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I. Listar

TO:	CHAIR AND MEMBERS PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
FROM:	JOHN FLEMING MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER
SUBJECT:	EMERALD ASH BORER PROGRAM STATUS REPORT MEETING MAY 28, 2013
RECOMMENDATION	

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, with the advice of the Manager of Urban Forestry

- (a) That this report **BE RECEIVED** for information.

PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER
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- Report to Council – February 28, 2013
- 2012-2016 Management of Emerald Ash Borer Business Case
- Report to Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee – February 9, 2012
- Report to Services Review Committee - November 17, 2011
- Council Resolution – October 3, 2011
- 8th Report of the Trees and Forests Advisory Committee – September 28, 2011
- Report of the Community and Neighbourhoods Committee – September 27, 2011
- Emerald Ash Borer Strategy – September, 2011
- 22nd Report of the Committee of the Whole – June 21, 2011
- Emerald Ash Borer Update - Report to the ETC - July 19, 2010
- 2nd Report of the Trees and Forests Advisory Committee - February 25, 2009
- Emerald Ash Borer Strategy - Report to the ETC - May 26, 2008

BACKGROUND

Approximately 110,000 ash trees have been previously estimated on City property of which 100,000 are in woodlands and approximately 10,000 identified on boulevards and manicured portions of parks. Prior to the development and endorsement of the Emerald Ash Borer Strategy in 2011, the management of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) was reactive. Ash trees on boulevards were removed when they were heavily infested or dead and few trees were treated with TreeAzin, as the chemical was registered for experimental use only. Since 2011, a more proactive and aggressive approach to managing the ash population has been adopted by Council to reduce risk associated with infested trees. This approach includes the injection of valuable ash trees, planned, systematic removal of ash trees along boulevards, managed trails in parks and perimeters of woodlands that are adjacent to subdivisions followed by replanting on boulevards and in parks and woodlands as approved budgets permit.

PROGRAM TO DATE

In 2011, the approved EAB management capital budget was \$200K for tree replacement. All other costs associated with removals and injections were taken from operational funding sources.

In 2012, \$920K was allocated to the EAB management program. The individual sources of capital funding were identified in the Report to Strategic Priorities and Policy Committee in 2012. An additional \$50K was later allocated from the ESA capital budget for TreeAzin injections in ESAs.

In 2013, the approved EAB capital budget for EAB management is \$600K for all activities. An additional \$150K has been allocated from the woodland management capital funding to supplement the tree removals along perimeters and managed trails in woodlands and wooded portions of parks. Additional capital funding from the infill planting program may also be re-allocated to supplement the tree replacements.

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Program Summary 2011-the end of 2013:

- # ash trees removed from boulevards and manicured parks to date (estimate) 8,500
- # ash trees still to remove from boulevards and manicured parks (estimate) 1,500
- # ash trees removed from boulevards and manicured parks by end of 2014 10,000
- # trees planted in boulevards and manicured parks to date 3,000
- # trees planted in boulevards and manicured parks by end of 2013 4,250
- # trees still to be planted to achieve ash replacement ratio of 2:1 on boulevards and manicured portions of parks 15,750
- # trees injected twice with TreeAzin on boulevards and manicured parks 384
- # trees injected once with TreeAzin in ESAs 200
- Major ash removals were completed in Helen Mott Shaw, Fairmont, Forestview and Northdale Parks. We do not have an accurate number of the total trees that have been removed in these wooded areas.
- Major ash removals and invasive species management are still in progress in Civic Garden and Westmount Parks
- Total capital funding spent from 2011 to end of 2013 for EAB management \$1,920,000

Considerable cost savings have been realized as a result of the systematic removals of all the ash trees on boulevards by area. These cost savings have permitted more trees to be removed in the same period of time than previously anticipated.

We have experienced lower than historic planting prices in the last two years. The average cost per tree has decreased from \$350 to \$225 per tree. This has allowed us to plant more trees with existing budgets. However, we do not expect this trend to continue in to the future.

The rate of restoration and replanting has not kept up with the rate of removals or as identified in the Council endorsed EAB management strategy (2 trees replanted for every ash tree removed) due to the priority associated with risk management, approved budget levels and staff resource capacity. Planting requires careful planning and coordination and current resources are equipped to plant 1,500-2,000 trees per year. Even if planting the remaining 15,750 trees were to be extended over the next 5 years, the average annual planting rate would be 3,150 trees.

With existing budgets and staff resources, the immediate priority is to replace ash trees at a 1:1 ratio as soon as practicable. Once this ratio has been achieved, the remaining trees required to meet the 2:1 replacement ratio will be planted as budgets and resources permit from the 10,000+ "infill" planting locations we have identified in our inventory. This situation has created some confusion for residents. Some think that they are getting two trees on their front lawn when that may not be the right prescription because there is not be sufficient room. Other residents do not want a replacement tree at all.

Over time, as ash removals are completed, the allocated EAB management funding will be directed more to replanting at endorsed replacement levels and to manage and mitigate the devastation caused by the insect in woodlands.

PRIORITIES FOR 2013

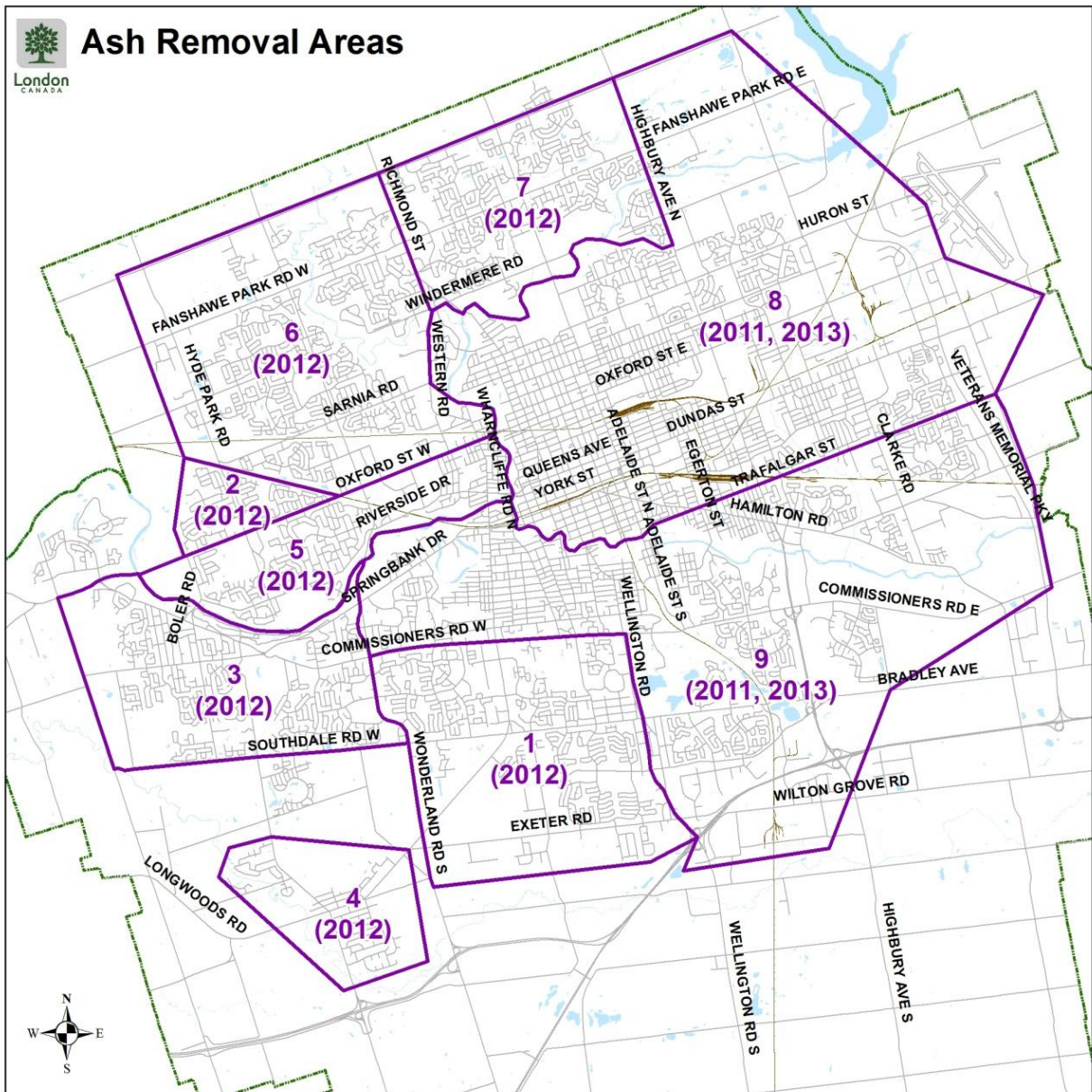
A map showing the major areas of removals by year is shown below (Figure 1). Most of the removals on boulevards have been completed in Areas 1-7. Priority removals in 2013 are scheduled in Areas 8 and 9. There are approximately 800 ash trees remaining on boulevards and 700 in manicured portions of parks scheduled for removal by the end of 2014. This will complete the removal of the 10,000 ash trees identified in our tree inventory.

We are just beginning to see and understand the true impact of the EAB in our woodlands. The completion of inventories and the removal of trees along perimeters of woodlands and wooded portions of parks will be prioritized. Approximately \$50K from the woodland management capital budget will be allocated to obtaining tree inventories and develop long term woodland management plans. A summer co-op student has been hired to assist in this process. An additional \$150k will be used for ash and other hazard tree removals. Priority wooded parks for removals include Clare Breton and Reservoir and Civic Garden. Invasive species management, such as buckthorn removal, will be coordinated in conjunction with the removals.

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Figure1. Ash removal areas from boulevards and manicured portions of parks by year.



The 384 trees that were injected in 2011 will be inspected and re-injected as required depending on their health and level of infestation.

It is anticipated that approximately 1,250 trees will be planted to replace the ash trees that have been removed - 750 this spring and 500 this fall. The annual capital budget of \$200k per year (PD1132) dedicated to replanting due to EAB expires at the end of 2013 and, if not replaced beginning in 2014, will have a significant and increased negative impact in our ability to replace dead trees.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

From 2011 to the end of 2013, the City has spent approximately \$1.92 million to manage the EAB infestation. Significant accomplishments to date have resulted from a combination of reallocating funding from other capital programs to “top up” the existing EAB management funding levels and through planning and operational efficiencies.

The removal of trees from boulevards and managed portions of parks is ahead of the planned schedule identified in the EAB management strategy due to operational and economic efficiencies through planning and contracting the work.

Replanting at a replacement ratio of 2:1, as endorsed in the EAB management strategy, has not been met due to the priority associated with risk management, tree removal, approved budget levels and staff resource constraints. One existing capital funding source for replanting expires at the end of 2013 and will need to be replaced in 2014. Staff will prepare a Business Case in 2013 for the replacement of this funding.

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The management of EAB in woodlands and wooded portions of parks, which contain the majority of City owned ash trees, has increased in priority as the number of ash trees remaining on boulevards has decreased. Additional funding, than currently identified in the EAB management strategy, to manage woodlands may be required in the future.

With the existing approved budget levels in future years, the focus of the program will shift more from boulevard removals to planting and woodland management activities.

The current EAB management strategy will be reviewed by Staff in 2013.

Acknowledgement: The following staff assisted with the development of this report: John Parsons, Division Manager – EES Transportation and Roadside Operations; Rob Burnard, Operations Technologist – EES Transportation and Roadside Operations

SUBMITTED BY:	RECOMMENDED BY:
IVAN LISTAR, R.P.F. MANAGER, URBAN FORESTRY	JOHN FLEMING, MCIP, RPP MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER

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cc: TFAC

John Parsons