



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

108 Hillhurst Boulevard – Application to Remove a Private Tree

Date:	May 20, 2016
To:	North York Community Council
From:	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	Ward 16 – Eglinton-Lawrence
Reference Number:	P:\2016\Cluster A\PFR\NY15-061416-AFS#22937

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located at 108 Hillhurst Boulevard. The application indicates the reasons for removal are concerns regarding safety of surrounding residents, poor tree location, and branch loss.

The subject tree is a honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) measuring 41 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 108 Hillhurst Boulevard.

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 situated in the rear yard of 108 Hillhurst Boulevard. The subject tree is a honey locust measuring 41 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns over branch loss, the subsequent safety issues, and the poor location of the tree which is close to an existing house and surrounded by a wooden deck. The arborist report which accompanied the application assessed the tree to be in fair condition with a medium-diameter branch overhanging the neighbour's house and with suckering from pruning wounds. It also states that the tree is growing into a wooden deck that surrounds the trunk.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined it is healthy both botanically and structurally. The tree is growing approximately two (2) metres north of an existing house. No evidence was observed or provided by the applicant to indicate that the tree is causing damage to the house. Further, the tree is not situated such that the owner would be restricted in performing routine maintenance. The tree is surrounded by a wooden deck. The deck has been altered to provide space for tree growth and is currently not constricting the stem. At the time of inspection Urban Forestry did not identify any defects above deck level that would indicate the tree is likely to fail.

A permit to remove the tree was denied by Urban Forestry. The owner is appealing this decision.

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.

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. As a condition of permit issuance, the applicant is proposing to plant one (1) replacement 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 on-site planting 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 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, 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 honey locust tree at 108 Hillhurst Boulevard 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 – Photograph of the honey locust tree located in the rear yard of 108 Hillhurst Boulevard
- Attachment 2 – Photograph depicting tree proximity to dwelling, deck, and neighbouring property (used with permission from *Arborist Report for 108 Hillhurst Blvd.*, prepared by Tree Doctors, Inc, dated November, 2015)
- Attachment 3 – Photograph demonstrating deck alteration surrounding trunk





