

Application to Remove a City Tree – 125 Florence Avenue

Date: May 5, 2026

To: North York Community Council

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

Wards: Willowdale - 18

SUMMARY

This report requests that the North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 125 Florence Avenue. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is concern that the tree impedes safe access to and from the driveway.

The sugar maple tree (*Acer saccharum*) measures 7 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

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 City-owned tree located at 125 Florence 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 City-owned tree located on the City-owned right-of-way fronting 125 Florence Avenue. The sugar maple tree (*Acer saccharum*) in question measures 7 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal of the tree is concern that the tree impedes safe access to and from the driveway.

An arborist report was not submitted with this application and was waived by Urban Forestry staff because the reason for the application is not related to the tree's condition.

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

In 2021 the Toronto Local Appeal Body (TLAB) approved severance of 123 Florence Avenue into 2 resulting lots: 123 and 125 Florence Avenue. Plans attached to the TLAB's Decision and Order showed the City-owned trees in front of both properties preserved (including the subject tree), with both driveways curving around the Tree Protection Zones of both trees (see Attachment 2). Although the trees were not discussed at the TLAB hearing, their preservation was raised as a concern by Urban Forestry prior to the Committee of Adjustment hearing where the application was refused.

Table 1: Summary of events leading up to current removal request and appeal

June 2020	COA Request For Comments	Urban Forestry staff advised Committee of Adjustment (COA) that the severance would result in the removal of 2 City-owned trees (due to driveway conflicts), and that UF would object to the severance if the application proceeded to the COA hearing in its current form.
Oct 2020	COA application	No Urban Forestry (UF) comments or objections were presented to the COA as the applicant had demonstrated to UF that they could modify the driveways to preserve the 2 City-owned trees.
June 2021	TLAB Decision and Order	Toronto Local Appeal Body (TLAB) approves the lot severance and associated minor variances for the 2 resulting lots. Plans attached to TLAB Decision and Order show both City-owned trees preserved, with both driveways curving to avoid the Tree Protection Zones.
2022	Building Permits Issued	For the proposed development of 125 Florence Avenue (subject site), the Building Permit drawings reflect the TLAB Decision and Order, in that the driveway is shown curving to accommodate the Tree Protection Zone of the subject tree.
2024	Substantial Construction Complete	Construction is largely complete, driveway between curb and sidewalk conforms with Building Permit drawings.
2025	Tree Removal Application	Owner submits application to remove subject tree. Urban Forestry refuses application partly due to decision history.

The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable. 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 the 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.

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 sugar maple tree at 125 Florence 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 North York Community Council deny the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 125 Florence Avenue. 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 City-owned tree located at 125 Florence Avenue, conditional upon the applicant:
 - providing payment of the appraised value of the tree (\$583.00) to be removed
 - agreeing to have the tree removed at their expense
 - providing 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
 - providing a tree planting security deposit to cover the cost of planting and warranty for a period of two years for all trees to be planted on City property.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Kim Statham
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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the sugar maple tree at 125 Florence Avenue; January 5, 2025

Attachment 2 – Figure 2: Excerpt from 2021 Toronto Local Appeal Body Decision and Order approval; Subject tree shown in red square.

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