



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

6 Erica Avenue – Application to Remove a Private Tree

Date:	February 1, 2016
To:	North York Community Council
From:	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	Ward 10 – York Centre
Reference Number:	P:\2016\Cluster A\PFR\NY12-022316-AFS22384

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located at 6 Erica Avenue. The owner is requesting removal to address concerns regarding branch failure and the associated potential for damage to people and property, the high cost to maintain the tree, and the feasibility of retaining the tree and landscaping the rear yard.

The subject tree is a Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) measuring 71 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry does not support removal of the subject 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 tree located at 6 Erica Avenue.

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 tree located in the rear yard of 6 Erica Avenue. The subject tree is a Norway maple, measuring 71 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address the property owner's

concerns regarding branch failure and the associated potential for damage to people and property, the high cost to maintain the tree, and the feasibility of retaining the tree and landscaping the rear yard.

The original arborist report that accompanied the application in support of the removal documented the tree as a "vigorous, healthy Norway maple with some defects." A second arborist report submitted by the owner as part of the application, and completed by a different arborist, described the tree as a "serious safety concern to both people and property."

The owner and the owner's home improvement contractor advised that large branch failure occurred during the December 2013 ice storm that resulted in damage to the home's eaves trough and soffit. It was also reported that a branch fell from the tree in 2014 that caused damage to a barbecue in the rear yard beside the home.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined it is healthy and maintainable. It is growing approximately five (5) metres from the home. Minor defects observed include a seam in the trunk that appears to have compartmentalized (healed) well and a minor girdling root. Staff estimated that approximately five percent of the tree's crown overhangs the roof of an existing home on the property and noted that some branch tips are in contact with the eaves trough.

At the time of the inspection, Urban Forestry did not identify any defects that would indicate the tree is likely to fail. The property owner has installed supportive cabling between two large scaffold branches thereby reducing the likelihood of additional limb or trunk failure. Performing routine maintenance could further reduce the risk of limb failure and address the issue of branches touching the roof.

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 comment by the community. No comments were received in response to the posting.

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*, permit approval must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. The owner is aware of the replanting requirement if tree removal is approved but no proposal to plant has yet been made. In this instance, it would be appropriate for the owner to provide at least 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 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. 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, 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 tree canopy to 40 percent. The loss of trees in the city due to the ice storm experienced in late December 2013, the Asian longhorned beetle and the emerald ash borer make the preservation of all healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The Norway maple at 6 Erica 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, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Photo of the crown of the 71 cm Norway maple tree
Attachment 2 – Photo of the trunk of the 71 cm Norway maple tree