

Application to Remove a City Tree – 161 Lee Avenue

Date: September 11, 2017

To: Toronto East York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 32 – Beaches East York

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) City-owned tree located on the road allowance adjacent to the property located at 161 Lee Avenue. The application indicates the reason for removal is that a retaining wall is being damaged by the tree.

The subject tree is a silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) measuring 48 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) City-owned tree located on the right of way adjacent to 161 Lee 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 for a permit to remove one (1) City-owned tree located on the road allowance adjacent to the property located at 161 Lee Avenue. The subject tree is a silver maple measuring 78 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns that the tree has damaged a nearby retaining wall.

The arborist report that accompanied the application assessed this tree to be in good condition. The report indicates that the tree has damaged a nearby timber retaining wall and that retention of the tree will cause further damage to the retaining wall increasing the need for repairs and the wall's replacement.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined it is healthy and in good condition, both botanically and structurally. Although the initial request was to remove a privately owned tree, Urban Forestry staff have determined that the tree is a City-owned tree and has notified the applicant.

The timber retaining wall was not constructed with sufficient size to allow for the growth of the tree, however it can be reconstructed and maintained to accommodate the tree without requiring its removal.

When reviewing applications for tree removal, Urban Forestry staff are guided by City policies and by-laws including *City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Article II*, more commonly referred to as the Street Tree By-law. The Street 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.

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 of the City-owned tree, in accordance with *Section 813-10.B of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees, Article II*, permit issuance must be conditional upon the owners providing payment of the appraised value of the tree to be removed, agreeing to have the tree removed at their expense, as well as providing satisfactory replacement planting. 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. The owner will also be required to provide a tree planting security deposit to cover the cost of removal, replacement and the cost of maintenance for a period of two years for all trees to be planted on City property.

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 silver maple tree located on the road allowance adjacent to the property at 161 Lee 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 Street 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 - Photograph of the silver maple tree measuring 41 cm in diameter.

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