

291 Princess Avenue – Application to Remove a City Tree

Date:	September 23, 2016
To:	North York Community Council
From:	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	Ward 23 – Willowdale
Reference Number:	P:\2016\Cluster A\PFR\NY17-101316-AFS#23521

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove one (1) City-owned tree located at 291 Princess Avenue. The application indicates the reason for removal is to prevent future potential damage to the driveway by the root system and the loss of the aesthetic appeal of the subject tree due to pruning to accommodate electrical wires. The reasons for removal also included a request for accommodation on the basis of a prohibited ground under the *Human Rights Code*.

The subject tree is a Freeman maple (*Acer x freemanii*) measuring 17.5 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry does not support 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) City-owned tree located at 291 Princess 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) City-owned tree situated on the City road allowance fronting 291 Princess Avenue. The subject tree is a Freeman maple tree measuring 17.5 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to

address concerns over future potential damage to the driveway by the root system as well as the negative effects on the tree's aesthetics due to the future canopy pruning to accommodate overhead wires.

The applicant submitted additional information in support of the appeal after it was initially submitted. The applicant has requested accommodation on the basis of a prohibited ground under the *Human Rights Code* due to the position of the tree in front of the main door.

The arborist report which accompanied the application states that the tree is viable and in good condition.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined it is healthy and maintainable. The subject tree is vigorous and in good botanical and structural condition. No structural damage caused by roots or branches was observed at time of the inspection. There are superficial seams on the surface of the trunk and a minor bark inclusion within a branch union.

The subject tree is located 2 m east of the new driveway and offset from overhead wires which will allow for future maintenance while maintaining the aesthetic appeal of the tree. The tree was planted in 2010, four (4) years before the property owner built the existing home and driveway.

In consultation with the Human Rights Office, it was determined that the applicant has not established, in good faith, that the City of Toronto's accommodation obligations have been triggered, based on the information submitted to date.

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

Should City Council approve this request for removal of the City tree, in accordance with *Section 813-10.B of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees, Article II*, permit approval must be conditional upon the owners providing payment of the appraised value of the tree (\$1,120.00), removing the tree at their expense and providing satisfactory replacement planting.

As a condition of permit issuance, the applicant is proposing to pay cash-in-lieu for 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. The owner will also be required to provide a tree planting security deposit in the amount of \$583 per tree to cover the cost of removal, replacement and maintenance of trees to be planted on City property.

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 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 Freeman maple tree at 291 Princess 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 – Photograph of the subject tree in the front yard of 291 Princess Avenue