



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

106 Old Forest Hill Road – Application to Remove a Private Tree

Date:	April 9, 2015
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Ward:	Ward 21 – St. Paul's
Reference Number:	P:\2015\Cluster A\PFR\TE06-051215-AFS#21202

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned tree located at 106 Old Forest Hill Road. The application indicates the reason for the removal is that the tree is causing damage to a retaining wall.

The subject tree is a dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) measuring 59 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) private tree located at 106 Old Forest Hill Road.

Financial Impact

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

COMMENTS

An application was received from an agent of the property owner of 106 Old Forest Hill Road for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned dawn redwood tree, measuring 59 cm diameter, situated in the front yard, near the southeast corner of the house. The arborist report that accompanied the application describes the tree's condition as fair, and states the reason for the requested tree removal is due to damage the tree is causing to a

retaining wall. It is the opinion of the owner's arborist that the tree cannot be maintained in its present location, and should therefore be removed.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it is healthy and structurally sound. The tree is a medium to large specimen in good health with a generally upright growth habit, typical for the species. However due to the tree's proximity to the house, one side has been pruned back to provide clearance from the house. The tree is situated in a raised planting bed approximately 3 - 4 m wide, with the house to one side and a retaining wall, approximately 1 m in height, on the other. Urban Forestry observed that the retaining wall is showing signs of deterioration.

The tree is growing approximately 1.5 m away from the existing retaining wall. The applicant has not provided any evidence demonstrating that the retaining wall has been damaged or that the tree is the cause of any damage. Roots are not physically capable of exerting force required to crack concrete, stone or asphalt. They are, however, capable of growing into any available cracks that offer water and air. Therefore, if there are existing cracks in a hard surface structure, tree roots may grow into them. Roots do not and cannot go where there is no water. Where a retaining wall has been damaged, repair can be typically undertaken without requiring tree removal.

Pavers, concrete, stone, asphalt or other hard surfaces can lift or crack overtime. This can occur as a result of a number of factors, and tree roots are often not the source of the problem. Where this occurs, an appropriate response is to check for tree roots when making the repair. If tree roots are found once the damaged structure has been removed, a qualified arborist can properly cut small roots, and if larger roots are found, determine if it is possible to shave down the larger roots to accommodate repair or replacement of the structure.

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 community with an opportunity to make comment. 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*, approval must be conditional upon the owner providing satisfactory replacement planting. The applicant is proposing to plant one (1) large growing shade tree. However, in this instance, it would be appropriate to require the applicant 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 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. Impacts on 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 dawn redwood tree at 106 Old Forest Hill 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

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Photograph of the 59 cm dbh dawn redwood tree
Attachment 2 – Photograph of the crown of the 59 cm dbh dawn redwood tree
Attachment 3 – Photograph of the base of the 59 cm dbh dawn redwood tree





