

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 16 Catalina Drive

Date: August 21, 2023

To: Scarborough Community Council

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

Wards: Scarborough-Guildwood - 24

SUMMARY

This report requests that Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 16 Catalina Drive. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to the year-round shade that affects the efficiency of their solar panels, as well as shading the edible garden and fruit trees surrounding the subject tree.

The Colorado blue spruce tree, *Picea pungens*, in question measures 38 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 16 Catalina 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 front yard at 16 Catalina Drive. The Colorado blue spruce tree in question measures 38 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to the year-round shade that affects the efficiency of their solar panels, as well as shading the edible garden and fruit trees surrounding the subject tree.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in good health and good condition.

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

The issues with understory landscaping can be addressed by choosing plant species that are tolerant of shade and the acidic soil conditions common to locations under coniferous trees. Issues with gardening, including vegetable gardens can be addressed by choosing alternate locations for garden beds.

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 of trees to reduce shading conditions or because they reduce the efficiency of solar panels. 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 of removal, and one comment was received 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 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 also 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 Colorado blue spruce tree at 16 Catalina 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 16 Catalina 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 16 Catalina 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 Colorado blue spruce tree at 16 Catalina Drive; April 21, 2023

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