



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### 45 Whiterock Drive – Application to a Remove Private Tree

<b>Date:</b>	May 19, 2016
<b>To:</b>	Scarborough Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
<b>Ward:</b>	Ward 44 – Scarborough East
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:\2016\Cluster A\PFR\SC15-061416-AFS#22938

#### SUMMARY

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This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located at 45 Whiterock Drive. The application indicates the main reasons for requesting tree removal are due to concerns over the tree's proximity to the house and the concern that the tree may fail during a wind storm and fall towards the house. Falling needles and security due to the tree blocking the view of the house are additional concerns.

The subject tree is a Colorado spruce (*Picea pungens*) measuring 38 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry does not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

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**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 45 Whiterock Drive.

#### 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 at the front of the property of 45 Whiterock Drive. The subject tree is a Colorado spruce measuring 38 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns over the tree's proximity to the house and due to the concern that the tree may fail during a wind storm and fall towards the house. In a subsequent letter to Urban Forestry, the owner states a concern about the needles that fall from the tree into the yard and eaves troughs. The needles are then tracked into the house where his 2-year old child has stepped on the needles and received injuries. The owner states also that this evergreen tree causes a security concern by blocking the view to the house from the street and that all of these factors are causing him to be stressed. The arborist report that accompanied the application describes the tree to be in good condition.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it is healthy and stable. No indicators of likelihood of tree failure, such as movement of the tree's root plate, were observed. The tree is already pruned to three (3) metres above grade, which provides clearance so that the view to the house from the street is not blocked. Further there is no indication of damage to the house.

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 applicant 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 applicant is proposing to plant one (1) one small-growing shade tree in the backyard. However, in this instance, it would be appropriate for the owner to provide five (5) large-growing shade 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 attributable 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 December 2013, compounded with additional tree loss due to 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 Colorado spruce tree at 45 Whiterock Drive 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**

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Jason Doyle  
Director of Urban Forestry  
Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachments 1 – Photograph of the Colorado spruce tree located at 45 Whiterock Drive  
Attachment 2 – Photograph of the Colorado spruce tree located at 45 Whiterock Drive

Attachment 1



Attachment 2



