

Application to Remove a Private Tree – 71 Paperbirch Drive

Date: March 9, 2026

To: North York Community Council

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

Wards: Don Valley East - 16

SUMMARY

This report requests that North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 71 Paperbirch Drive. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is concerns that the tree is leaning towards the house and the potential for property damage.

The Colorado blue spruce tree (*Picea pungens*) measures 36 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. North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 71 Paperbirch 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 71 Paperbirch Drive. The Colorado blue spruce tree (*Picea pungens*) in question measures 36 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is concerns that the tree is leaning towards the house and the potential for property damage.

The arborist report that accompanied the application did not provide a rating condition but noted that the tree has a poor root flare; a possible heaving of the tree's roots; and the trunk of the tree is leaning towards the dwelling at the property.

City staff inspected the tree, and at the time of inspection, determined that it is healthy and maintainable. Staff observed no trunk or stem defects that would reduce the wood strength, and that poor root flare is the result of a buried root collar which does not appear to have caused any weakness that would increase failure risk.

Staff agree that the lower stem is not perfectly vertical but found no exacerbating factors such as damaged or broken roots, nor visible cracks or fissures in the soil. A tree with a minor trunk lean is generally unlikely to fail or tip over while the roots and stem remain strong and the tree's connection with the ground or soil is good. Further, the upper portions of the tree are near vertical, indicating that the lean has existed for many years.

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. Urban Forestry received no comments 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 Colorado blue spruce tree at 71 Paperbirch 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 North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 71 Paperbirch Drive. Should North 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) North York Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one privately owned tree located at 71 Paperbirch 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, 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 Colorado blue spruce tree at 71 Paperbirch Drive; October 27, 2025

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