

Interim Approach to Address City-Owned Female Ginkgo Trees - 54 Gormley Avenue

Date: June 19, 2026

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

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

Wards: Toronto-St. Paul's - 12

SUMMARY

Environment, Climate and Forestry received an application to remove a City-owned female ginkgo tree (*Ginkgo biloba*) at 54 Gormley Avenue due to concerns that the tree drops fruit with a foul odour. The City's Tree By-laws do not support the removal of this tree as it is healthy and maintainable. The appeal was submitted to Toronto and East York Community Council on May 28, 2026 and was denied. Councillor Matlow has requested to reopen this appeal for the July 8 and 9, 2026 meeting of Toronto and East York Community Council.

On May 20 and 21, 2026, City Council directed the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry to provide recommendations on the impacts of City-owned female ginkgo trees with a focus on community health and safety, as part of the ongoing Tree By-Law Review and to report back in 2027.

Following recent City Council direction, this report proposes an interim approach for the management of female ginkgo trees and requests that Toronto and East York Community Council approve a permit to remove one City-owned female ginkgo tree located at 54 Gormley Avenue on condition that a tree of alternate species be planted as a replacement.

City staff will report back to Council in early 2027 with recommendations on an approach to the impacts of female ginkgo trees with a focus on community health and safety, as part of the ongoing Tree By-Law Review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Toronto and East York Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 54 Gormley Avenue as part of an interim

approach to addressing female ginkgo trees in the city of Toronto, so that the City-owned female ginkgo tree will be removed and replaced by the City of Toronto in the road allowance fronting 54 Gormley Avenue to the satisfaction of the Executive Director, Environment, Climate, and Forestry.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on May 20 and 21, 2026, City Council directed the Executive Director, Environment, Climate and Forestry to provide recommendations on the impacts of City-owned female ginkgo trees with a focus on community health and safety, as part of the ongoing Tree By-Law Review and to report back in 2027.

[Agenda Item History - 2026.MM41.31](#)

At its meeting on March 25 and 26, 2026, City Council adopted the report entitled **Tree By-law Review Report**. This report recommended that staff would review operational practices to ensure invasive species management and nuisance tree concerns are addressed in a way that balances customer expectations with biodiversity and urban forest protection goals.

[Agenda Item History - 2026.IE27.8](#)

At its meeting on February 27, 2017, the Parks and Environment Committee adopted the report outlining the implications if the City decided to exempt black walnut trees from protection under the City's Tree Bylaws.

[Agenda Item History - 2017.PE17.2](#)

COMMENTS

The City of Toronto received an application for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located on the right-of-way fronting 54 Gormley Avenue. The female ginkgo tree (*Ginkgo biloba*) in question measures 39 cm in diameter. The applicant indicates the reason for requesting removal is that the tree drops fruit with a foul odour.

Ginkgo trees are an excellent urban tree with great attributes such as beautiful fall colour, striking form, large size at maturity, and hardiness. They also contribute to the diversity of the urban forest and are highly disease resistant. The City of Toronto includes male ginkgo trees in its planting program for these positive attributes. The City of Toronto does not knowingly plant the female version, as they produce fruit, which are known to have a noxious odour and can be toxic when handled with bare skin (similar to poison ivy); negative attributes that make these trees unique. City staff are reviewing planting programs and the operational practices of considering tree removal

applications for female ginkgo trees as per Council direction. A report back to Council is expected in early 2027 with recommendations on an approach to the impacts of female ginkgo trees with a focus on community health and safety, as part of the ongoing Tree By-Law Review.

In the interim, City staff have determined that on a case-by-case basis it is reasonable to remove a City-owned female ginkgo tree on condition that a tree of alternate species be planted as a replacement.

As such, the Director of Urban Forestry, Environment, Climate and Forestry recommends that:

1. Toronto and East York Community Council approve the request for a permit to remove one City-owned tree located at 54 Gormley Avenue as part of an interim approach to addressing female ginkgo trees in the city of Toronto, so that the City-owned female ginkgo tree will be removed and replaced by the City of Toronto in the road allowance fronting 54 Gormley Avenue to the satisfaction of the Executive Director, Environment, Climate, and Forestry.

City staff will report back to Council in early 2027 with updated recommendations on the impacts of female ginkgo trees with a focus on community health and safety, as part of the ongoing Tree By-Law Review.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Kim Statham
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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Figure 1: Staff photograph of the Ginkgo tree at 54 Gormley Avenue; January 13, 2026

