TORONTO

# REPORT FOR ACTION

# Application to Remove a Private Tree – 35 Bowmore Road

**Date:** September 27, 2017
**To:** Toronto and 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) privately owned tree located at 35 Bowmore Road. The application indicates the reasons for removal are that the tree roots are damaging an existing fence and deck and that the tree sways too much in high winds.

The subject tree is a white spruce (*Picea glauca*), measuring 41 cm in diameter. The Private Tree By-law 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) privately owned tree located at 35 Bowmore Road.

## 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) privately owned tree located in the rear yard of 35 Bowmore Road. The subject tree is a white spruce measuring 41 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns that the tree is damaging an existing fence and deck and that the tree sways too much in high winds.

The arborist report that accompanied the application assessed this tree to be in good condition. No evidence supporting excessive movement of the tree or the potential for the tree to fail was provided in the report.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and determined that it was healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally. Urban Forestry staff did not identify any signs or symptoms that would indicate this tree has excessive sway or is prone to failure. Trees are adapted to sway in the wind and respond to wind conditions in their environment as they grow both in height and in diameter. There is an existing fence and deck in contact with the base of the tree; however, both could be modified to provide clearance for the tree to grow. These repairs can be undertaken without requiring removal of the tree.

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 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 issuance 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 of planting one (1) replacement tree. However, in this instance it would be appropriate for the applicant 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 white spruce tree at 35 Bowmore Road 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

Yaroslaw Medwidsky, Supervisor Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry
Tel: 416-392-7390, Email: Yaroslaw.Medwidsky@toronto.ca

## SIGNATURE

Jason Doyle
Director, Urban Forestry
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

## ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Photograph of the white spruce tree measuring 41 cm in diameter
Attachment 2 - Photograph showing the trunk of the white spruce tree measuring 41 cm in diameter

Attachment 1 -Photograph of the white spruce tree measuring 41 cm in diameter.

Attachment 2 -Photograph showing the trunk of the white spruce tree measuring 41 cm in diameter