

Application to Remove a City-Owned Tree – 1380 Queen Street West

Date: May 27, 2021

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Ward 4 – Parkdale-High Park

SUMMARY

This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 1380 Queen Street West. The application indicates the reason for removal is due to concerns that the tree's roots may damage water and sprinkler service lines in the future, potentially causing service or safety issues.

The subject tree is a ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) measuring 12 cm in diameter. The Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this 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 City-owned tree located at 1380 Queen Street West.

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 City-owned tree located in front of the property located at 1380 Queen Street West. The application was submitted by the owner of the adjacent property at 1378 Queen Street West. The subject tree is a ginkgo measuring 12 cm in diameter. The application indicates the reason for removal is due to the applicant's concerns that the tree's roots may damage

water and sprinkler service lines in the future, potentially causing service or safety issues.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in good condition and did not recommend removal. The report concluded that the tree's potential conflict with the water service lines was unlikely because the tree's roots would not be deep enough to encroach upon the water service lines, which were replaced as part of a building renovation approximately 20 years ago. The arborist report noted that modern water service lines are typically installed at 1.5 m below grade and constructed using copper piping, which is highly resistant to root intrusion. No evidence was provided to suggest the tree's roots were damaging or may damage the water service lines in the future. A large canker at the base of the tree's trunk was noted as a defect.

Urban Forestry staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. The noted defect at the base of the tree's trunk appears to be mechanical damage which has healed well and is not expected to compromise the tree's condition.

Tree roots typically grow in the upper 60 cm of soil and are generally not physically capable of exerting enough force to crack well-built and maintained pipes. Water and sewer pipes are usually 1.5 - 2 m below ground level. It is unlikely that this tree will impact water service lines in the future.

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.

Should City Council approve this request for removal of the City-owned tree, in accordance with *Section 813-10.B of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees, Article II*, permit issuance must be conditional upon the applicants providing payment of the appraised value of the trees to be removed (\$1,166.00), agreeing to have the trees removed at their expense, as well as providing satisfactory replacement planting. In this instance, it would be appropriate for the applicant to provide five replacement trees for each tree being removed which can be achieved in a combination of on-site planting and cash-in-lieu of planting. The applicant will also be required to provide a tree planting security deposit to cover the cost of removal, replacement and the cost of maintenance for a period of two years for all trees to be planted on City property.

The ginkgo tree at 1380 Queen Street West 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 Tree By-laws, the ginkgo tree at 1380 Queen Street West, as a valuable part of the urban forest, should not be removed.

CONTACT

Nicholas Trevisan, Supervisor, Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry
Tel: 416-392-7390, Email: Nicholas.Trevisan@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE



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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing the City-owned ginkgo tree at 1380 Queen St. West, January 7, 2021

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