

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 1706 Gerrard Street East

Date: October 27, 2023

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Beaches-East York - 19

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 1706 Gerrard Street East. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to safety concerns related to falling branches or tree failure.

The Norway maple tree (*Acer platanoides*) in question measures 82 cm in diameter. The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable. The permit was denied and the applicant is appealing the decision. 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

The Director, 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 1706 Gerrard Street East.

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 1706 Gerrard Street East. The Norway maple tree in question measures 82 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to safety concerns related to falling branches or tree failure.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in good health with good structure. The report noted that it is a large tree growing in a confined soil volume. The report also noted that Norway maple is a weak-wooded species when compared to other tree species.

City staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Staff noted that the tree has co-dominant stems, and despite evidence of a broken branch, the crown was growing with good vigor. The tree's roots were restricted by a retaining wall but had a strong root flare, which is an indicator of good root structure. At the time of inspection there were no significant signs of high potential of root failure, such as significant basal decay or root plate lifting. Pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices and the performance of routine tree maintenance will reduce the risk of limb or tree failure.

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. The applicant is appealing this decision. 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 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 Norway maple tree at 1706 Gerrard Street East 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 1706 Gerrard Street East. 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 1706 Gerrard Street East, 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, Parks, Forestry and Recreation.

CONTACT

Janice Allen, Supervisor Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry
Tel: 416-396-5131, Email: Janice.Allen@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the Norway maple tree at 1706 Gerrard Street East; April 20, 2023

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the Norway maple tree at 1706 Gerrard Street East; April 20, 2023

