



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

582 Hillside Avenue East – Application to Remove a Private Tree

Date:	January 19, 2015
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	Ward 22 – St. Paul's
Reference Number:	P:\2015\Cluster A\PFR\TE04-021815-AFS#20335

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned tree located at 582 Hillside Avenue East. The application indicates the reason for removal is the tree's poor condition.

The subject tree is a horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) with a diameter of 54 cm measured at 1.4 metres above ground. The subject tree is in good condition, both structurally and botanically. Urban Forestry does not support removal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove a privately owned horse chestnut tree located in the rear yard of 582 Hillside Avenue East.

Financial Impact

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

COMMENTS

An application was received from the property owner of 582 Hillside Avenue East for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned horse chestnut tree measuring 54 cm in diameter, situated in the rear yard of the property. The application states the reason for tree removal is the tree's poor condition. The Arborist Report which accompanied the application describes the subject tree's overall condition to be poor. The report claims "[t]he tree suffers from severe chestnut blight, ... [is] unsightly and causes concern for

safety." The report describes the tree as having no visible root collar, and a slight lean, and explains that the tree lost several limbs during "the recent ice storm". The report admits the main stem of the tree is solid, with no decay or injury visible. The arborist advises that the deadwood in the crown was pruned recently leaving the crown with a fair appearance.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and concluded that overall the tree is in good condition. The tree is botanically healthy and in good condition structurally. The canopy has experienced significant pruning; however, the shape of the crown remains fair with little deadwood and good leaf formation. The pruning cuts have not caused significant decay in the tree and the base of the tree appears solid. The arborist's analysis of the condition of the tree has not been substantiated.

Chestnut blight (*Endothica parasitica*) does not affect horse chestnut trees. Chestnut blight is a fungus introduced from Asia in the early 1900s, which has resulted in the virtual elimination of the mature American chestnut (*Castanea dentata*) tree population in this region. The blight which horse chestnut trees commonly contract is a seasonal leaf disease, leaf blotch, (*Guignardia aesculi*), a fungus that causes the leaves to brown and curl. It is considered an aesthetic issue and is not a serious concern to the overall health of the tree. The tree was not suffering from the condition at the time of inspection by Urban Forestry staff.

As required under *Section 813-19, of City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 813, Trees, Article III*, Notice of an application to destroy the tree was posted on the subject property for the minimum required 14 day period, in order to provide the community an opportunity to make comment. One submission was received objecting to tree removal.

A permit to destroy the tree was denied. The property owner is appealing that decision.

Should City Council approve this request for 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) 50 mm caliper witch hazel (*Hamamelis sp.*), one (1) white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) and one (1) maple tree (*Acer sp.*) on the property. In this instance, it would be appropriate to require the applicant to provide five (5) replacement trees, in a combination of planting and cash-in-lieu.

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 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.

It is the goal of the City of Toronto to increase the city's existing tree canopy to 40 percent by 2050. The loss of trees in the city due to the ice storm experienced in late December 2013, the Asian long horned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*), and the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) make the preservation of all possible significant trees more necessary now, than ever.

The horse chestnut at 582 Hillside Avenue East 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
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Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachments 1 and 2 – Photos of the 54 cm diameter horse chestnut tree located in the rear of the property at 582 Hillside Avenue East.

54 cm diameter horse chestnut tree at the rear of 582 Hillsdale Avenue East



54 cm diameter horse chestnut tree at the rear of 582 Hillsdale Avenue East

