

Application to Remove a City Tree – 150 Hillside Avenue

Date: April 24, 2023

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

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

Wards: Etobicoke-Lakeshore - 3

SUMMARY

This report requests that Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 150 Hillside Avenue. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is to allow for construction of a proposed asphalt driveway.

The sugar maple tree, *Acer saccharum*, measures 86 cm in diameter. The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable. Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make a final decision as to whether a permit may be issued when an applicant wishes to appeal the City's decision to deny a tree permit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director of Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 150 Hillside Avenue.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

There is no decision history related to this tree removal permit application.

COMMENTS

Parks, Forestry and Recreation received an application for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located on the City-owned right-of-way fronting 150 Hillside Avenue. The sugar maple tree in question measures 86 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is to allow for the construction of a proposed asphalt driveway.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in good condition. This report noted that the tree is in good botanical and structural condition. There is a minor amount of small diameter deadwood present in the crown, however this does not affect tree's overall well-being and longevity.

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

Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff reviewed the minor variance application submitted to the Committee of Adjustment (COA) to facilitate the construction of a new dwelling and driveway at this site, and provided comments recommending denial of the variances impacting the by-law protected trees. The applicant was advised that any application to injure and/or remove a City-owned tree will be denied, regardless of COA approval. The COA approved the minor variance application on the condition that the applicant submit an application for a permit to injure or remove the City-owned trees, as per the *City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees Article II Trees on City Streets*.

City staff requested that the plans be revised to retain the tree, but the applicant indicated that doing so was not feasible.

The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable. Through the inspection and review of the arborist report, a permit to remove the tree was denied by Parks, Forestry and Recreation. Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make a final decision as to whether a permit may be issued when an applicant wishes to appeal the City's decision to deny a tree permit.

Protecting the urban forest is critical in building climate resilience as urban centres continue to face increasing development, impacts due to climate change in the form of extreme weather events, and other natural threats such as invasive pests. The City has reaffirmed its canopy target of 40 per cent by 2050. One approach to support achieving this target is to protect healthy trees from injury and removal whenever possible. A sustainable and expanding urban forest also supports the City of Toronto's goals to improve quality of life and well-being of its residents.

Toronto's urban forest provides \$55 million in ecosystem services and benefits annually. Services such as air pollution removal, reduction of storm water runoff, and carbon sequestration all contribute to climate resilience. Protecting and expanding tree cover helps to mitigate exposure to extreme heat events through shade and transpiration. A

higher density of trees in a neighbourhood has been shown to significantly improve physical and mental well-being by reducing blood pressure, decreasing stress levels and by promoting physical activity. Economic benefits include enhancements to property values, increased tourism and consumer spending.

In keeping with the City's Strategic Forest Management Plan, Toronto's Official Plan, Toronto's Biodiversity Strategy, and the Tree Protection By-laws, the sugar maple tree at 150 Hillside Avenue is a valuable part of the urban forest, providing numerous aesthetic, social and economic benefits to the property owner and the local community and therefore should not be removed.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 150 Hillside Avenue. Should Etobicoke York 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) Etobicoke York Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 150 Hillside Avenue, conditional upon the applicant:
 - providing payment of the appraised value of the tree (\$15,990.00) 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

Max Dida, Supervisor Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry
Tel: 416-394-8551, Email: Max.Dida@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the sugar maple tree at 150 Hillside Avenue; November 3, 2022

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the sugar maple tree at 150 Hillside Avenue; November 3, 2022

