

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 201 Woburn Avenue

Date: October 9, 2024

To: North York Community Council

From: Acting 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 privately owned tree located at 201 Woburn Avenue. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to concerns about the tree's health and potential for failure and damage to property.

The silver maple tree (*Acer saccharinum*) in question measures 135 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 Acting Director of Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation recommends that:

1. North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 201 Woburn 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 privately owned tree located in the rear yard at 201 Woburn Avenue. The silver maple tree (*Acer saccharinum*) in question measures 135 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to concerns about the tree's health and potential for failure and damage to property.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in fair condition. This report noted that the tree has codominant stems and a sparse canopy.

City staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. The City staff investigation found that the tree has codominant stems and a generally sparse or open canopy, but these characteristics do not unreasonably pre-dispose the subject tree to failure or breakage. Codominant stems, when growing too close together can have bark trapped between them, which can increase the risk of failure or breakage. However, in this instance, the large size of the stems and the tree's generally upright stature, mitigate this factor. Parks, Forestry and Recreation therefore determines the overall risk of failure to be low.

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 to provide an opportunity for comment by the community. Three responses were received against, and three responses were received in support (two of which are from the same respondent) of the removal.

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 silver maple tree at 201 Woburn 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 privately owned tree located at 201 Woburn 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 privately owned tree located at 201 Woburn 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

Raymond Vendrig
Acting Director, Urban Forestry, Parks, Forestry and Recreation

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the silver maple tree at 201 Woburn Avenue; September 20, 2024

Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph of the silver maple tree at 201 Woburn Avenue; September 20, 2024

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the silver maple tree at 201 Woburn Avenue; September 20, 2024



Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph of the silver maple tree at 201 Woburn Avenue; September 20, 2024

