

## **Application to Remove a Private Tree - 8 Leacock Crescent**

**Date:** August 27, 2021

**To:** North York Community Council

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

**Wards:** Ward 15 – Don Valley West

### **SUMMARY**

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This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 8 Leacock Crescent. The application indicates the reasons for removal are to accommodate a landscape redesign, as well as to address concerns regarding the safety of the children and the property related to potential tree failure and root damage to the driveway and garage slab.

The subject tree is a silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*), measuring 75 cm in diameter. The Tree By-laws do 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 privately owned tree located at 8 Leacock Crescent.

### **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 privately owned tree located at 8 Leacock Crescent. The subject tree is a silver maple measuring 75 cm in diameter. The application indicates the reasons for removal are to accommodate a

landscape redesign, as well as to address concerns regarding the safety of children and property related to potential branch failure, tree failure due to wind throw, declining health due to restricted growing conditions, and tree root damage to the driveway and garage slab.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in fair condition. The report states that the tree is growing close to the driveway and 5 m from the house, has multiple dead and dying branches, an unbalanced crown, low live crown ratio, and has a history of large diameter branch failure.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable.

Concerns regarding deadwood and the unbalanced crown structure can be addressed through pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices and the performance of routine tree maintenance. All trees even healthy trees will pose some risk of limb failure, however these preventative measures will reduce the likelihood of this happening.

Tree roots are not physically capable of exerting enough force to lift or crack properly constructed and maintained infrastructure including driveways. However, if proper drainage is not provided, heaving or cracking may occur as a result of water freezing and thawing, creating spaces that tree roots may grow into. The potential for damage described here, can typically be prevented and/or repaired without requiring tree removal. Concerns for the driveway and garage slab could be addressed by re-building these structures, if necessary, following tree-sensitive methods, and following the submission, review and approval of a Tree Protection Plan and injury permit. Roots cannot grow where there is no water or air. If properly constructed and sealed, these actions should prevent roots from growing into any existing cracks or other openings.

Through this inspection and review of the arborist report, staff have concluded that the removal of the subject tree is not permissible under the Tree By-law, City of Toronto *Municipal Code Chapter 813*. As a result of the above noted findings and in support of protecting and growing the City's urban forest, a permit to remove the tree was denied by Urban Forestry. The applicant is appealing this decision.

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 application to remove the tree in question.

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 replacement tree. However, in this instance it would be appropriate for the applicant to provide five replacement trees which can be achieved in a combination of on-site planting and cash-in-lieu of planting.

The silver maple located at 8 Leacock Crescent is a valuable part of the urban forest that provides numerous aesthetic, social and economic benefits to the property owner and local community. Toronto's urban forest provides \$55 million in environmental benefits every year including improved air quality through pollution removal, lower storm water management costs by reducing runoff, and carbon sequestration that lessens the impacts of climate change. Through shade and transpiration, increasing urban tree cover can mitigate exposure to extreme heat events. A higher density of trees in a neighborhood has been shown to significantly improve physical and mental health, such as reducing blood pressure and stress levels and promoting physical activity. Trees also make urban environments aesthetically more pleasing which raises property values.

Protecting the urban forest is a key strategy for building resiliency, as it continues to face increasing natural pressures such as storms and invasive pests. The 2013 ice storm resulted in the removal of over 3000 City-owned trees. The Emerald Ash Borer beetle has killed approximately 860,000 ash trees across the City. As a result, if the City aims to reach its canopy target of 40 per cent it is imperative that the City protect healthy trees from injury and removal whenever possible. The improved condition and size of the urban forest will support the City of Toronto's goals to improve quality of life and well-being that enables a diverse, sustainable, innovative, growing and thriving city.

In accordance with the City Council-approved Strategic Forest Management Plan, Toronto's Official Plan, Toronto's Biodiversity Strategy, and the Private Tree By-law, the silver maple at 8 Leacock Crescent, as a valuable part of the urban forest, should not be removed.

## **CONTACT**

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David Bostock, Supervisor, Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry  
Tel: 416-395-6134, Email: [David.Bostock@toronto.ca](mailto:David.Bostock@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

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Kim Statham  
Acting Director, Urban Forestry  
Parks, Forestry and Recreation

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing silver maple at 8 Leacock Cres.  
June 8, 2021

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