

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 34 Clissold Road

Date: September 26, 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 privately owned tree located at 34 Clissold Road. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to the proximity of the tree to the shed and the tree's lean towards the house. The applicant also indicates that they want to increase biodiversity by removing an invasive species tree and replacing it with a native species.

The Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) tree in question measures 49 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 denial of a permit of a tree protected under the By-laws.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 34 Clissold Road.

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 privately owned tree located in the rear yard at 34 Clissold Road. The Norway maple tree in question measures 49 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to the proximity of the tree to the shed and the tree's lean towards the house. The applicant also indicates that they want to increase biodiversity by removing an invasive species tree and replacing it with a native species.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in good condition. The report noted that the tree leans towards house, but no structural issues, pests, pathogens or decay were observed.

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

The tree is exhibiting a slight lean due to a phototropic growth pattern. Phototropism is a natural growth pattern whereby plants grow toward available light. The lean observed is not impacting the structural integrity of the tree and is a response to competition from nearby trees. There is no evidence of heaving or other root damage that would be indicative of potential tree failure. The tree's root system appears healthy and has grown to support the slight lean.

Regarding the stated goal of managing invasive species, the subject tree is not in close proximity to any natural areas, and is a common tree found on private property and city streets in the neighbourhood. Removing one Norway maple tree in this area will not result in a significant ecological benefit. However, if this tree were to be removed, all of the ecosystem benefits that this tree is currently providing would be lost.

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.

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. Three comments were received in support of removal and no comments were received in opposition to the application to remove the tree in question.

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.

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. 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 sustainable and expanding urban forest also supports the City of Toronto's goals to improve quality of life and well-being of its residents. 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 Norway maple tree at 34 Clissold Road 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 privately owned tree located at 34 Clissold Road. 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 privately owned tree located at 34 Clissold Road, 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, Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Figure 1 - Staff photograph of the Norway maple at 34 Clissold Road;
June 14, 2023

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