



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

52 Clairton Crescent – Application to Remove a Ravine-Protected Private Tree

Date:	October 24, 2016
To:	Etobicoke York Community Council
From:	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	Ward 11 – York South-Weston
Reference Number:	P:\2016\Cluster A\PFR\EY18-111516-AFS#23736

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned, ravine-protected tree located at 52 Clairton Crescent. The application indicates the reasons for removal are that the tree is situated too close to an existing garage and patio and is subsequently causing damage.

The subject tree is a white spruce (*Picea glauca*), measuring 40 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry does not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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, ravine-protected tree located at 52 Clairton Crescent.

Financial Impact

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

COMMENTS

Urban Forestry received an application to remove one (1) privately-owned, ravine-protected tree located in the rear yard at 52 Clairton Crescent. The subject tree is a white spruce tree measuring 40 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns that the tree is located too close to an existing garage and patio,

causing heaving of the patio stones, and cracks in the floor of the garage and cinder block walls due to expanding roots.

The arborist report that accompanied the application states that the tree is in good condition. It also provides photos of heaving patio stones and cracking in the cinder block wall and cement floor of the garage.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it is healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally. No evidence was observed nor was evidence provided that the tree is causing or is likely to cause damage to the garage.

Tree roots are not physically capable of exerting the physical force to crack concrete or asphalt and therefore cannot damage a properly constructed patio, foundation wall or flooring. Tree roots are however, capable of growing into any available spaces that offer water, air and nutrients. If proper drainage has not been provided, heaving may occur as a result of freezing and thawing, creating space that tree roots may grow into. Roots do not and cannot go where there is no water. Damage such as described here can typically be repaired without requiring tree removal.

When reviewing applications for tree removal, Urban Forestry staff are guided by City policies and by-laws. This includes the *City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 658, Ravine and Natural Feature Protection*, more commonly referred to as the Ravine By-law. The Ravine By-law does not have a mechanism that would allow the removal of the subject tree based on the applicants' concerns.

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 658-6 of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 658, Ravine and Natural Feature Protection*, permit approval must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. As a condition of permit issuance, the property owner has proposed to pay a cash-in-lieu payment. 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. Trees help to 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 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. Trees 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 wind in winter. Trees are a community resource that 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 tree canopy to 40 per cent. The loss of trees in the City due to the ice storm experienced in late December 2013, compounded with additional tree loss due to the presence of the Asian longhorned beetle and the emerald ash borer make the preservation of all healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The white spruce tree at 52 Clairton Crescent is a valuable part of the urban forest. With proper care and maintenance this tree has the potential to provide the property owners and the surrounding community with benefits for many more years. Urban Forestry, therefore, does not support removal of this tree.

CONTACT

Norman DeFraeye, Supervisor, Ravine and Natural Feature Protection, Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry, Tel: 416-392-0343, Fax: 416-392-1915, Email: ndefrae@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1: Photograph of white spruce tree at 52 Clairton Crescent measuring 40 cm in diameter.
- Attachment 2: Photograph of white spruce tree at 52 Clairton Crescent measuring 40 cm in diameter, showing proximity to garage and patio
- Attachment 3: Arborist Report





Arborist Report

Trade Winds Tree Care

Don Gauthier
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Toronto, Ontario
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416.922.8883
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Reference #: AR16-712
Date: 12/07/16

Property:
52 Clairton Crsc
Toronto

Description:
White Spruce (*Picea glauca*)
Located in the backyard
40cm DBH

NATURE OF WORK: Request permission to remove a White Spruce.

CONDITIONS: This tree is in good condition, is growing in a backyard, and is 3 feet away from the wall of the garage. The tree's roots have caused extensive damage to the garage including fractures in the outer wall, fracturing of the cement floor, and heaving of the patio walkway leading to the back door. The extent of the heaving has created multiple tripping hazards.

CATEGORY: 1

REASONS FOR REMOVAL: The property owners wish to remove this tree as they are fearful that the tree will continue to damage the garage. They have performed expensive repairs to the garage in the past in the hopes of keeping the tree. If the tree continues to grow the roots will continue shifting and displacing the bricks of the south wall of the garage, further fracturing of the cement garage floor, and continue heaving the patio stones.

ARBORIST RECOMMENDATION: I believe this tree qualifies for removal in accordance with the private tree by-law. It is my opinion that this tree has outgrown its location as evidenced by the *visible structural damage caused to the garage and patio*. The owner's are committed to the paying of cash in lieu of replanting.

Don Gauthier
President Trade Winds Tree Care
ISA Certified Arborist ON500a





