

Application to Remove a City Tree – 94 Prince Edward Drive South

Date: December 15, 2022

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

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

Wards: 3 - Etobicoke-Lakeshore

SUMMARY

This report requests that Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 94 Prince Edward Drive South. The applicant is seeking permission to remove the tree to accommodate the proposed construction of a new shared driveway for two new dwellings.

The subject tree is a Norway maple tree (*Acer platanoides*) measuring 85 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. Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 94 Prince Edward Drive South.

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 94 Prince Edward Drive South. The subject tree is a Norway maple measuring 85 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to accommodate the proposed construction of a new shared driveway for two new dwellings.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be fair to good condition. The report described the tree as having an asymmetrical canopy, and exposed and girdled roots. It noted a potentially weak union of codominant stems that showed signs of included bark, a trunk cavity above this union that shows signs of poor compartmentalization, and signs of peeling bark. The canopy of this tree is considered to have watersprouts and dieback, with unhealed wounds and unhealed pruning cuts.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Urban Forestry staff requested that the applicant revise the design of the driveway in order to retain the tree and planting space. The applicant revised their plans to accommodate Urban Forestry's concerns. However after a windstorm removed another City tree that was also in conflict with the design, the applicant decided to move forward with their original plan. If permitted to remove the tree, they would put in a permeable driveway to facilitate new growth, and plant the trees equidistant to make the landscape aesthetically pleasing and maintain the curb appeal.

Toronto's Tree By-laws provisions do not direct the issuance of tree permits where injury or destruction of City trees is required for plans approved by the Committee of Adjustments (COA). In situations where the approval of the COA application will lead to a request for the removal of a City tree, including approval of minor variances, Urban Forestry recommends that the permit be denied in order to retain the City tree. For this reason, as well as 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.

The Norway maple tree at 94 Prince Edward Drive South 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 unnecessary 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 Tree By-laws, the Norway maple tree at 94 Prince Edward Drive South as a valuable part of the urban forest, should not be removed.

The Acting Director of Urban Forestry recommends Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove a privately owned tree located at 94 Prince Edward Drive South. Should City 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) Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 94 Prince Edward Drive South, conditional upon the applicant:
 - providing payment of the appraised value of the tree to be removed;
 - agreeing to have the tree removed at their expense;
 - providing 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, and;
 - providing a tree planting security deposit to cover the cost of planting and warranty for a period of two years for all trees to be planted on City property.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Kim Statham
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Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing the Norway maple tree at 94 Prince Edward Drive South; July 2022

Attachment 2 - Figure 2: Detail from site plan showing the proposed new dwellings, shared driveway between the dwellings, new sidewalks to the front doors, tree that fell during a storm, and the subject tree marked in green; June 3, 2022

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing the Norway maple tree at 94 Prince Edward Drive South; July 2022



Attachment 2 - Figure 2: Detail from site plan showing proposed new dwellings, shared driveway between the dwellings, new sidewalks to the front doors, tree that fell during a storm, and the subject tree marked in green; June 3, 2022

