



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

706 Briar Hill Avenue – Application to Remove a Private Tree

Date:	April 21, 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#21203

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned tree located at 706 Briar Hill Avenue. The application indicates the reason for removal is that the owner does not wish to maintain the tree in its current location.

The subject tree is a honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*), measuring 37 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 706 Briar Hill Avenue.

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 706 Briar Hill Avenue for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned honey locust tree, measuring 37

cm in diameter, situated at the rear of the property. The arborist report that accompanied the application states the reason for the requested tree removal is that the homeowner does not wish to maintain the tree in its current location and would, therefore, like to remove it.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it is healthy and structurally sound. The tree was found to be a medium-sized specimen in good health, with a generally balanced crown and full canopy. The stem of the tree curves slightly to the east, however, the weight of the crown is well distributed above the base of the stem and root plate.

At the time of the inspection, the owner expressed the following concerns: a portion of the tree's canopy extends over their roof, and that of the east neighbour; that much of their back yard and their neighbour's is shaded by the subject tree's canopy; and that falling leaves and flowers are accumulating in and clogging the eaves troughs and downspouts. These concerns could all be addressed through performing routine property maintenance, including tree pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices. The issues that have been identified by the property owner are not included in the Private Tree By-law as factors allowing tree removal.

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. One letter in support of the tree's removal was received.

A permit to remove this 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*, permit issuance must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. As part of the application, the property owner has proposed to plant one (1) large growing shade tree. 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 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 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 honey locust tree at 706 Briar Hill Avenue 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 37 cm diameter honey locust tree
- Attachment 2 – Photograph of the stem of the 37 cm diameter honey locust tree
- Attachment 3 – Photograph of the crown of the 37 cm diameter honey locust tree





