

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - JUNE 14, 2011

EMERALD ASH BORER IMPACT IN THE CITY OF VAUGHAN

Recommendation

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Director of Parks and Forestry Operations, recommends:

1. That this report be received for information, and;
2. That staff be directed to develop an Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Communication Strategy in collaboration with the Regional Municipality of York (York Region) Technical Working Group.

Contribution to Sustainability

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council in the Green Directions, Vaughan, Community Sustainability Environmental Master Plan, Goal 2, Objective 2.2.4:

- To ensure that policies in the City's new Official Plan protect all ecological features and functions as per current provincial and regional policies, and also include consideration for locally significant natural features and functions.

Economic Impact

There are no immediate budgetary impacts resulting from the adoption of this report. However, additional operating and capital funding will be required in future years and this will be requested through the 2012 budget process.

The replanting of trees will capture carbon from the atmosphere over time and positively contribute to the mitigation of climate change. This will provide an opportunity to generate VCS carbon credits.

Communications Plan

Once Council has adopted the recommendation, Parks & Forestry Operations Department will work with the Corporate Communications Department to inform residents about EAB. The information will be communicated with the use pamphlets as well as posters, which will provide maintenance tips and information on how to identify EAB.

The pamphlets will be distributed in 2012 to residents at community events such as Environmental Days and Public Works Day. Posters will be placed at all Vaughan Community Centers, Civic Centre and Joint Operations Centre. The posters and pamphlet will be made available on the City of Vaughan Website, under Parks and Forestry Operations and advertised through City Page On-Line.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to present the Parks & Forestry Operations Department current management, monitoring and communication strategies as they relate to the current EAB activity.

Background - Analysis and Options

The EAB was first discovered in Windsor, Ontario in 2002 and has since spread across parts of Southern Ontario. The EAB, native to China, Japan, Korea, Russia and Taiwan, kills all species of Ash (*Fraxinus* spp.) and will have a significant impact on the decline of the Ash tree population in Vaughan Preliminary Urban Forest Effect Model (UFORE) Study results indicate that Vaughan's urban forest is approximately 8% Ash.

In comparison to Asian Long Horned Beetle ("ALHB"), EAB is a much smaller and faster spreading insect. Containment efforts by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency ("CFIA") in South-western Ontario were not successful. Removal of host trees which was done for the ALHB would not be effective, as the insect is transported further distances through the transportation of goods.

The first known EAB infestation in Vaughan occurred in the Highway 7 and Weston Rd area in Woodbridge and have since spread north into both public and private resident Ash trees. Currently, the Canadian Food and Inspection Agency has created a quarantine zone across all of York Region, Halton Region, Peel Region, Durham Region and the City of Toronto. This quarantine restricts the moving of ash wood and yard waste outside of designated infested areas in order to slow and monitor the spread of the EAB.

The City of Vaughan Parks and Forestry Operations Department has undertaken several steps to monitor and contain the EAB impact in Vaughan.

1. Parks and Forestry Operations is currently undertaking a tree inventory of all Ash trees found within City of Vaughan's boulevards, parks and open spaces. Once completed, the updated tree inventory will provide the numbers and location of publicly owned Ash trees with the exception of woodlot trees. This information will be used to quantify the impact and estimate the economic cost.
2. Parks and Forestry Operations Department has implemented several maintenance strategies to slow or prevent the spread of EAB. Infested Ash trees located along boulevards or inside a park that represent a threat have been removed and pending budget approval, will be replaced with a species other than Ash. Woodlots are designated naturalized areas and Ash trees located within woodlots will be removed and not replaced. If the tree poses a hazard to a trail or neighbouring property it will be topped and the wood will remain within the woodlot.
3. Parks and Forestry Operations Department is anticipating an increased volume of wood fiber resulting from the removal of the Ash trees. The Department is coordinating its efforts with the Region to develop strategies for increasing the processing and utilization for this added material, recognizing the travel restrictions instituted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency
4. The Parks and Forestry Operations Department has not planted any Ash trees through its annual replacement tree planting program for the past 7 years. Additionally, subdivision developers have been asked to remove any Ash trees from landscape plans that have yet to be planted in unassumed subdivisions. Each of these practices will remain in place for the foreseeable future as it is unlikely the EAB will be eradicated and the insects will continue to infest and kill all Ash trees of any size.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

This report is consistent with the priorities previously set by Council and the necessary resources have been allocated and approved.

Regional Implications

The City of Vaughan Emerald Ash Borer Information update is consistent with the report approved by York Region council.

Conclusion

The Parks and Forestry Department will continue to work with the York Region EAB Technical Working Group. Through this collaboration, the latest science and best practices will be shared amongst municipalities as well as consistent monitoring and communication efforts.

Attachments

No Attachments

Report Prepared By

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Respectfully submitted,

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