

## **Application to Remove a Private Tree – 560 Willard Avenue**

**Date:** August 28, 2023

**To:** Toronto and East York Community Council

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

**Wards:** Parkdale-High Park - 4

### **SUMMARY**

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This report requests that Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 560 Willard Avenue. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to the location and species.

The Colorado blue spruce tree, *Picea pungens*, in question measures 41 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**

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

1. Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 560 Willard 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 rear yard at 560 Willard Avenue. The Colorado blue spruce tree in question measures 41 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to its location and species.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in fair condition. This report noted a minor lean at the base of the trunk, slightly elevated crown, branches approaching the building, resin oozing from previous pruning wounds, lower sections of canopy showing natural form dieback, purple needles, likely as a result of dehydration.

City staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Upon a staff inspection, no critical defects were found. The tree is in good structural and botanical condition.

This tree is situated approximately 2.4 metres from the rear addition. At the time of the inspection there was no evidence that the tree was impacting the house. Pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices and the performance of routine tree maintenance will reduce the risk of property damage.

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, 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 of 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 560 Willard 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 Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 560 Willard Avenue. 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 560 Willard 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 560 Willard Avenue; May 9, 2023

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