



## STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

### Application to Remove a Private Tree - 875 Pape Avenue

<b>Date:</b>	August 17, 2016
<b>To:</b>	Toronto and East York Community Council
<b>From:</b>	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
<b>Wards:</b>	Ward 29 – Toronto-Danforth
<b>Reference Number:</b>	P:\2016\Cluster A\PFR\TE18-090716-AFS#23393

#### 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 875 Pape Avenue. The application indicates that the reason for the requested removal is that the tree's structure and location pose a risk to people and property.

The subject tree is a tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), measuring 66 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry does not support removal of the subject tree as it is in good condition, both structurally and botanically.

#### 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 875 Pape 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 situated in the rear yard of the property at 875 Pape Avenue. The subject tree is a tree-of-heaven measuring 66 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns that the tree's structure and location pose a risk to people and

property. The arborist report that accompanied the application does not provide an assessment of the overall condition of the tree but states that it is not maintainable. It lists several reasons for removal, including: that the tree has broken and hanging branches; shows decay at old wound sites; is surrounded by hard surface; lacks anchor roots; is an invasive species; and is in close proximity to a high use area.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it has good crown vigour, good crown form, good trunk integrity and no major structural defects. Despite the presence of small broken and hanging branches, Urban Forestry assessed this tree to be healthy and maintainable through pruning. There is evidence of one previous storm break of a limb approximately 15 cm in diameter; however, this does not substantiate an overall assessment of the tree as high risk nor does it substantiate an overall assessment of the tree to be in poor condition.

Tree-of-heaven trees are extremely tolerant of urban conditions such as salt, soil compaction, and lack of permeable growing space. The subject tree is located on a commercial retail property, where limited soft surface space would inhibit the growth of most large growing tree species. Although the invasiveness of this species is of concern to the management and protection of natural parklands, woodlots and ravines, the tree-of-heaven at 875 Pape Avenue is contributing to the urban canopy because of its tolerance to these conditions, and this contribution would be difficult to replace in the same location with any other species.

As required under *Section 813-19, of City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 813, Trees, Article III*, a Notice of application 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.

Should City Council approve this request for 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 pay cash-in-lieu for one (1) replacement tree due to the lack of soft surface or, alternatively, to plant elsewhere within the community. 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.

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 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 percent. The loss of trees in the City due to the ice storm experienced in late December 2013, compounded with additional recent tree loss due to presence of the Asian longhorned beetle and the emerald ash borer make the preservation of all healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The tree-of-heaven located at 875 Pape 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**

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Jason Doyle  
Director, Urban Forestry  
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 – Photo of the tree-of-heaven tree, measuring 66 cm in diameter

