

# Application to Remove a Private Tree – 282 Friendship Avenue

**Date:** September 28, 2023

**To:** Scarborough Community Council

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

**Wards:** Scarborough-Rouge Park - 25

## SUMMARY

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This report requests that Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 282 Friendship Avenue. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to safety concerns related to storm failures of similar sized trees in the neighbourhood.

The Colorado blue spruce tree (*Picea pungens*) in question measures 46 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 denial of a permit of a tree protected under the By-laws.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The Director, 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 282 Friendship 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 related to this tree removal permit application.

## COMMENTS

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Parks, Forestry and Recreation received an application for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located in the front yard at 282 Friendship Avenue. The Colorado blue spruce tree in question measures 46 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to safety concerns related to storm failures of similar sized trees in the neighbourhood.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in good condition. This report noted that the root crown structure is good with no significant defects, the trunk integrity is good to fair with a slight kink, the crown structure is good with no significant defects, and the canopy vigor is good to fair with some needle discolouration that may have been caused by winter desiccation.

City staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. The defects found were very minor in nature and do not, individually or collectively, result in the tree being in poor condition or prevent it from being maintained in a safe condition. Pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices will reduce the likelihood of future limb failure. Routine tree maintenance is considered part of performing routine property maintenance and is a responsibility of all property owners within the City of Toronto.

The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable. 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 two comments were 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 282 Friendship Avenue 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 282 Friendship Avenue. 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 282 Friendship Avenue, 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**

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

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1: Figure 1 - Staff photograph of the Colorado blue spruce tree at 282 Friendship Avenue; June 9, 2023

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