

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 66 Crosland Drive

Date: August 21, 2023

To: Scarborough Community Council

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

Wards: Scarborough Centre - 21

SUMMARY

This report requests that Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 66 Crosland Drive. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is because the tree has outgrown its location, branches are rubbing on adjacent roofs, animals are using the tree for access to adjacent roofs, branches are growing in close proximity to utility lines, and the tree is dropping needles and sap.

The Austrian pine tree, *Pinus nigra*, in question measures 55 cm in diameter. The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable. Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make a final decision as to whether a permit may be issued when an applicant wishes to appeal the City's decision to deny a tree permit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director of Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 66 Crosland Drive.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

There is no decision history related to this tree removal permit application.

COMMENTS

Parks, Forestry and Recreation received an application for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located in the rear yard at 66 Crosland Drive. The Austrian pine tree in question measures 55 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is because the tree has outgrown its location; branches are rubbing on adjacent roofs, animals are using the tree for access to adjacent roofs, branches are growing in close proximity to utility lines, and the tree is dropping needles and sap.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree's health to be in decline.

City staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. This tree is situated approximately 3.5 metres from the neighbouring house and garage. At the time of inspection, no evidence of the tree damaging the house or garage was observed. Staff noted that the tree had codominant stems, poor architecture due to crossing branches, and that branches were overhanging the neighbour's roof. However, these conditions were deemed non-critical tree defects and it was determined that the tree was botanically healthy.

Many species of urban wildlife can climb walls and reach the rooftops of houses that do not have trees growing in close proximity to them. Concerns of and wildlife accessing the roof directly from this tree as well as conflict with utilities may be mitigated by pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices and performing routine property maintenance. This includes pruning of secondary branches to elevate and redirect growth to eliminate any branch contact with neighbouring roofs and overhead utility wires or conductors. Regular roof inspections should be performed as part of routine property maintenance to prevent animals from damaging or entering the home.

Every large growing tree requires some degree of maintenance such as removal of leaves, flowers, fruit, twigs and small branches. Private tree maintenance, such as the removal of dropping needles, is considered part of regular property maintenance and is the responsibility of the property owner. The tree is located such that routine maintenance of the trees branches and roofs can be performed.

The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable; nor do they support removal to address the perceived nuisance resulting from a tree's natural functions such as habitat for wildlife, nor to address concerns regarding onerous tree maintenance. Through the inspection and review of the arborist report, a permit to remove the tree was denied by Parks, Forestry and Recreation. Community Council has delegated authority from City Council to make a final decision

as to whether a permit may be issued when an applicant wishes to appeal the City's decision to deny a tree permit.

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 support nor in opposition to the application to remove the tree in question.

The City has reaffirmed its canopy target of 40 per cent by 2050. One approach to support achieving this target is to protect healthy trees from injury and removal whenever possible.

Protecting the urban forest is also critical in building climate resilience as urban centres continue to face increasing development, impacts due to climate change in the form of extreme weather events, and other natural threats such as invasive pests. Toronto's urban forest provides \$55 million in ecosystem services and benefits annually. Services such as air pollution removal, reduction of storm water runoff, and carbon sequestration all contribute to climate resilience. Protecting and expanding tree cover helps to mitigate exposure to extreme heat events through shade and transpiration.

A sustainable and expanding urban forest supports the City of Toronto's goals to improve quality of life and well-being of its residents. A higher density of trees in a neighbourhood has been shown to significantly improve physical and mental well-being by reducing blood pressure, decreasing stress levels and by promoting physical activity. Economic benefits include enhancements to property values, increased tourism and consumer spending.

In keeping with the City's Strategic Forest Management Plan, Toronto's Official Plan, Toronto's Biodiversity Strategy, and the Tree Protection By-laws, the Austrian pine tree at 66 Crosland Drive is a valuable part of the urban forest, providing numerous aesthetic, social and economic benefits to the property owner and the local community and therefore should not be removed.

Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 66 Crosland Drive. 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 66 Crosland Drive, 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
Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Figure 1 - Staff photograph of the Austrian pine tree at 66 Crosland Drive;
April 14, 2023

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