

Application to Remove a City Tree – 360 Melrose Street

Date: June 10, 2025

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

From: Director, Urban Forestry, Environment, Climate and Forestry

Wards: Etobicoke-Lakeshore - 3

SUMMARY

This report requests that Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 360 Melrose Street. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is to accommodate a new proposed driveway related to a lot severance.

The ruby red horsechestnut tree (*Aesculus x carnea 'Briotii'*) measures 8 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 appeals the City's decision to deny a tree permit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director of Urban Forestry, Environment, Climate and Forestry recommends that:

1. Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 360 Melrose 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

The City of Toronto received an application for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located on the City-owned right-of-way fronting 360 Melrose Street. The ruby red horsechestnut tree (*Aesculus x carnea 'Briotii'*) in question measures 8 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting the removal of the tree is to accommodate a new proposed driveway related to a lot severance.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in good condition. This report noted that the root zone of the tree was in fair condition, and the trunk integrity, crown structure, and crown vigour were all good. The report noted that it may be possible to retain the tree, by transplanting it eastward along the right-of-way.

City staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection, determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Tree relocation is not supported as the proposed driveways would result in an insufficient soil volume to support a tree. In addition, the tree has been established in its current location since 2017 and would likely not continue to survive well in a new location.

Urban Forestry reviewed the consent and minor variance applications submitted to the Committee of Adjustment (COA) and provided comments recommending denial of the consent due to the impacts to a bylaw-protected tree. The applicant was advised that any application to injure and/or remove a City-owned tree may be denied by Urban Forestry regardless of COA approval. The COA approved the consent and minor variance on the condition that the applicant submit an application and receive a permit to injure or remove the City-owned tree(s), as per City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 813, Trees Article II Trees on City Streets.

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 Environment, Climate and Forestry. 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 appeals 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 ruby red horsechestnut tree at 360 Melrose Street 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.

Environment, Climate and Forestry recommends Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 360 Melrose Street. Should Etobicoke 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) Etobicoke York Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 360 Melrose Street, conditional upon the applicant:
 - providing payment of the appraised value of the tree (\$583.00) to be removed;
 - agreeing to have the tree 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 Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry, 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, Environment, Climate and Forestry Division

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the ruby red horsechestnut tree at 360 Melrose Street; January 8, 2025

Attachment 2 - Figure 2: Detail from site plan for 360 Melrose Street illustrating the location of the tree and proposed driveway

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Attachment 2 - Figure 2: Detail from site plan for 360 Melrose Street illustrating the location of the tree and proposed driveway

