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Town of Aurora

Committee of the Whole Report

No. OPS24-009

Subject: Tree Removal Application – 15342 Yonge Street

Prepared by: Matthew Volpintesta, Manager of Parks & Fleet

Department: Operational Services

Date: May 7, 2024

Recommendation

1. That Report No. OPS24-009 be received; and
2. That the Tree Removal Application for 15342 Yonge Street be approved.

Executive Summary

This report is to provide Council with information and recommendations associated with the removal of trees at 15342 Yonge Street:

- Town Forestry staff assessment confirms information in application and supports removal.
- Compensation for tree removals and replanting opportunities identified.

Background

The subject property is listed on the Town of Aurora's Register of Properties of Cultural Heritage Value or Interest under Tree Protection By-law 5850-16. Section 9 (1) (b) states:

If a tree subject to an Application is found by the Director to be a Heritage Tree, the Director shall not issue a permit unless the injury, destruction or removal is approved by Council following a review by the Town's Heritage Advisory Committee.

On November 13, 2023, the owner at 15342 Yonge Street applied for the removal of a tree at the subject property, noting suspected structural issues as well as sightline issues for cars exiting the property.

Analysis

Town Forestry staff assessment confirms information in application and supports removal.

The Town's Forestry Technician attended the site and confirmed the tree was a multi-stem (13cm & 21cm) mature white cedar in fair condition. There were no apparent structural concerns with the tree; however, visibility concerns were acknowledged as vehicles exiting the property driveway onto Yonge Street, are partially blocked from seeing pedestrian traffic on the west sidewalk travelling south. Further, a blind spot is also apparent for vehicles turning out of the driveway, as the tree stems block the view of southbound traffic when stopped in the driveway approaching exit. Attachment 1 to this report highlights the tree stems limiting the vision of southbound traffic travelling on Yonge Street.

Compensation for tree removals and replanting opportunities identified.

Based on the Town's Tree Removal and Compensation Policy, the replacement value for this tree is calculated to be \$840. Staff's recommendations, should the Heritage Advisory Committee's recommendation to Council be in favour of tree removal, is that this tree at 15342 Yonge Street be replaced with a deciduous tree for the full compensation value, and that the replacement tree be set back further from Yonge Street to avoid any sightline issues.

Advisory Committee Review

The Tree Permit Application for this property was reviewed by the Heritage Advisory Committee (HAC) at its February 12, 2024, meeting. The Minutes include the following comments from the committee:

The Heritage Advisory Committee approved the tree removal at 15342 Yonge Street supported a new deciduous replanting of a native species that is further recessed from the street edge.

Legal Considerations

Pursuant to the Town's Private Tree Protection By-law Number 5850-16, a permit is required to injure or remove a Heritage Tree, as defined in the by-law, on private property. Further, in the case of a Heritage Tree, a permit for removal or destruction cannot be issued by staff, unless it is approved by Council following a review by the Town's Heritage Advisory Committee. The tree at issue at 15342 Yonge Street has been identified as being a Heritage Tree and the application for its removal was referred to the Heritage Advisory Committee.

At this stage, Council approval is required to issue a tree removal permit to the applicant. If Council does not provide approval, the permit will not be issued, and the applicant will not be permitted to remove the tree at issue. As the tree has been observed to pose sightline restrictions for traffic, if the tree is not permitted to be removed and contributes to a vehicular accident or a pedestrian injury, the Town may become liable for any such accident or injury. The issuance of a permit pursuant to the Private Tree Protection By-law may be subject to conditions, as imposed by Council.

Financial Implications

Any tree compensation revenues will be contributed to the Town's Tree Compensation Reserve whose balance is used to fund the installation of new trees across Town. If approved, all costs for the removal the proposed tree will be solely at the owner's expense.

Communications Considerations

There are no communications considerations as a result of this report.

Climate Change Considerations

Removal of live trees reduces the ability of the Town's natural assets to capture carbon; however, the Town's Tree Compensation Policy allows for the re-planting of trees to compensate for the loss of canopy associated with any removals which will re-generate and increase the carbon offset previously existing.

Link to Strategic Plan

Tree removals support the Strategic Plan goal of Supporting Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability for all through its accomplishment in satisfying requirements in the following key objectives within this goal statement:

Encouraging the stewardship of Aurora's natural resources: Assess the merits of measuring the Town's natural capital assets.

Alternative(s) to the Recommendation

1. That the Tree Removal Application for 15342 Yonge Street not be approved.
2. As directed by Council.

Conclusions

Town staff support the removal of the multi-stem tree at 15342 Yonge Street in alignment with the Town's Tree Removal and Compensation Policy and recommend that the tree be replaced with a deciduous tree for full compensation value. Town staff will work to finalize details of replanting, tree removal permit and associated securities with applicant. Staff recommend the Tree Removal Application for 15342 Yonge Street be approved.

Attachments

Attachment 1 – Northbound view at driveway exit of 15342 Yonge Street.

Previous Reports

Heritage Advisory Committee Memorandum – February 12, 2024

Pre-submission Review

Agenda Management Team review on April 18, 2024.

Approvals

Approved by Sara Tienkamp, Director, Operational Services

Approved by Doug Nadorozny, Chief Administrative Officer