

Application to Remove a Private Tree - 467 Soudan Avenue

Date: August 13, 2021

To: North York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 15 - Don Valley West

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 467 Soudan Avenue. The application indicates the reason for removal is to address concerns that the tree poses a safety hazard.

The subject tree is an Austrian pine (*Pinus nigra*), measuring 46 cm in diameter. The Private Tree By-law does not support the removal of the tree as it is healthy and maintainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager of Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 467 Soudan 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 467 Soudan Avenue. The subject tree is an Austrian pine tree measuring 46 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address concerns that the tree poses a safety hazard.

The arborist report that accompanied the application describes the tree to be in poor condition. It describes the tree as leaning with: failing limbs still attached; an unbalanced form due to light competition from a nearby large shade tree; scaffold limbs competing to become codominant leaders; and the presence of insect damage in the form of sap globules on the trunk.

Urban Forestry inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. All of the concerns listed in the arborist report were present, however they are minor in nature and do not result in the tree being in poor condition nor do they prevent the tree from being maintained in a safe condition.

All trees, even healthy trees will pose some risk of limb failure. Removal of deadwood through pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices and the performance of routine tree maintenance will reduce the likelihood of this happening.

Through this 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 were received in response to the posting.

Should City Council approve this request for tree removal, in accordance with *Section 813-20 of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees, Article III*, permit issuance must be conditional upon the provision of satisfactory replacement planting. As a condition of permit issuance, the applicant has proposed to provide cash-in-lieu but did not indicate a specific amount or number of tree equivalents. However, in this instance it would be appropriate for the applicant to provide five replacement trees which can be achieved in a combination of on-site planting and cash-in-lieu of planting.

The Austrian pine tree at 467 Soudan 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 resiliency, 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, it is imperative that the City protect healthy trees from 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 Austrian pine at 467 Soudan Avenue, as a valuable part of the urban forest, should not be removed.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Figure 1: Staff photograph showing Austrian pine tree located in the rear yard of 467 Soudan Avenue; May 10, 2021

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