

## **Application to Remove a Private Tree – 309 Armadale Avenue**

**Date:** May 3, 2023

**To:** Toronto and East York Community Council

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

**Wards:** Parkdale-High Park - 4

### **SUMMARY**

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This report requests that Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located on the boundary line between the properties of 309 Armadale Avenue and 307 Armadale Avenue. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to its conflict with a fence on the property line, the potential negative impact to the growth of nearby oak trees and cedar hedge, and the desire to manage invasive species.

The Norway maple tree, *Acer platanoides*, in question measures 42 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**

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

1. Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 309 Armadale Avenue.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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

## DECISION HISTORY

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

## COMMENTS

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Parks, Forestry and Recreation received an application for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located in the rear yard on the boundary line between the properties of 309 Armadale Avenue and 307 Armadale Avenue. The Norway maple tree in question measures 42 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to its conflict with a fence on the property line, the potential negative impact to the growth of nearby oak trees and cedar hedge, and the desire to manage invasive species.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the health and structural condition of the tree as being in fair condition. The arborist report also states that the tree is growing in a restrictive space. Defects noted in their assessment include a minor lean, vertical frost crack, trunk wound, and visible surface root flares.

City staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. The tree's crown does not significantly inhibit the growth of the nearby oak trees, and appropriate pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices can be undertaken to reduce potential conflict. It was also suggested that the conflict with the fence is minor and could be addressed through minor repairs to the leaning fence. Moreover a new fence could be installed in such a way that it can accommodate the tree.

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 the tree has grown to support the slight lean.

The subject tree is not growing in close proximity to any natural areas, and is a common tree found on private property and city streets. 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. No comments were received in support nor in opposition to the application to remove the tree in question.

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 Norway maple tree at 309 Armadale 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 Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 309 Armadale Avenue. Should Toronto and East 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) Toronto and East York Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 309 Armadale 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**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the Norway maple tree at 309 Armadale Avenue; August 16, 2022

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