

## **Application to Remove a City-Owned Tree - 157 Brookside Avenue**

**Date:** October 19, 2021

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

**From:** Acting Director, Urban Forestry

**Wards:** Ward 4 – Parkdale – High Park

### **SUMMARY**

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This report requests that City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 157 Brookside Avenue. The application indicates the reason for removal is to construct a parking pad.

The subject tree is a Colorado blue spruce (*Picea pungens*), measuring 39 cm in diameter. The Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Acting Director of Urban Forestry recommends that:

1. City Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 157 Brookside 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 regarding this tree removal permit application.

### **COMMENTS**

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Urban Forestry received an application for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located on the City-owned right-of-way fronting 157 Brookside Avenue. The subject tree is a Colorado blue spruce measuring 39 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree is to construct a parking pad.

The arborist report that accompanied the application did not include a condition rating for the tree.

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

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*.

*Section 918-12.A of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 918, Parking on Residential Front Yards and Boulevards* does not permit tree removal for the purpose of front yard parking. Moreover, this By-law also requires that the applicant plants a tree on the boulevard fronting or in the front yard of the residential property for which the licence for parking is being sought. In the case where it is not feasible for a tree to be planted, the applicant must pay to have a tree planted elsewhere.

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 trees, 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 tree to be removed (\$3,848.00), agreeing to have the tree 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 Colorado blue spruce tree at 157 Brookside 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 Colorado blue spruce tree at 157 Brookside Avenue, as a valuable part of the urban forest, should not be removed.

## **CONTACT**

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

## **SIGNATURE**

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

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing the Colorado blue spruce tree at 157 Brookside Avenue; July 15, 2021

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