

## **Application to Remove Two Private Trees - 33 Arran Crescent**

**Date:** December 6, 2016

**To:** North York Community Council

**From:** Jason Doyle, Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

**Wards:** Ward 24 – Willowdale

### **SUMMARY**

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This report requests that City Council deny the application for a permit to remove two (2) privately-owned trees located at 33 Arran Crescent. The application indicates the reasons for removal are to address concerns of dripping sap, a trunk lean and tree roots causing driveway damage.

The subject trees are two (2) Colorado blue spruce trees (*Picea pungens var. glauca*) measuring 35 cm and 40 cm in diameter. Urban Forestry does not support removal of these trees as they are healthy and maintainable.

### **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 two (2) privately-owned trees located at 33 Arran Crescent.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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

### **DECISION HISTORY**

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

### **COMMENTS**

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Urban Forestry received an application to remove two (2) privately-owned Colorado blue spruce trees measuring 35 cm and 40 cm in diameter, situated in the front yard of 33 Arran Crescent. The application for tree removal has been made to address the property owner's concerns that sap is dripping on vehicles parked in the driveway, the tree's roots are beginning to cause heaving to an interlocking brick driveway, and the tree is exhibiting a ten degree trunk lean. Initially the property owner was requesting a permit to remove three trees. However, one (1) of the trees included in the application measures 25 cm in diameter and, therefore, does not qualify for protection under the Private Tree By-law.

The arborist report which accompanied the application indicates that both trees are in "okay health and vigour," exhibit northwest leans, and contain twenty per cent dead wood throughout the canopies.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the trees and determined they are healthy and maintainable. The trees do both exhibit northwest leans of approximately ten degrees, however, the leans do not negatively impact their structural integrity. The subject trees are located 50 cm south of an existing interlock stone driveway. Heaving along the outermost row of interlock pavers was observed near the trees, however similar interlock heaving was also observed outside of the rooting area of the trees.

Tree roots are not physically capable of exerting the force required to lift or crack concrete, asphalt or interlock pavers. They are, however, capable of growing into any available space that offers water and air. Tree roots cannot damage a properly constructed and maintained interlocking brick 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 damage of this nature has occurred, repair can be typically undertaken without requiring tree removal.

When reviewing applications for tree removal, Urban Forestry staff are guided by City policies and bylaws including *City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees, 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 trees based on the concerns identified by the applicant, including a tree's natural functions such as dripping sap. Concerns expressed by the applicant regarding dripping sap can be addressed through pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices and performing other routine tree maintenance.

A permit to remove the trees was denied by Urban Forestry. The owner is appealing this decision.

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. One (1) objection was received in response to the application to remove the trees in question.

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 applicant is proposing to plant two (2) replacement trees. However, in this instance, it would be appropriate for the owner to provide ten (10) 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 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 two Colorado blue spruce trees at 33 Arran Crescent are a valuable part of the urban forest. With proper care and maintenance these trees have 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 these trees.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Jason Doyle  
Director, Urban Forestry  
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 – Photograph of the subject trees in the front yard of 33 Arran Crescent.

Attachment 2 - Photograph of the crowns of the subject trees in the front yard of 33 Arran Crescent.

Attachment 3 - Photograph of the trunks of the subject trees in the front yard of 33 Arran Crescent.

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