

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 93 Silver Birch Avenue

Date: November 6, 2025

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Beaches-East York - 19

SUMMARY

This report requests that Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located on the boundary line between the properties of 93 and 95 Silver Birch Avenue. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting the removal of the tree is concern over the potential failure of the tree that is growing with a strong lean over the house.

The white oak tree (*Quercus alba*) measures 74 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. Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 93 Silver Birch 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 rear yard on the boundary line between the properties of 93 and 95 Silver Birch Avenue. The white oak tree (*Quercus alba*) in question measures 74 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting the removal of the tree is concern over the potential failure of the tree that is growing with a strong lean over the house.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in healthy condition. This report noted that the tree is in good physiological condition and has no obvious wounds that indicate likely failure. The report also noted that the tree has a strong lean that is concerning given its angle as well as the weight, age of tree, and location relative to the home.

City staff inspected the tree and, at the time of inspection determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Staff noted that the tree is growing with a phototropic lean over the house. Phototropism is a natural growth pattern whereby plants grow toward available light, in this case in a response to competition from nearby trees. The lean observed is not impacting the structural integrity of the tree. 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.

Two site inspections were conducted, both before bud break and after in full leaf. The site inspections were conducted by two separate City staff. The tree had no visible pruning wounds and no deadwood. Both inspections confirmed that the tree was in healthy condition.

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 removal, and nine comments were received 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 white oak tree at 93 Silver Birch 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 Toronto and East York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 93 Silver Birch Avenue. 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 93 Silver Birch 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

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SIGNATURE

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the white oak tree without leaves at 93 Silver Birch Avenue; May 2, 2025

Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph of the white oak tree with leaves at 93 Silver Birch Avenue; June 24, 2025

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the white oak tree without leaves at 93 Silver Birch Avenue; May 2, 2025



Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Staff photograph of the white oak tree with leaves at 93 Silver Birch Avenue; June 24, 2025

