

## **Application to Remove Two (2) Private Trees - 40 Wilkinson Drive**

**Date:** May 22, 2018

**To:** North York Community Council

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

**Wards:** Ward 33 - Don Valley East

### **SUMMARY**

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This report recommends that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove two (2) privately-owned trees located at 40 Wilkinson Drive. The application indicates the reason for removal is to address concerns that tree roots are causing or are likely to cause damage to the existing concrete pool basin and surrounding interlocking brick and that one of the trees has caused roof damage to the home and is growing in an inappropriate location.

The subject trees are one (1) honey locust tree (*Gleditsia triacanthos*), measuring 68 cm in diameter and one (1) little-leaved linden tree (*Tilia cordata*), measuring 66 cm in diameter. The Private Tree By-law does not support the removal of these trees as they are healthy and maintainable.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove two (2) privately-owned trees located at 40 Wilkinson Drive.

### **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 for a permit to remove two (2) privately-owned trees located in the rear yard of 40 Wilkinson Drive. The subject trees are one (1) honey locust tree (*Gleditsia triacanthos*) measuring 68 cm in diameter and one (1) little-leaved linden tree (*Tilia cordata*) measuring 66 cm in diameter.

The request to remove the honey locust tree has been made to address concerns that the tree's roots are causing damage to the existing in-ground concrete pool and surrounding interlocking brick, has caused damage to the roof of the dwelling, and is growing in an inappropriate location. The request to remove the little-leaved linden tree has been made to address concerns that the tree roots may cause damage in the future to the existing pool.

The arborist report that accompanied the application did not give a condition rating but indicated the trees were healthy.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the trees and determined they were healthy and maintainable both structurally and botanically. No damage to the roof or pool was observed at the time of inspection.

The underground pool is located approximately 2 metres (m) away from the honey locust tree and approximately 7 m from the little-leaved linden tree. The interlocking brick that needs to be replaced is situated approximately 0.5 m away from the honey locust tree. The little-leaved linden tree is located such that repairs to both the pool and brick can be made without encroachment into the minimum tree protection zone. It may be possible to retain the honey locust tree while allowing repairs to the pool and interlocking brick. Urban Forestry has requested details of the proposed repairs and construction methodology for review to determine the impact the proposed repairs would have on the honey locust tree, however the property owner has declined to submit these plans for review.

Tree roots are opportunistic in nature and will grow towards seeping water. They are not physically capable of exerting the force required to crack pool basins. They are, however, capable of growing into any available space that offers water and air and if cracks exist in the pool basin, roots can grow into the existing cracks.

The house is approximately 3 m away from the honey locust tree. No part of the tree is touching the house and no damage was observed to the roof at the time of inspection. The tree is located such that routine maintenance of the tree can be performed. The tree could be pruned in future in accordance with good arboricultural practices to eliminate any branch contact with the house, should it occur.

When reviewing applications for tree removal, Urban Forestry staff are guided by City policies and by-laws including the *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 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 objections were received in response to the application to remove the trees in question.

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 plant two (2) replacement trees. However, in this instance it would be appropriate for the applicant 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 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 honey locust tree and the little-leaved linden tree at 40 Wilkinson Drive 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. In accordance with the City Council-approved Strategic Forest Management Plan, Toronto's Official Plan and the Private Tree By-law, these trees should not be removed.

## **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 honey locust tree measuring 68 cm in diameter

Attachment 2 - Photograph of the pool and interlocking brick at the base of the honey locust tree measuring 68 cm in diameter

Attachment 3 - Photograph of the little-leaved linden tree measuring 66 cm in diameter



Attachment 1 - Photograph of the honey locust tree measuring 68 cm in diameter





Attachment 2 - Photograph of the pool and interlocking brick at the base of the honey locust tree measuring 68 cm in diameter





Attachment 3 - Photograph of the little-leaved linden tree measuring 66 cm in diameter

