

## **Application to Remove a Private Tree – 174 Church Street**

**Date:** March 9, 2026

**To:** Etobicoke York Community Council

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

**Wards:** York South-Weston - 5

### **SUMMARY**

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This report requests that Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 174 Church Street. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting the removal of the tree is to accommodate the construction of a new basement walkout access associated with a proposed multiplex development.

The Colorado blue spruce tree (*Picea pungens*) measures 42 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 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**

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

1. Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 174 Church 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 front yard at 174 Church Street. The Colorado blue spruce tree (*Picea pungens*) measures 42 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting the removal of the tree is to accommodate the construction of a new basement walkout access associated with a proposed multiplex development.

The arborist's report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in fair condition.

City staff inspected the tree and, at the time of inspection, determined that it is healthy and maintainable.

Further to City Council Decision [2023.PH3.16](#) #5 regarding the City of Toronto's Review of Multiplexes, Urban Forestry may refuse a permit to injure or destroy a tree protected under the tree bylaws, received in relation to a building permit application to construct or expand a multiplex building type. Further, the applicant is advised to meet with City Planning and Urban Forestry staff as appropriate to consider how the location, massing and design of the proposed building or expansion can be amended to protect the By-law protected tree in question.

Modifications to the proposed walkway have been recommended by City staff to increase the separation distance between the tree and the path. Options are available to preserve this tree through construction while limiting injury. Revisions to the basement walkout design and/or construction technique could reduce the impact to a minor tree injury.

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. The 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 or 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, the Tree Protection By-laws and in alignment with Toronto's Net Zero Strategy, the Colorado blue spruce tree at 174 Church 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 Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 174 Church Street. Should Etobicoke 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) Etobicoke York Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 174 Church Street and require the applicant to provide 5 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  
Application to Remove a Private Tree – 174 Church Street

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the Colorado blue spruce tree at 174 Church Street; July 18, 2025

Attachment 2 - Figure 2: Partial Tree Protection Plan showing proposed basement walkout and walkway adjacent to the Colorado blue spruce tree (identified as #2 in image)

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the Colorado blue spruce tree at 174 Church Street; July 18, 2025



