

Application to Remove a City-Owned Tree – 222 Munro Street

Date: October 29, 2020

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: 14 - Toronto Danforth

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 222 Munro Street. The application indicates the reason for removal is to facilitate the construction of a basement walkout as proposed from recent Committee of Adjustment approvals.

The subject tree is a silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), measuring 104 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 City-owned tree located at 222 Munro Street.

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 City-owned tree located on the City-owned right of way fronting 222 Munro Street. The subject tree is a silver maple measuring 104 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been

made facilitate the construction of a basement walkout as proposed from recent Committee of Adjustment approvals.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in fair condition and at its full maturity. The arborist report also stated that the tree has a slight lean; its main trunk shows signs of vertical shear but is not significant enough to affect the tree's overall structure; and that construction will leave the tree with significant root damage even with some tree protection in place. It was also noted that the tree is situated on the front lawn, right up against sidewalk, 2.2m from property line and 3.5m away from the existing foundation.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and, at the time of inspection, determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Urban Forestry requested that the basement walkout component of the proposed plan be revised to retain the tree, but the applicant indicated that doing so was not feasible. Construction access can be modified and/or tree protection measures installed to preserve and protect the tree during construction.

Urban Forestry reviewed the minor variance application submitted to the Committee of Adjustment (COA) and recommended the COA deny the minor variance because it would have necessitated removal of the City-owned tree and valuable tree planting space. The applicant was advised that any application to injure and/or remove a City-owned tree would be denied by Urban Forestry regardless of COA approval. The COA approved the minor variance on the condition that the applicant submit an application for a permit to injure or remove the City-owned tree(s), as per *City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees Article II Trees on City Streets*.

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 II*, more commonly referred to as the City Street Tree By-law. The City 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 (\$18,851.00), 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 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 fronting 222 Munro Street 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 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 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing the City-owned silver maple tree fronting 222 Munro Street. August 13, 2020

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