

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 240 Dunvegan Road

Date: June 20, 2024

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Toronto-St. Paul's - 12

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 240 Dunvegan Road. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to its poor health.

The Colorado blue spruce tree (*Picea pungens*) measures 63 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. Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 240 Dunvegan Road.

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 240 Dunvegan Road. The Colorado blue spruce tree (*Picea pungens*) in question measures 63 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to its poor health.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in fair to poor health with a fair structural condition. This report noted that the lower branches have been removed to approximately 3 m above grade. The report also noted that the tree is suspected to have a fungal infection, Diplodia tip blight, due to the browning needles present throughout the canopy. As the infection spreads throughout the canopy, the tree will likely continue to lose needles and experience dieback. The arborist report also observed that the tree had significant internal deadwood resulting in a semi-sparse canopy.

City staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Staff noted that the tree had minor deadwood on the side near the road and in the tree's interior. Dead branches in the interior of a tree are normal due to the lack of light. No significant decay nor structural defects were noted. New growth from last year was assessed as good to excellent, with average to above average growth.

Staff noted that there was some isolated dieback of needles with a purplish colouration affecting less than ten per cent of the canopy. Staff acknowledge that the issue affecting this tree may be caused by Diplodia tip blight, a fungal infection common throughout Toronto. This type of dieback is typical of many coniferous trees with or without a fungal disease present.

Despite fungal infection, the tree's health can be maintained over time with proper care. The affected area of the spruce tree is minor and can be effectively managed through pruning practices to remove the affected tissue and increase airflow to help manage the problem. Additional maintenance practices such as cleaning up dropped needles, adjusting watering schedules and watering methods to avoid watering of foliage directly, are recommended to manage the infection and promote better overall tree health.

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. No comments were received in support of removal 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 Colorado blue spruce tree at 240 Dunvegan Road 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 240 Dunvegan Road. 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 240 Dunvegan Road 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

Melanie Dubroy, Supervisor Tree Protection and Plan Review, Urban Forestry
Tel: 416-392-7390, Email: Melanie.Dubroy@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the Colorado blue spruce tree at 240 Dunvegan Road; February 27, 2024

Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph showing a close-up of the needles of the Colorado blue spruce tree at 240 Dunvegan Road; February 27, 2024

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the Colorado blue spruce tree at 240 Dunvegan Road; February 27, 2024



Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph showing a close-up of the needles of the Colorado blue spruce tree at 240 Dunvegan Road; February 27, 2024

