

Emerald Ash Borer update -Rena Viehbeck, Urban Forest Program Specialist

On November 7th City Council approved Administration's recommendation of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Active Management Strategy with 50% treatment. This involves a \$550,000 proposed budget for 2017.

The unfortunate truth about this invasive beetle is that there is no \$0-cost option for managing ash trees once it arrives. All ash trees (*Fraxinus* sp.) will die within a short time frame (likely within the next 10 years), and removal is required immediately as the trees quickly become hazardous. The management strategy involving treatment of 50% of eligible trees (those over 20cm dbh-trunk size) is the most cost-effective management option. Preserving a portion of ash trees that are healthy actually saves money in the long term vs. the removal and replacement of all ash trees. Preserved ash trees will increase in value with age and size and continue to provide the City with both measurable services, such as through stormwater mitigation, as well as through non-measurable benefits such as aesthetic beauty and improving our health and well-being.

Since June of 2016 there have been 8 EAB positive finds in the City of Thunder Bay. The initial find was on an ash tree on the corner of Memorial Ave and Fourth Ave. The other locations are First Ave, Fourth Ave, Sixth Ave, High St, Memorial Ave, Frankwood Ave and on Norah St S. All additional finds were through the use of the green prism detection traps. No additional EAB were found in the region. It is estimated that EAB have been undetected in Thunder Bay for the past 3 or 4 years as they are very difficult to detect. The City is working with the Canadian Forest Service (CFS) to determine the length of time that EAB have been in Thunder Bay. This is useful to know so that we know where Thunder Bay stands in the population cycle of the pest and can plan our management accordingly.

Ash tree removal has begun for those with poor structure or health, or those suspect of being infested with EAB. Ash wood movement is restricted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and so movement certificates are granted for such work. Approximately 200 additional ash trees will be removed and replaced in 2017.

The number of ash trees treated thus far is 95. This treatment was funded through Tree Canada upon the City's successful grant application. Trees that are injected are over 20cm dbh (diameter at breast height), with good structure and health. Injections will begin in full force starting in 2017 with half of all those identified to be preserved being treated the first year and the remaining half in 2018 (bi-annual treatment).

EAB detection monitoring with green prism traps will continue next year to determine the extent of the infestation. The City continues to work with officials from the provincial and federal governments to complete such monitoring in and around the City.

It is as important as ever to not move ash wood so as not to spread the invasive beetle around Thunder Bay and region. Ash wood should be burnt on-site (with a burning permit) or disposed of appropriately at the City Landfill. More information can be found at thunderbay.ca/eab