

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE – MARCH 22, 2004

CREATION OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE ASIAN LONG-HORNED BEETLE

Recommendation

Mayor Michael Di Biase and Councillor Bernie DiVona recommend that:

1. An Intergovernmental Task Force (ITF) be created to assist in the coordination of the response to the Asian Long-Horned Beetle infestation;
2. The Task Force be composed of elected and appointed officials including:
 - Two representatives from the City of Vaughan (Mayor and Local Councillor, Ward 3);
 - Three representatives from the City of Toronto;
 - One representative from the Region of York;
 - One representative from the Federal Government (an elected MP);
 - One representative from the Provincial Government (an elected MPP);
 - One representative from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency; and
 - One representative from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority;
3. This report be forwarded to the above cited governments and agencies with the request that they support the creation of the Task Force, appoint representatives and participate in its operations; and
4. That appropriate Staff from each of the agencies support the Task Force as required.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council support for the creation of an Intergovernmental Task Force of elected and appointed officials to coordinate the response to Asian Long-Horned Beetle infestation; and to obtain direction from Council to issue a request to the affected governmental bodies to participate on the Task Force.

Background – Analysis and Options

Background

Late in the summer of 2003, an infestation of the Asian Long-Horned Beetle (ALHB) was discovered in an industrial park in the City of Vaughan, on the north side of Steeles Avenue, west of Highway No. 400. Subsequent investigation revealed that the infestation also extended to the south into the City of Toronto, north of Highway No. 7 into the Woodbridge residential area and to the east of Highway No. 400 in the employment area.

The Asian Long-Horned Beetle is an imported pest with no natural enemies in this country to contain its spread. Host trees include common species of hardwoods, such as maples, birch, willow, elm, sycamore, hackberry, poplar, silk tree, mountain ash and horse chestnut. Therefore, it poses a serious threat to Canada's trees and forests. If it is not eradicated, the beetle has the potential to destroy both our urban forests and the natural hardwood forests in our rural areas. This would have environmental, economic and aesthetic impacts of regional, provincial and national importance.

The federal Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) is the lead authority in the fight against the Asian Long-Horned Beetle. At the outset, the CFIA implemented a control and eradication

program in cooperation with the Cities of Toronto and Vaughan and affected federal and provincial agencies. Eradication measures primarily involve the cutting and removal of infected trees followed by the inspection of trees within a 400 m radius for signs of infestation. This work is now on-going.

In February of 2004, *The Asian Longhorned Beetle Infested Place Order* was issued under the *Plant Protection Act* to prevent the further spread of the beetle. The order applies to the area within the following boundaries: **North** – Rutherford Road; **East** – Dufferin Street and the Allen Road/Allen Expressway; **South** – Highways No. 401 and 409; and **West** – Highway No. 27 (see Attachment 1). It prohibits or restricts the movement of nursery stock, trees, leaves, logs, lumber, wood, wood and bark chips from certain trees identified as hosts of the beetle and firewood of all species.

The eradication and control measures place a burden on both the community and the affected public authorities.

Objective of the Task Force

Recognizing the lead role of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, one of the key elements in the fight against the Asian Long-Horned Beetle will be the development and implementation of comprehensive strategies to counter the infestation. The communication of these strategies to the affected parties and the public at-large will be essential if they are to succeed. Public understanding and co-operation is critical since many of the impacts of the governmental response will have to be borne by private landowners (e.g. cutting of trees on public and private land, controls on movement of affected materials, etc.).

A task force made up of elected or appointed representatives from the affected governments and agencies with appropriate staff support has the potential to fulfill several objectives. However, this Intergovernmental Task Force must be distinguished from the existing Interagency Management Team that has been established under the CFIA lead and encompasses all of the proposed members of the Intergovernmental Task Force proposed herein. This Interagency Management Team is chaired by the CFIA and has been set up under the auspices of the Federal *Plant Protection Act* and consists of three active sub-committees including the Science Committee, Communications Committee and the Operations Committee. Since there is the need to ensure that these efforts are not duplicated, the following mandate is suggested for the Intergovernmental Task Force:

1. That the proposed Intergovernmental Task Force (ITF) be composed of elected or appointed officials only;
2. That the mandate of the ALHB Intergovernmental Task Force be clearly articulated and limited to:
 - Enhancing communication between Government and Agency Partners;
 - Supporting the planning and implementation of a long term, well-planned and executed strategy to eradicate the Asian Long-Horned Beetle;
 - Supporting the planning and implementation of a comprehensive replanting strategy to enhance the health and sustainability of the urban forest; and
 - Advising on the development and implementation of the communications strategy around public information and education to ensure that the public and appropriate partners are informed on the identification and prevention aspects of the ALHB
3. That staff of the appropriate agencies support the Intergovernmental Task Force as required.

The membership on the Intergovernmental Task Force would be composed of elected and appointed officials from each of the Governmental bodies and agencies that will be playing a significant role in the elimination and eradication of the beetle. These include:

- Two representatives from the City of Vaughan (Mayor and Local Councillor, Ward 3);
- Three representatives from the City of Toronto;
- One representative from the Region of York;
- One representative from the Federal Government (an elected MP);
- One representative from the Provincial Government (an elected MPP);
- One representative from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency; and
- One representative from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

The ITF can play a supportive role in both the eradication program and during the upcoming remediation phase. Regular meetings of the Task Force, assisted by staff, can provide an effective forum for dialogue on a wide-range of matters. This may also include federal and provincial funding for remediation measures, which will be critical to the aesthetic and environmental recovery of the affected areas. Action plans can be developed and tasks assigned as required with the continuing monitoring of results.

Conclusion

The Asian Long-Horned Beetle poses a major threat to both our urban and natural forests. Failure to address the problem promptly and completely has the potential to impose long term environmental, aesthetic and economic impacts on society. Optimizing the governmental response will be critical.

It is recommended that the Intergovernmental Task Force be formed to assist in coordinating the work of the affected bodies and that the Task Force be composed of elected or appointed officials only. The mandate must not overlap with the existing Interagency Management Team Chaired by the CFIA. It is further recommended that the mandate of the Intergovernmental Task Force be clearly articulated and limited to:

- Enhancing communication between Government and Agency Partners;
- Supporting the planning and implementation of a long term, well-planned and executed strategy to eradicate the Asian Long-Horned Beetle;
- Supporting the planning and implementation of a comprehensive replanting strategy to enhance the health and sustainability of the urban forest; and
- Advising on the development and implementation of the communications strategy around public information and education to ensure that the public and appropriate partners are informed on the identification and prevention aspects of the ALHB.

Should Council concur with this approach, the recommendations as set out in the "Recommendations" section of this report should be adopted.

Attachments

1. Asian Long-Horned Beetle Regulated Area

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Di Biase
Mayor

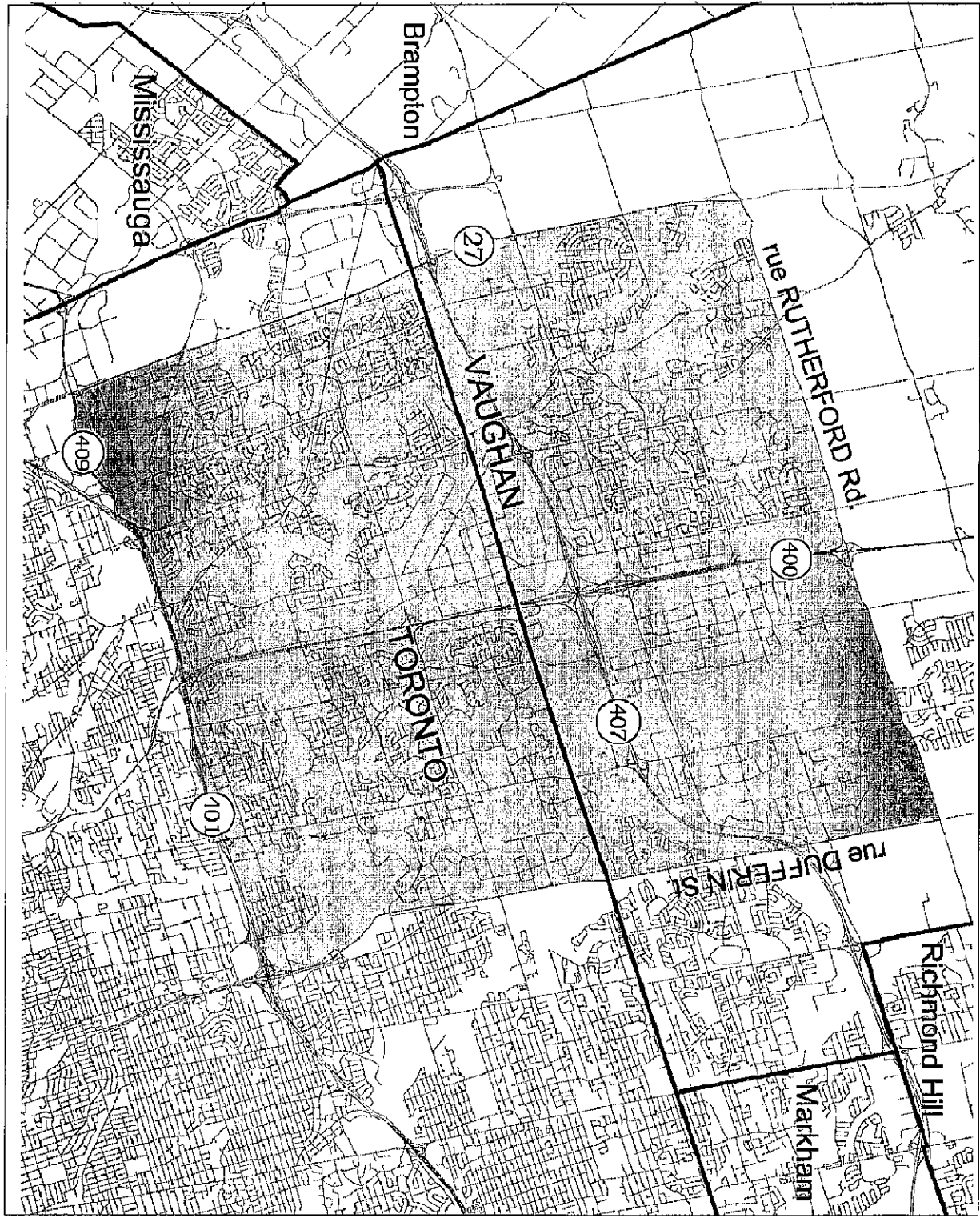
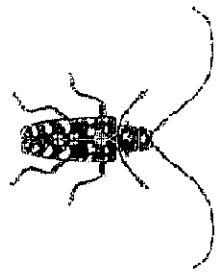
Bernie DiVona
Councillor, Ward 3

Asian Longhorned Beetle / Longicorne Asiatique

Regulated Area / Région réglementée

Toronto - Vaughan, Ontario

Attachment 1



 Regulated Area
Région réglementée

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