This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove two (2) private trees located in the rear 389 Strathmore Boulevard. The application indicates the reason for removal is that the trees are too close to the foundation of the neighbour's garage and as a result the tree's structural stability is questionable.

The subject trees are two (2) American elms (*Ulmus americana*) measuring 38 cm and 36 cm in diameter. The trees are healthy and in good condition structurally and botanically. There is no evidence that the trees are impacting the garage on the adjacent property or that the trees are structurally unstable. Urban Forestry does not support removal of these trees.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove the two (2) privately owned American elm trees at 389 Strathmore Boulevard.

**Financial Impact**

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

An application was received from the owner of 389 Strathmore Boulevard for a permit to remove three (3) trees located in the rear yard of the subject property. A 48 cm diameter Manitoba maple tree was confirmed by staff to be in poor condition and a permit was issued for its removal. The trees in question are two (2) American elms measuring 38 cm and 36 cm in diameter. The application indicates the reason for removal is that the trees are too close to foundation of their neighbour's garage and the structural stability of the trees is questionable.

The American elm trees are healthy and in good condition structurally and botanically. There are no obvious signs of decay, cavities, or structural weakness. The trees are not showing any evidence of Dutch Elm Disease (*Ophistoma ulmi*) (DED), a fungal disease affecting elm trees, which leads to tree mortality. The trees do not appear to be negatively affected by the presence of the garage, nor does the garage appear to be negatively affected by the presence of the trees.

The American elm is an especially valuable and significant tree. This species was almost completely destroyed during the 1960s and 1970s due to Dutch Elm Disease. This disease continues to infect and kill American elms across North America and very few mature elms have survived in Toronto. Due to the age and health of the subject trees, it is clear that they have been able to resist infection. It is not possible to predict whether these trees will survive indefinitely, but given their current health and demonstrated ability to resist the disease, preservation is recommended. American elms can live for several hundred years.

Those elms that have survived DED may represent a potential source of genetically resistant offspring, and therefore a means to reintroduce this stately species back into the urban forest. The University of Guelph is currently conducting research on DED resistance utilizing clones of such trees.

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 comments by the community. No comments were received by Urban Forestry.

A permit to remove the trees 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. As a condition of permit issuance, the property owner is proposing to plant one (1) red maple tree (*Acer rubrum*) in the front yard within City road allowance and pay cash-in-lieu for one (1) additional tree. In this instance, it would be appropriate to require the applicant to
provide six (6) replacement trees, in a combination of planting on private property and cash-in-lieu.

Toronto's Official Plan policy 3.4.1 supports the preservation of significant trees, citing their many benefits:

(1) To support strong communities, a competitive economy and a high quality of life, public and private city-building activities and changes to the built environment, including public works, will be environmentally friendly, based on:

(d) preserving and enhancing the urban forest by:

(i) providing suitable growing environments for trees;

(ii) increasing tree canopy coverage and diversity, especially of long-lived native and large shade trees; and

(iii) regulating the injury and destruction of trees.

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. 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 American elm trees at 389 Strathmore Boulevard are a valuable part of the urban forest and with proper care and maintenance these trees have the potential to provide the property owner and the surrounding community with benefits for many years to come. Urban Forestry, therefore, cannot support removal of these trees.
CONTACT  
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SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENT
Attachment 1 – Photos of the 38 cm and 36 cm diameter American elms trees located in the rear yard of 389 Strathmore Boulevard.
Attachment 1

Crows of the 36 cm and 38 cm diameter American elms at the rear of 389 Strathmore Boulevard

Garage at the rear of 387 Strathmore Boulevard

Stems of the 36 cm and 38 cm diameter American elm trees at the rear of 389 Strathmore Boulevard