

## **Application to Remove a City-Owned Tree – 108 Aspenwood Drive**

**Date:** May 14, 2020

**To:** North York Community Council

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

**Wards:** Ward 17 – Don Valley North

### **SUMMARY**

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This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located on the road allowance fronting 108 Aspenwood Drive. The owner is requesting permission to remove this tree in order to construct a proposed new driveway.

The subject tree is a Colorado blue spruce (*Picea pungens*), measuring 45 cm in diameter. The Tree By-law does not support the removal of this tree as it is 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 one City-owned tree located at 108 Aspenwood 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 one City-owned tree located on the City-owned road allowance fronting 108 Aspenwood Drive. The subject tree is a Colorado blue spruce measuring 45 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made in order to construct a proposed new 6 metre-wide driveway.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in good structural condition and fair health. Their comments indicated that the canopy had been raised and is sparse towards one side.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and, at the time of inspection, determined that it is healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally. Although the tree has been pruned for adequate vertical clearance above the sidewalk and roadway, this pruning was carried out in accordance with good arboricultural practices and does not affect the tree's viability or health.

The tree could be retained if either the existing driveway measuring approximately 5 m wide, were retained and re-used, or if the parts of the proposed new driveway closest to the tree between the curb and sidewalk are modified or made more narrow.

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 813-10.B, Article II*, more commonly referred to as the Tree By-law. The 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 permission to remove 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 (\$4,495.00), agreeing to have the trees removed at their expense, as well as providing satisfactory replacement planting. In this instance, it would be appropriate for the owner to provide five 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 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 long horned beetle and the emerald ash borer make the preservation of all healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The Colorado blue spruce tree at 108 Aspenwood Drive 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 Tree By-law, this tree 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 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing City-owned Colorado blue spruce at 108 Aspenwood Drive, February 20, 2020

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