

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 24 King High Avenue

Date: December 1, 2021

To: North York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 6 – York Centre

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 24 King High Avenue. The application indicates the reason for removal is due to concerns the tree is leaning towards the dwelling and may cause property damage and personal injury.

The subject tree is a Siberian elm tree (*Ulmus pumila*) measuring 51 cm in diameter. The Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Acting Director of Urban Forestry recommends that:

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 24 King High Avenue.

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 privately owned tree located at 24 King High Avenue. The subject tree is a Siberian elm tree measuring 51 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns

that the tree is leaning towards the dwelling and may cause property damage and personal injury.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in poor condition. It also noted that the tree has 35 per cent deadwood and is leaning towards the dwelling with broken branches within the canopy.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Special attention was given to the root crown and main stem, and no defects or weakness that would unreasonably predispose the tree to failure were observed. For a tree of this stature it would be necessary for the main roots to have broken or lost contact with the surrounding soil to change the angle of the main stem, and no evidence of this was observed. The base of the stem and root crown was free of obvious decay or rot, the visible portions of the buttress roots were firm and solid, and the soil surrounding the base of the tree was firm and unyielding i.e., not soft or spongy, as might be indicative of rot or decay.

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 pay cash in lieu for 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. Any cash-in-lieu collected will go towards the City's tree canopy reserve, a fund used for planting trees City wide.

The Siberian elm tree at 24 King High Avenue 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 by 2050 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 Siberian elm at 24 King High Avenue as a valuable part of the urban forest, should not be removed.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Figure 1: Staff photograph showing Siberian elm at 24 King High Avenue Sept 28, 2021 (whole tree).

Attachment 2 - Figure 2: Staff photograph showing Siberian elm at 24 King High Avenue Oct 21, 2021 (base of tree).

Attachment 1 - Figure 1: Staff photograph showing Siberian elm at 24 King High Avenue; September 28, 2021 (whole tree).



Attachment 2 - Figure 2: Staff photograph showing Siberian elm at 24 King High Avenue; October 21, 2021 (base of tree).

