



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

50 Hart Avenue – Application to Remove a Private Tree

Date:	April 18, 2016
To:	Scarborough Community Council
From:	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Ward:	Ward 35 – Scarborough Southwest
Reference Number:	P:\2016\Cluster A\PFR\SC14-051016-AFS#22795

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located at 50 Hart Avenue. The application indicates the reason for removal is that the owner finds the tree too costly to maintain, the tree roots are lifting a shed, and the surface roots are a tripping hazard.

The subject tree is silver maple tree (*Acer saccharinum*), measuring 64 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 tree located at 50 Hart Avenue.

Financial Impact

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

COMMENTS

Urban Forestry received an application for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located at the rear of the property at 50 Hart Avenue. The subject tree is a silver maple tree measuring 64 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns that the elderly homeowner has tripped over the surface roots several times, and

that the roots are lifting a shed. In a letter written by the homeowner requesting an appeal, the cost of maintaining this tree was also noted as a factor. The arborist report that accompanied the application assessed this tree to be in good condition.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it is healthy and structurally sound. The tree was found to be a medium to large sized specimen in good health, with a generally balanced crown and full canopy. Some surface roots were present. Physical damage to the roots appears to have been incurred over time, likely from lawn mowing. No evidence of a heaving shed due to tree roots or otherwise was observed.

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.

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 approval must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. As a condition of permit issuance, 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 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 existing tree canopy to 40 percent. The loss of trees in the city due to the ice storm experienced in late December 2013, as well as the presence of the Asian long-horned beetle and the emerald ash borer make the preservation of all healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The silver maple tree at 50 Hart 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 silver maple tree measuring 64 cm in diameter
Attachment 2 – Photograph of the surface roots of the silver maple tree
Attachment 3 – Photograph showing relationship of tree to shed





