



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Application to Remove a Private Tree - 49 Brookridge Drive

<b>Date:</b>	August 16, 2016
<b>To:</b>	Scarborough Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
<b>Ward:</b>	Ward 37 – Scarborough Centre
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:\2016\Cluster A\PFR\SC16-090716-AFS#23389

#### SUMMARY

---

This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located at 49 Brookridge Drive. The application indicates the reason for removal are concerns that the tree will fail due to its poor structure, and that the roots are damaging the driveway and walkway.

The subject tree is a silver maple tree (*Acer saccharinum*), measuring 93 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 49 Brookridge 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, situated at the front of the property at 49 Brookridge Drive. The subject tree is a silver maple tree measuring 93 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address

concerns that the tree will fail and damage the homeowner's property and cause injury to the family. In the past, the homeowner has found roots below the concrete basement slab and in drain pipes. The homeowner also suspects that roots from this tree are causing damage to the driveway and walkway, and would like to repair these structures. The arborist report that accompanied the application states that "this tree has structural weaknesses, noticeable stress cracks and... some canker on bark", and that the tree is leaning.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it is healthy and structurally sound. The main stem of the tree was noted as having a lean between 5 to 10 degrees but was structurally sound. Cracks on the driveway were observed, but the causes of these cracks could not be ascertained. Minor deadwood and stubs, typical for a tree of this species and size, were present within the crown.

Any above-ground structural concerns could be addressed through routine inspection and maintenance in accordance with good arboricultural practices. The driveway and walkway could be repaired by removing the asphalt or paving stones, re-grading the base layer, and then laying new interlock pavers on top, as proposed in writing by the homeowner. As long as the roots are sufficiently protected while completing the repairs, the installation of interlock pavers in the future would result in less damage to the tree compared to the existing asphalt, as pavers can be easily removed without damaging tree roots.

Tree roots are not physically capable of exerting the force required to lift or crack concrete or asphalt, nor are they able to go where there is no water. Tree roots are capable of growing into any available space that offers water and air such as damaged drain pipes. Any roots found below the concrete basement slab would have made their way there via damaged sewer pipes leaching water and nutrients into the surrounding area. Urban Forestry staff has been advised that tree roots found previously in the foundation and pipes in the basement have been removed and the necessary repair completed.

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. Twenty-nine (29) objections and two (2) comments supporting the tree removal were received.

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. As a condition of permit issuance, the property owner is proposing 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. Trees 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. Trees 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 the 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 silver maple tree at 49 Brookridge 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**

Mark Ventresca, Supervisor Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry  
Tel: 416-396-5131, Fax: 416-396-4170, Email: [mventre@toronto.ca](mailto:mventre@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

---

Jason Doyle  
Director of Urban Forestry  
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Photograph of the silver maple tree, measuring 93 cm in diameter  
Attachment 2 – Photograph showing cracks in the driveway



