TORONTO

# REPORT FOR ACTION

# Application to Remove a Private Tree – 30 Ainsdale Road

**Date:** November 6, 2019
**To:** Scarborough Community Council
**From:** Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation
**Wards:** Ward 21 – Scarborough Centre

## SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one (1) privately owned tree located at 30 Ainsdale Road. The application indicates the reasons for removal are concerns over damage to the weeping tiles caused by the tree's roots and that the tree is attracting an abundance of squirrels that have damaged electrical wiring.

The subject tree is a black walnut (*Juglans nigra)*, measuring 63 cm in diameter. The 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 30 Ainsdale 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 30 Ainsdale Road. The subject tree is a black walnut measuring 63 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns that the tree's roots have entered the weeping tiles and caused damage; that the tree is attracting an abundance of squirrels that have damaged electrical wiring; and that the tree has caused additional property damage that could reoccur.

The arborist report that accompanied the application assessed this tree to be in good health with no significant defects. Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and, at the time of inspection, determined that it is healthy and maintainable both botanically and structurally.

Tree roots typically grow within the top 60 cm of soil, above the depth of a foundation weeping system. Moreover, tree roots are not physically capable of exerting the force required to crack properly constructed and maintained weeping tiles. They are however, capable of growing into any available space that offers water and air. It is typically possible to repair the damage and replace the weeping tiles with more robust materials while preserving the tree.

The minor deadwood and stubs present in the tree can be addressed through pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices. This pruning along with routine tree maintenance will also reduce the likelihood of future limb failure. Tree care is considered part of performing routine property maintenance and is a responsibility of all property owners within the City of Toronto.

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, 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. One objection to the removal was 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 plant 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 (*Anoplophora glabripennis*), and the emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*), make the preservation of all healthy trees more necessary now than ever.

The black walnut at 30 Ainsdale 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 Tree/Ravine 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

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: July 12, 2019 staff photograph of the black walnut tree trunk, measuring 63 cm in diameter.

Attachment 2 – Figure 2: July 12, 2019 staff photograph showing the canopy of the black walnut tree measuring 63 cm in diameter.

Attachment 3 – Figure 3: May 22, 2019 Arborist report spring photograph showing the lower branches of the black walnut tree measuring 63 cm in diameter cleared away from the house and garage.

Attachment 1

Figure 1: July 12, 2019 staff photograph of the black walnut tree trunk, measuring 63 cm in diameter.

Attachment 2

Figure 2: July 12, 2019 staff photograph showing the canopy of the black walnut tree measuring 63 cm in diameter.

Attachment 3

Figure 3: May 22, 2019 Arborist report spring photograph showing the lower branches of the black walnut tree measuring 63 cm in diameter cleared away from the house and garage.