

## **Application to Remove a Private Tree – 90 Spruce Street**

**Date:** June 10, 2025

**To:** Toronto and East York Community Council

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

**Wards:** Toronto Centre - 13

### **SUMMARY**

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This report requests that the Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 90 Spruce Street. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is the nuisance associated with the rancid smell of fruit from the female ginkgo tree, and weakly attached branches in the upper canopy.

The ginkgo tree (*Ginkgo biloba*) measures 41.2 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. The Community Council has delegated the City Council's authority to decide whether a permit may be issued when an applicant appeals the City's decision to deny a tree permit.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 90 Spruce Street.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

### **DECISION HISTORY**

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There is no decision history related to this tree removal permit application.

## COMMENTS

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The City of Toronto received an application for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located in the rear yard at 90 Spruce Street. The ginkgo tree (*Ginkgo biloba*) in question measures 41.2 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is the nuisance associated with the rancid smell of fruit from the female ginkgo tree, and weakly attached branches in the upper canopy.

The arborist's report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in good health but in poor structural condition and form. Every scaffold branch has been subjected to incorrect pruning (heading cuts). In response, multiple epicormic shoots have arisen just below each cut, some of which have now become larger branches. The report noted that the branches are weakly attached due to previous pruning cuts that the tree is unlikely to successfully compartmentalize, which irreparably compromise the tree's structure and form.

City staff inspected the tree and, at the time of inspection, determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Staff noted that the tree is healthy overall, with no major botanical or structural issues. There were some weakly attached branches due to epicormic growth near the top of the tree's canopy, but it was not of concern. Epicormic growth is when a tree sprouts multiple shoots from its trunk or branches in reaction to stress or damage, such as poor pruning.

The ginkgo tree is expected to survive well, where epicormic growth can be addressed through pruning in accordance with good arboricultural practices and the performance of routine tree maintenance. Removal of debris, such as fallen fruit, is considered part of performing regular property maintenance and is a responsibility of all property owners in Toronto.

The City's Tree By-laws do not support tree removal to address the perceived nuisance resulting from a tree's natural functions, nor do they support the removal of this tree that 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. The Community Council has delegated the City Council's authority to decide 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 the City of Toronto Municipal Code, Chapter 813, Trees, Article III*, a notice of application sign was posted on the subject property for a 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 ginkgo tree at 90 Spruce 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 Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 90 Spruce Street. 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 90 Spruce Street 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**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Kim Statham  
Director, Urban Forestry, Environment, Climate and Forestry Division

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the gingko tree at 90 Spruce Street;  
January 2, 2025

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the ginkgo tree at 90 Spruce Street; January 2, 2025

