

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 18 Rodarick Drive

Date: June 6, 2022

To: Scarborough Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 25 - Scarborough-Rouge Park

SUMMARY

This staff report is about a matter that Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make a final decision.

This report requests that Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located on the boundary line between the properties of 18 Rodarick Drive and 20 Rodarick Drive. The application indicates the reason for removal is due to safety related to falling branches, and the roots of the tree damaging the driveway.

The subject tree is a Norway maple tree (*Acer platanoides*), measuring 77.5 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. Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located on the boundary line between the properties of 18 and 20 Rodarick Drive.

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 in the front yard on the boundary line between the properties of 18 and 20 Rodarick Drive. The subject tree is a Norway maple measuring 77.5 in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address safety related to falling branches and the roots of the tree damaging the driveway.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be 58 cm in diameter, and in poor condition. The arborist report also states that: the tree has had several branch failures over the past few years; most of its branches have included bark indicating weakness in the branch unions; and that the tree should be removed and planted with a better species in a more suitable site.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. The tree was a larger diameter (77.5 cm) than documented in the arborist report (58 cm). There had been damage to the roots of the tree as a result of the recently repaved driveways located at both 18 and 20 Rodarick Drive. There was deadwood noted in the canopy which could be pruned in accordance with good arboricultural practices to address any concerns. A majority of the canopy retained live buds. Urban Forestry staff requested that the homeowners continue to work with their arborist to manage the tree sustainably, including any pruning that is required for any branches that may have died back.

Tree roots are not physically capable of exerting enough force to lift or crack properly constructed and maintained 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 damage described here, can typically be repaired without requiring tree removal. As roots cannot grow where there is no water or air, they can be prevented from growing into any existing cracks or other openings if properly constructed and sealed.

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.

The Norway maple tree located on the boundary line between the properties of 18 and 20 Rodarick Drive 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 neighbourhood 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 resilience, 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 Norway maple tree located on the boundary line between the properties of 18 and 20 Rodarick Drive as a valuable part of the urban forest, should not be removed.

The Acting Director of Urban Forestry recommends Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located on the boundary line between the properties of 18 and 20 Rodarick Drive. Should Scarborough Community Council grant this request for tree removal, the following recommendation may be adopted, in accordance with the City's Tree By-law permit requirements:

- 1) Scarborough Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree diameter located on the boundary line between the properties of 18 and 20 Rodarick Drive, and require the applicant to provide five replacement trees which can be achieved in a combination of on-site planting and cash-in-lieu of planting to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing Norway maple tree located on the boundary line between the properties of 18 and 20 Rodarick Drive; March 11, 2022

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