

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 390 Glencairn Avenue

Date: March 4, 2025

To: North York Community Council

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

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 390 Glencairn Avenue. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to the tree's declining health and concerns about tree failure.

The Colorado blue spruce tree (*Picea pungens*) measures 55 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 390 Glencairn 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

The City of Toronto received an application for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located in the front yard at 390 Glencairn Avenue. The Colorado blue spruce tree (*Picea pungens*) in question measures 55 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is due to the tree's declining health and concerns about tree failure.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in declining health. This report noted that the tree had signs of a cytospora canker (*Leucostoma/Cytospora kunzei*) infection with numerous sunken lesions, exuding the characteristic whiteish-blueish resin. The crown is also suffering from an eastern spruce gall adelgid (*Adelges abietis*) infestation. This report noted that the tree is very tall and fully exposed to wind and underscored that Colorado blue spruce trees are particularly susceptible to uprooting via wind-throw.

City staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Staff did observe symptoms of canker and spruce gall; however, both are relatively common in Colorado blue spruce trees and do not warrant a poor condition rating.

Cytospora canker is a fungus-borne disease commonly found on spruce trees. The disease primarily affects lower branches, causing needles to turn brown and fall off. The tree can be pruned in accordance with good arboricultural practices to remove affected branches and manage the disease. Spruce gall is caused by an aphid-like insect that rarely causes serious harm to healthy spruce trees. Even the presence of hundreds of galls would not indicate poor tree condition. Healthy trees can tolerate one or both of these pathogens for many years.

The tree does not exhibit any obvious signs of internal or external decay that would make it more prone to failure. A common indication of potential failure due to strong winds can be a heaving root plate. The root system appears structurally sound without any heaving.

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 Colorado blue spruce tree at 390 Glencairn 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.

Environment, Climate and Forestry recommends North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 390 Glencairn 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 390 Glencairn 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 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 Colorado blue spruce tree at 390 Glencairn Avenue; October 22, 2024

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the Colorado blue spruce tree at 390 Glencairn Avenue; October 22, 2024

