

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 295 Woburn Avenue

Date: December 15, 2022

To: North York Community Council

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

Wards: 8 – Eglinton-Lawrence

SUMMARY

This report requests that North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located in the rear yard at 295 Woburn Avenue. The applicant is seeking permission to remove the tree to address concerns regarding the proximity of the tree to the adjacent properties; and the creation of slip hazards on the adjacent rear deck.

The subject tree is a honey locust (*Glenditsia triacanthos*) measuring 49 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. North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 295 Woburn 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 295 Woburn Ave. The subject tree is a honey locust tree measuring 49 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns regarding the proximity of the tree to the adjacent properties; and the creation of slip hazards on the adjacent rear deck due to debris falling from the tree.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in fair condition. The arborist report describes the tree as having an elevated crown, co-dominant stems, included bark, and a girdling root. The arborist report also indicates that the tree is growing against the deck, 4 m from the foundation, and 0.4m away from the fence.

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

Every large growing tree has some degree of maintenance associated with it including the collection and/or removal of leaves, flowers, fruit, twigs and small branches.

The application includes photographs demonstrating that the tree and the attached wooden deck are in contact however the deck can be modified or altered to relieve the pressure without requiring the removal of the tree. Depending on the nature and extent of any work around the tree, a permit to injure the tree may be required.

Through the 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 regarding the removal of the tree in question were received.

The honey locust tree at 295 Woburn 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 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 by 2050, 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 Private Tree By-law, the honey locust tree at 295 Woburn Avenue, as a valuable part of the urban forest, should not be removed.

The Acting Director of Urban Forestry recommends North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 295 Woburn Avenue. Should North York Community Council grant this request for tree removal, the following recommendation may be adopted, in consideration of the City's Tree By-law permit requirements:

- 1) North York Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 295 Woburn Avenue 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

David Bostock, Supervisor, Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry
Tel: 416-395-6134, Email: David.Bostock@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing the honey locust tree at the rear of 295 Woburn Avenue; September 2022

Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Arborist Report photograph showing the honey locust tree at the rear of 295 Woburn Avenue contacting the attached wooden deck

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Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Arborist Report photograph showing the honey locust tree at the rear of 295 Woburn Avenue contacting the attached wooden deck

