ward:	Ward 36 – Scarborough Southwest
Reference Number:	P:\2015\Cluster A\PFR\SC10-111015-AFS#21991

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located at 41 Ferncroft Drive. The owner is requesting removal of this tree because of the condition of the tree, concerns over potential tree failure, and the cost to maintain the tree.

The subject tree is a silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), measuring 107 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry does not support the removal of this 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 41 Ferncroft Drive.

Financial Impact

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

COMMENTS

An application was received from the property owners of 41 Ferncroft Drive for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree, situated at the rear of the property. The subject

tree is a silver maple, measuring 107 cm in diameter. The removal request has been made to address the property owners concerns that the tree is unhealthy and prone to failure, as well as the cost of tree maintenance.

The property owners are concerned that the tree is unhealthy as they have observed limb failure in the past. There is also the presence of fruiting bodies (mushrooms) near the tree, which they have identified as a sign of root rot. The arborist report that accompanied the application states the tree is exhibiting branch dieback due to root rot, which could be attributed to injury from past construction.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and found it to be healthy and in good condition both structurally and botanically. The tree has a slightly unbalanced crown due to competition from an adjacent tree which has since been removed. Notable deadwood was not observed, however any concerns over falling branches can be addressed through routine tree pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices.

Neither fruiting bodies nor other signs of root rot were observed on site at the time of inspection. Photographs of mushrooms growing in close proximity to the tree were provided to Urban Forestry by the property owners. A review of the photographs and additional inspection by City of Toronto Forest Health Care staff concluded that the tree is in good health and that the species of fruiting bodies shown in the photographs were not indicative of root rot.

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 required 14 day period, in order to provide the opportunity for comment by the community. No comments were received.

The permit to remove the tree was denied by Urban Forestry. The owners are 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*, approval must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. As a condition of permit issuance, the property owners have proposed to plant one (1) large growing shade tree. However, in this instance it would be appropriate for the owners to provide five (5) replacement trees, which can be achieved in a combination of planting on site 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 attributable 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 existing tree canopy to 40 percent. The loss of the tree canopy in the city due to the ice storm experienced in late December 2013, the Asian long-horned beetle, and the emerald ash borer make the preservation of all possible healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The silver maple tree at 41 Ferncroft Drive is a valuable part of the urban forest. With proper care and maintenance this tree has the potential to provide the property owners and the surrounding community with benefits for many more years. Urban Forestry, therefore, does not support removal of this tree.

CONTACT

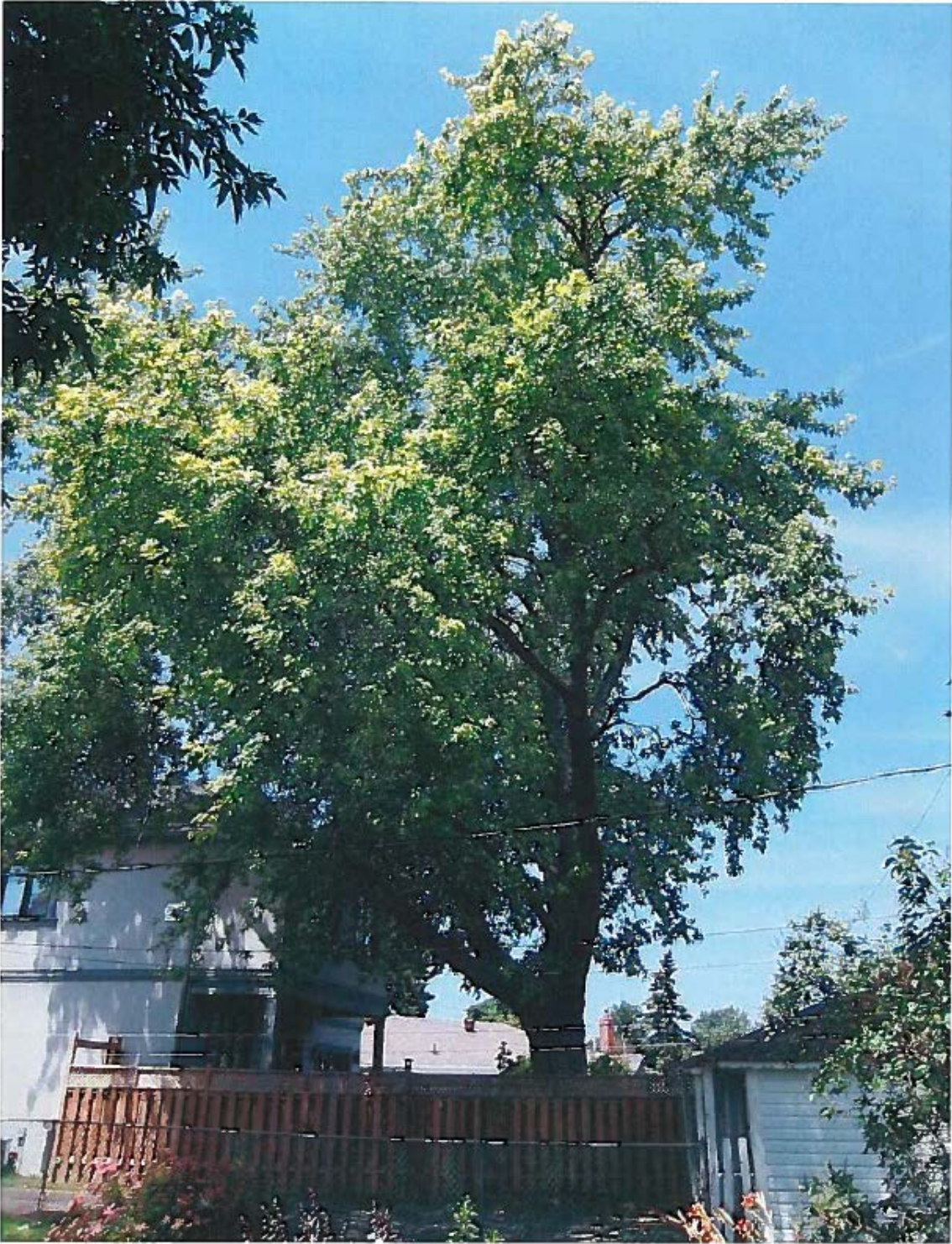
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SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Photograph of the 107 cm diameter silver maple tree
Attachment 2 – Photograph of the 107 cm diameter silver maple tree
Attachment 3 – Photograph of fruiting bodies in the backyard
Attachment 4 – Photograph of fruiting bodies in the backyard
Attachment 5 – Photograph of fruiting bodies in the backyard





Attachment 3



Attachment 4



