



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

Application to Remove a Private Tree - 16 Shropshire Drive

Date:	August 12, 2016
To:	Scarborough Community Council
From:	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Ward:	Ward 37 – Scarborough Centre
Reference Number:	P:\2016\Cluster A\PFR\SC16-090716-AFS#23386

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located at 16 Shropshire Drive. The application indicates the reason for removal is that the tree is located immediately next to the neighbour's driveway and that falling debris and sap have caused vehicle and property maintenance and safety issues for the homeowner and neighbour.

The subject tree is a Colorado blue spruce (*Picea pungens var. glauca*), measuring 45 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 16 Shropshire 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 16 Shropshire Drive. The subject tree is a Colorado blue spruce tree measuring 45 cm in diameter. The arborist report that accompanied the application states the reason for the requested tree removal is that the tree is located immediately next to the neighbour's driveway and that falling debris and sap have caused vehicle, property maintenance and safety issues for the homeowner and neighbour. The arborist report which accompanied the application describes the tree as being in fair condition, with roots that have damaged the neighbour's driveway. The arborist report also claims that the homeowner observed heaving of the soil during heavy winds.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it is healthy and maintainable. A raised crack in the driveway was noted; however, no observable evidence indicated that the tree was uprooting.

Tree roots are not physically capable of exerting the force required to lift or crack concrete or asphalt. They are however, capable of growing into any available space that offers water and air. Tree roots cannot damage a properly constructed driveway. However, if proper drainage has not been provided, heaving may occur as a result of freezing and thawing creating space that tree roots may grow into. Roots do not and cannot go where there is no water. Where a driveway has been damaged, repair can be typically be undertaken without requiring tree removal.

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 owner is appealing this decision.

After the application was denied the neighbour contacted Urban Forestry on multiple occasions to express their concerns of the aesthetics and maintenance of their vehicles parked underneath the tree, caused by dropping sap and needles, including the submission of photographs showing splashes of sap or fallen needles on their vehicles.

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. 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 existing tree canopy to 40 percent. The loss of the tree canopy 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 Colorado blue spruce tree at 16 Shropshire 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

Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Photograph of the Colorado blue spruce tree, measuring 45 cm in diameter.

