

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 13 Lockwood Road

Date: December 15, 2022

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: 19 - Beaches-East York

SUMMARY

This report requests that Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 13 Lockwood Road. The applicant is seeking permission to remove the tree in order to reduce the potential hazard and maintenance issues that may be caused by the tree.

The subject tree is a Colorado blue spruce tree (*Picea pungens*) measuring 42 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. Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 13 Lockwood 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 in the rear yard at 13 Lockwood Road. The subject tree is a Colorado blue spruce measuring 42 cm in diameter. The request to remove this tree has been made to reduce the potential hazard that may be caused by the tree.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in poor condition. The subject tree was described as having gaps in its foliage, brown/dying tips, a slight lean towards the house, and the dropping of copious needles.

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

The tree is exhibiting a slight lean due to a phototropic growth pattern. Phototropism is a natural growth pattern whereby plants grow toward available light. The lean observed is not impacting the structural integrity of the tree and is a response to competition from nearby trees. There is no evidence of heaving or other root damage that would be indicative of potential tree failure. The tree's root system appears healthy and has grown to support the slight lean.

All trees drop leaves, needles, nuts, fruit or other debris. Removal of debris such as falling needles are considered part of performing regular property maintenance and is a responsibility of all property owners in Toronto. Moreover, removal of deadwood can be addressed through pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices and the performance of routine tree maintenance. All trees even healthy trees will pose some risk of limb failure however routine maintenance will reduce the likelihood of this happening.

The City's Tree By-laws do not support tree removal to address the perceived nuisance resulting from a tree's natural functions.

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*. 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 Colorado blue spruce tree at 13 Lockwood 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 Colorado blue spruce at 13 Lockwood Road is a valuable part of the urban forest, should not be removed.

The Acting Director of Urban Forestry recommends Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 13 Lockwood Road. Should Toronto and East York 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) Toronto and East York Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 13 Lockwood 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 Colorado blue spruce tree at 13 Lockwood Road; August 24, 2022.

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