

Application to Remove a Private Tree - 14 Lethbridge Avenue

Date: May 3, 2017

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

From: Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

Wards: Ward 4 - Etobicoke Centre

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located at 14 Lethbridge Avenue. The subject tree is a Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) measuring 37 cm in diameter. The application indicates the reason for removal is to address concerns that the tree is too close to the house and its surface roots have damaged patio stones.

The Private Tree By-law does not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately-owned Norway maple tree located at 14 Lethbridge Avenue.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

There is no decision history regarding this tree removal permit application.

COMMENTS

Urban Forestry received an application to remove one (1) privately-owned tree located at 14 Lethbridge Avenue. The subject tree is a Norway maple measuring 37 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns that the tree is too close to the dwelling and its surface roots have damaged patio stones on the adjacent property at 12 Lethbridge Avenue.

The arborist report that accompanied the application does not identify the condition of the Norway maple tree. The arborist report does however claim that this tree should be considered for removal because of its invasive and self-seeding nature, and its ability to suppress young trees in close proximity.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it is healthy and in good condition, both botanically and structurally.

This tree is situated approximately 2.2 meters from the house at 14 Lethbridge Avenue and 2.8 meters from the house at 12 Lethbridge Avenue. No evidence of the tree impacting the house was observed at the time of inspection. The location of the tree is located such that routine maintenance of the tree can be performed.

Tree roots are not physically capable of exerting the force required to lift or crack properly constructed and maintained hard surfaces, including patio stones. However, if proper drainage has not been provided, heaving may occur as a result of freezing and thawing, creating space that offers water and air into where tree roots may grow. Damage such as that described here can typically be repaired without requiring tree removal. If tree roots are found once the patio stones have been lifted, a qualified arborist can properly cut small roots and if larger roots are found, can determine if it is possible to shave them down to provide a flat surface under the patio stones.

Norway maple trees are extremely tolerant of urban conditions such as salt, soil compaction, and lack of permeable growing space. Although the invasiveness of this species is of concern to the management and protection of natural parklands, woodlots and ravines, the Norway maple tree at 14 Lethbridge Avenue is contributing to the urban canopy because of its tolerance to these conditions.

When reviewing applications for tree removal, Urban Forestry staff are guided by City policies and bylaws including the *City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Article III*, more commonly referred to as the Private Tree By-law. The Private Tree By-law does not have a mechanism that would allow the removal of the subject tree based on the concerns stated in the tree removal permit application.

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.

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) 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 help to 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 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 Norway maple tree at 14 Lethbridge 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. In accordance with the City Council-approved Strategic Forest Management Plan, Toronto's Official Plan and the Private Tree By-law, this tree should not be removed.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Figure 1: Subject Norway maple tree

Attachment 2 - Arborist report (with subject Norway Maple tree (*Acer platanoides*)
misidentified as *Acer negundo*)

Attachment 1

Figure 1: Subject Norway maple tree



Attachment 2

Arborist report (with subject Norway Maple tree (*Acer platanoides*) misidentified as *Acer negundo*)



Dave Tree Expert Company of Canada, Limited

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To whom it may concern,

██████████ of 14 Lethbridge Ave would like to request a permit for the removal of one 37 cm DBH Norway Maple (*Acer negundo*) located along the East fence line in the rear of the property.

The tree is close to the client's house and fence. It has also damaged the patio stones of the East neighbour with growing surface roots. The tree has the additional negative impact of it's invasive nature, aggressive self seeding and suppression of other young trees in close proximity.

██████████ would like to replace the removed Maple with one 50mm Little Leaf Linden in the rear yard.

Regards,

Nick Biffis

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Tree Inventory & Replant

369 Old Orchard Grove
Toronto, Ontario
M5M 2G1

Tree #	Species	Size DBH	Health	Comments
1	Acer negundo	38cm	Fair	- Rear/East fence - Remove
2	Morus alba	>30cm	Good	- West fence line - Preserve
3	Picea glauca	>30cm	Good	- Front yard - Preserve
4	Acer x freemanii	<30cm	Good	- Front - City owned - Preserve
5	Tilia cordata	50mm	N/A	-REPLANT



