

Application to Remove a City Tree – 237 Bedford Park Avenue

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 one City-owned tree located at 237 Bedford Park Avenue. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to concerns about safety and to facilitate the construction of a new dwelling specifically related to construction access and servicing conflicts.

The littleleaf linden tree (*Tilia cordata*) measures 67 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 of Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 237 Bedford Park Avenue.

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 City-owned tree located on the City-owned right-of-way fronting 237 Bedford Park Avenue. The littleleaf linden tree (*Tilia cordata*) in question measures 67 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to concerns about worker safety due to the tree's condition, and to facilitate the construction of a new dwelling specifically related to construction access and servicing conflicts.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree as being in poor condition. The report noted that the tree had poor structure, deadwood, and was located within one metre of electrical lines.

City staff inspected the tree and, at the time of inspection, determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Methods such as the use of horizontal hoarding for site access around the tree, and/or tunnelling to install services (e.g. water), would allow the tree to be preserved. City staff have requested that the applicant seek an injury permit as an alternative to removal. The tree can be pruned in accordance with good arboricultural practices to provide and maintain appropriate clearance from overhead utilities.

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.

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 littleleaf linden tree at 237 Bedford Park 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 North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 237 Bedford Park Avenue. 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 one City-owned tree located at 237 Bedford Park Avenue, conditional upon the applicant:
 - providing payment of the appraised value of the tree (\$8,431.00) to be removed;
 - agreeing to have the tree and stump removed at their expense;
 - providing 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, and;
 - providing a tree planting security deposit to cover the cost of planting and warranty for a period of two years for all trees to be planted on City property.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the littleleaf linden tree at 237 Bedford Park Avenue; June 1, 2019

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