

Application to Remove Four City Trees – 3900 Yonge Street

Date: March 12, 2024

To: North York Community Council

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

Wards: Eglinton-Lawrence - 8

SUMMARY

This report requests that North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove four City-owned trees located at 3900 Yonge Street. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the trees is to widen an existing single lane driveway to accommodate two large vehicles and an adjacent walkway.

The trees in question include a black walnut tree (*Juglans nigra*) measuring 29 cm in diameter; an Austrian pine tree (*Pinus nigra*) measuring 41 cm in diameter; and two Colorado blue spruce trees (*Picea pungens*) measuring 29 cm and 32 cm in diameter. The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of these trees as they are 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 of Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove four City-owned trees located at 3900 Yonge Street.

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 four City-owned trees located on the City-owned right-of-way fronting 3900 Yonge Street. The trees in question include a black walnut tree (*Juglans nigra*) measuring 29 cm in diameter; an Austrian pine tree (*Pinus nigra*) measuring 41 cm in diameter; and two Colorado blue spruce trees (*Picea pungens*) measuring 29 cm and 32 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the trees is to widen an existing single lane driveway to accommodate two large vehicles and an adjacent walkway.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described all four trees to be in good condition.

City staff inspected the trees and, at the time of inspection, determined that they are healthy and maintainable. Where healthy City-owned tree removals are proposed to accommodate hardscape features such as driveways, walkways, and parking pads, the City requests that alternative designs be proposed to preserve healthy trees. Where no alternative designs are proposed, the request for a tree removal permit is denied and referred to Community Council.

The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of these trees as they are healthy and maintainable. Through the inspection and review of the arborist report, a permit to remove the four trees 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.

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, these four trees at 3900 Yonge Street are 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 North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove four City-owned trees located at 3900 Yonge Street. Should North 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) North York Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove four City-owned trees located at 3900 Yonge Street, conditional upon the applicant:
 - providing payment of the appraised value of the subject trees (\$9,091.00);
 - agreeing to have the trees and stumps removed at their expense;
 - providing five replacement trees for each tree removed totaling 20 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, and;
 - if any of the required replacement trees are planted by or on behalf of the applicant, within the City-owned road allowance, a tree planting security deposit in the amount of \$583 per tree shall be required to guarantee the trees' survival and health for a period of 2 years, from the date that planting is accepted as satisfactory by Urban Forestry.

CONTACT

David Bostock, Supervisor Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry
Tel: 416-395-6134, Email: David.Bostock@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the black walnut tree at 3900 Yonge Street; October 11, 2023

Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph of the Austrian pine tree at 3900 Yonge Street; October 11, 2023

Attachment 3 – Figure 3: Staff photograph of the Colorado blue spruce tree measuring 29 cm in diameter at 3900 Yonge Street; October 11, 2023

Attachment 4 – Figure 4: Arborist photograph of the Colorado blue spruce trees measuring 29 cm in diameter in the foreground (A) and 32 cm in diameter in the background (B) in relation to the existing driveway at 3900 Yonge Street; May 9, 2023

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the black walnut tree at 3900 Yonge Street; October 11, 2023



Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph of the Austiran pine tree at 3900 Yonge Street; October 11, 2023



Attachment 3 – Figure 3: Staff photograph of the Colorado blue spruce tree measuring 29 cm in diameter at 3900 Yonge Street; October 11, 2023



Attachment 4 – Figure 4: Arborist photograph of the Colorado blue spruce trees measuring 29 cm in diameter in the foreground (A) and 32 cm in diameter in the background (B) in relation to the existing driveway at 3900 Yonge Street; May 9, 2023

