

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 12 Drury Lane

Date: April 8, 2026

To: Etobicoke York Community Council

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

Wards: Etobicoke Centre - 2

SUMMARY

This report requests that Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 12 Drury Lane. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is a concern that due to the tree's maturity and location it has the potential to damage the house should failure occur; and concerns that the tree roots are damaging the driveway and underground pipes.

The multi-stem Colorado blue spruce tree (*Picea pungens*) measures 45 and 47 cm in diameter, respectively. 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 recommend that:

1. Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 12 Drury Lane.

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 12 Drury Lane. The multi-stem Colorado blue spruce tree (*Picea pungens*) measures 45 and 47 cm in diameter, respectively. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal is that due to the tree's maturity and location, the tree could potentially damage the house should failure occur; and a concern that the tree roots are damaging the driveway and underground pipes.

The arborist report that accompanied the application described the tree to be in 'near late maturity' with reduced structural integrity due to the presence of two co-dominant stems emerging from a narrow V-shaped union; a condition identified by the arborist as biomechanically weak due to included bark and poor weight load distribution. The report also described one stem exhibiting a significant lean towards the dwelling.

City staff inspected the tree and, at the time of inspection, determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Staff identified that the tree has two co-dominant stems of about equal diameter and canopy volume. Decay was not observed at the union and the included bark union does not present a significant risk.

Tree roots grow almost exclusively in the upper 60 cm of soil and are not physically capable of exerting enough force to crack pipes. Water and sewer pipes are usually located 1.5 to 2 meters below ground level. Older clay pipes may be susceptible to cracks because of the freezing and thawing process. When damaged pipes leak, they provide oxygen and nutrient-rich water deep in the soil, which attracts tree roots. Replacing old clay pipes with continuous PVC piping between the house and the sewer connection can eliminate the possibility of future blockages by tree roots.

Landscape features such as driveways may be prone to damage by tree roots if they have not been properly designed, built, or maintained. When built to accommodate future root growth and expansion, and when properly maintained over time, any conflict with trees or their roots can be planned for and managed without tree removal.

Damage to clay pipes or driveways can typically be repaired without requiring tree removal. If an injury to the tree is required to complete the repairs, the applicant may apply for a construction permit and submit the relevant construction plans and arborist report showing how the tree will be impacted and protected during construction.

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 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, and the Tree Protection By-laws, the Colorado blue spruce tree at 12 Drury Lane 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 recommend Etobicoke York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 12 Drury Lane. 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 12 Drury Lane 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

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

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the multi-stem Colorado blue spruce tree at 12 Drury Lane; December 4th, 2025

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