



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

22 Helena Avenue – Application to Remove a Private Tree

Date:	September 21, 2016
To:	Toronto and East York Community Council
From:	Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
Wards:	Ward 21 – St. Paul's
Reference Number:	P:\2016\Cluster A\PFR\TE19-101316-AFS#23517

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located on the boundary of the properties of 22 and 20 Helena Avenue. The application submitted by the owner at 22 Helena Avenue indicates that the reason for removal is to address concerns that the tree is in an undesirable location, and has had branches break in the past.

The subject tree is a tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), measuring 67 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry does not support removal of the subject tree as it is in good condition, both structurally and botanically.

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 on the boundary of 22 and 20 Helena 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 on the rear yard boundary of the properties at 22 and 20 Helena Avenue. In accordance with the City's Boundary and Neighbour Tree Procedure, the co-owner of the boundary tree has been notified in writing that an application to remove the tree has been received. No response was received.

The subject tree is a tree-of-heaven measuring 67 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made by the applicant on behalf of the owner of 22 Helena Avenue to address concerns that the tree is in an undesirable location, has had branches break in the past and interferes with plans to improve the aesthetics of the rear yard of 22 Helena Avenue. The arborist report that accompanied the application describes the condition of the tree as botanically fair, and structurally fair to poor. It describes the tree as having included bark in the main union between primary limbs.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it is healthy and maintainable. The tree was found to have good crown vigour, good crown form, good trunk integrity and no major structural defects. The main union between primary limbs has minor included bark, but also has a 'U-shaped' angle of attachment which substantially lowers its risk of failure. There is a small amount of deadwood in the tree, and stubs from previously broken branches measuring 5 to 10 cm in diameter.

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 of 22 Helena Avenue 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 plant one (1) Freeman maple tree (*Acer x freemanii*) on site as a replacement 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 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 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 tree canopy to 40 per cent. 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 tree located on the boundary of 22 and 20 Helena Avenue is a valuable part of the urban forest. With proper care and maintenance this tree has the potential to provide the property owners and the surrounding community with benefits for many more years. Urban Forestry, therefore, does not support removal of this tree.

CONTACT

Daniel Boven, Supervisor, Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry
Tel: 416-392-7390, Fax: 416-392-7277, Email: dboven@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Tree-of-heaven tree, measuring 67 cm in diameter.

