

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 513 Huntingwood Drive

Date: January 30, 2025

To: Scarborough Community Council

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

Wards: Scarborough-Agincourt - 22

SUMMARY

This report requests that Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 513 Huntingwood Drive. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is because the tree is in poor condition and there is a concern about potential failure.

The Colorado blue spruce tree (*Picea pungens*) measures 60 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. Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 513 Huntingwood Drive.

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 513 Huntingwood Drive. The Colorado blue spruce tree (*Picea pungens*) in question measures 60 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is because the tree is in poor condition and there is a concern about potential failure.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in poor condition. This report noted that the tree is leaning at a 60-degree angle towards the adjacent property and is approximately 70 to 80 feet tall. The tree's shallow root system and its position near the house make it a potential hazard, especially during storms or extreme weather.

City staff inspected the tree and at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. During the site inspection, it was determined the tree was healthy, with a full dense crown.

The tree is exhibiting a slight lean due to a phototropic growth pattern. Phototropism is a natural growth pattern whereby plants grow toward available light. The lean observed is not impacting the structural integrity of the tree and is a response to competition from nearby trees. There is no evidence of heaving or other root damage that would be indicative of potential tree failure. The tree's root system appears healthy and has grown to support the slight lean. The tree is also showing correction of the lean.

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 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 also 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 513 Huntingwood Drive 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 Scarborough Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 513 Huntingwood Drive. Should Scarborough 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) Scarborough Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 513 Huntingwood Drive 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 of Environment, Climate and Forestry.

CONTACT

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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 513 Huntingwood Drive; July 17, 2024

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