



**STAFF REPORT  
ACTION REQUIRED**

**50 McCowan Road – Application to Remove a Private Tree**

<b>Date:</b>	October 21, 2015
<b>To:</b>	Scarborough Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
<b>Ward:</b>	Ward 36 – Scarborough Southwest
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:\2015\Cluster A\PFR\SC10-101115-AFS#22024

**SUMMARY**

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This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located at 50 McCowan Road. The application indicates the reasons for removal are to accommodate construction of a new home and to address the nuisance from shade, falling needles and dripping sap.

The subject tree is a white spruce (*Picea glauca*), measuring 63 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**

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**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 50 McCowan Road.

**Financial Impact**

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

**COMMENTS**

An application was received from the applicant for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned white spruce tree, measuring 63 cm in diameter, situated at the front of the

property at 50 McCowan Road. The arborist report that accompanied the application states the reason for the requested tree removal is to accommodate demolition and construction of a new home.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and found that demolition of the previous house, and excavation for the new house foundation had already proceeded without a permit to remove or injure the tree. Excavation occurred approximately 1.5 m – 2 m from the base of the tree. However, it was determined by Urban Forestry staff that the tree had not been destabilized, and it is expected that the tree will withstand the injury and continue to survive well. No significant damage to the roots or crown of the tree were observed.

The property owner has provided additional reasons in support of the requested tree removal including installation of a sewer service and to address the nuisance caused from shade, falling needles and dripping sap.

The new sewer service can be installed without requiring the removal of the subject tree. All trees drop leaves, needles, nuts, fruit or other debris. The Private Tree By-law does not support tree removal to address the nuisance resulting from a tree's natural functions. Concerns expressed by the applicant regarding shade, falling needles and sap can be addressed through pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices and routine tree maintenance.

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 an opportunity for comment by the community. No comments were received.

The permit to remove this tree was denied by Urban Forestry. The owner is appealing that 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 three (3) trees. 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 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 the 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 healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The spruce tree at 50 McCowan Road 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**

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

## **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1 – photograph of the 63 cm diameter white spruce tree prior to demolition/construction.
- Attachment 2 – photograph of the 63 cm diameter white spruce tree after demolition of the existing house, and excavation for the new foundation.
- Attachment 3 – photograph of the base of the 63 cm diameter white spruce tree in relation to the foundation excavation.
- Attachment 4 – photograph of the 63 cm diameter white spruce tree after foundation construction, backfilling, and exterior wall construction.
- Attachment 5 – photograph of the base of the 63 cm diameter white spruce tree after foundation construction, backfilling, and exterior wall construction, showing space between crown of tree and exterior wall, and showing location of prior excavation.











