

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 140 Courcelette Road

Date: December 15, 2022

To: Scarborough Community Council

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

Wards: 20 - Scarborough Southwest

SUMMARY

This report requests that Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 140 Courcelette Road. The applicant is seeking permission to remove the tree in order to address the nuisance smell, mess and safety issues related to dropping fruit.

The subject tree is a ginkgo tree (*Ginkgo biloba*) measuring 64 cm in diameter. The Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Acting Director of Urban Forestry recommends that:

1. Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located between properties 140 and 142 Courcelette Road.

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 in the side yard between properties 140 and 142 Courcelette Road. The subject tree is a ginkgo tree measuring 64 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to address the nuisance smell, mess and safety issues related to dropping fruit.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in poor condition. The report indicated that the tree is a female ginkgo tree that drops an enormous amount of fruit. The fruit is tracked into each home creating mess and smell. The arborist report claims that fruit from the tree led to a slip and fall injury.

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

Many of the tree species that grow in Toronto's urban forest produce fruit that some residents consider a nuisance. Every large growing tree has some degree of maintenance associated with it including removal of leaves, flowers, fruit, twigs or small branches. Removal of debris such as fallen fruit is considered part of performing regular property maintenance and is a responsibility of all property owners in Toronto.

The City's Tree By-laws do not support tree removal to address the perceived nuisance resulting from a tree's natural functions, nor to address concerns regarding onerous tree maintenance. Private tree maintenance is considered part of regular property maintenance and is the responsibility of the property owner. The benefits that trees afford to a community far outweigh the maintenance inconvenience associated with falling debris.

Through the 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 regarding the removal of the tree in question were received.

The ginkgo tree between properties 140 and 142 Courcelette Road 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 resilience, 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 by 2050, it is imperative that the City protect healthy trees from unnecessary 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 ginkgo tree between properties 140 and 142 Courcelette Road as a valuable part of the urban forest, should not be removed.

The Acting Director of Urban Forestry recommends Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located between properties 140 and 142 Courcelette Road. Should Scarborough 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) Scarborough Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at between properties 140 and 142 Courcelette Road, 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

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing the gingko tree between properties 140 and 142 Courcelette Road; September 21, 2022

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph showing the ginkgo tree between properties 140 and 142 Courcelette Road; September 21, 2022

