

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 21 Tepee Court

Date: March 4, 2025

To: North York Community Council

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

Wards: Don Valley North - 17

SUMMARY

This report requests that North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 21 Tepee Court. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to concerns that the tree roots are cracking the steps; shifting interlocking stones; creating a slope that directs water toward the house; and contributing to ongoing foundation issues.

The littleleaf linden tree (*Tilia cordata*) measures 97 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 denial of a permit of a tree protected under the By-laws.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 21 Tepee Court.

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 privately owned tree located in the rear yard at 21 Tepee Court. The littleleaf linden tree (*Tilia cordata*) in question measures 97 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to concerns that the tree roots are cracking the steps; shifting interlocking stones; creating a slope that directs water toward the house; and contributing to ongoing foundation issues.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in good condition. This report noted that tree has good vigor with few to no dead branches. The tree's co-dominant stems are the most evident sign of poor structure in the tree with areas of included bark.

City staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Staff noted that there was minimal deadwood in the crown. The tight main union has some included bark (i.e. ingrown bark that grows in the union between two or more stems that are growing closely together) and the tree had many healthy buds on its branches.

The tree is located approximately 4 metres from the house. It is extremely rare for trees or their roots to cause damage to a well-constructed foundation from this distance. Over many decades, foundations may develop cracks or leaks due to material deterioration and/or environmental factors like water freezing and thawing. These conditions can create tiny gaps that fine roots of nearby trees can grow into, potentially accelerating the rate of deterioration. However, such age-related deterioration could also occur in the absence of trees and their roots. Efforts should be made to repair the damage and waterproof the foundation while preserving the tree, through an injury application. A comprehensive review by staff should assess whether this can be effective. If the review determines that removal is the only viable option for completing the necessary repairs, then a construction application would be required, and include consultation with the councillor.

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.

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, 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 littleleaf linden tree at 21 Tepee Court 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 North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 21 Tepee Court. 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 21 Tepee Court 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 Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry.

CONTACT

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

SIGNATURE

Raymond Vendrig
Acting Director, Urban Forestry, Environment, Climate and Forestry

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the littleleaf linden tree at 21 Tepee Court;
December 3, 2024

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