

DRAFT

EMERALD ASH BORER MANAGEMENT PLAN PLYMOUTH, MN

Purpose:

By implementing the provisions in this management plan, the City will take a proactive approach and attempt to spread the costs associated with the potential outbreak of Emerald Ash Borer over five to ten years. The loss of most every ash tree in Plymouth will have a devastating effect on home values, quality of life and the environment. Our goal is to buffer that impact in advance by implementing current arboricultural management activities.

Introduction:

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an introduced pest that is currently killing all species of ash trees (*Fraxinus* sp) in thirteen states and two Canadian provinces. Since its discovery in Detroit, Michigan in 2002, the insect has spread killing all the ash trees in its path. The City of Plymouth must prepare and manage for the arrival of EAB on three fronts – public property (i.e. parks), street trees and trees on private property. While no one can accurately determine when the insect will arrive in Plymouth, our best estimate would be as soon as 2012 from Minneapolis /St. Paul. According to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture staff – the EAB could already be here - brought here via firewood or from out of state nursery stock. The current evidence from Michigan and Ohio show that once EAB becomes established – it takes about five to ten years to infest and kill the majority of the ash trees in a city.

Per an outdated tree inventory, we have 288 ash trees in our park proper, which represents 13% of our park tree population. We have 3,269 boulevard trees, which represents 15% of our boulevard tree population. At this time we have no accurate estimate of the ash population for the undeveloped city park lands or private property. One could extrapolate similar percentages of the ash population.

The following elements of the City's EAB management plan are recommended and are subject to periodic revision as new information about the EAB becomes available. This plan is also subject to change should state or federal policies dictate.

Administration:

The City Forester, though the Park and Recreation Department's Forestry Division will be responsible for implementing and follow up on the provisions of this plan. Priority will focus first on Park trees, second on Boulevard and thirdly on Private trees.

Park Trees:

- There are many Ash trees in City parks, as well as thousands of ash in wooded areas. It is our intent to update the park tree inventory within the next 2 years.
- The forestry division shall begin pre-emptive removals and replace ash trees within park proper areas, focusing on poor quality trees or trees in fair condition with major defects.
- The City will continue to cooperate with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to establish EAB traps and/or detection trees as needed in city parks.

- Ash trees in wooded areas will be left alone – unless considered a hazard due to a target within range of falling. Early in an EAB infestation we will be removing infested trees as needed to slow the spread to the community.
- Ash trees in park proper areas will be replaced as economically feasible. In wooded areas, natural regeneration will play a significant role in reforesting parkland, but invasive/non-native plants will create future management challenges.

Boulevard Trees:

- Our intent is to update the boulevard tree inventory within 5 years. The City will discourage planting any new ash trees on public and/or private property and boulevards.
- The City will remove boulevard ash tree on a case by case basis.
- Poor quality trees and/or trees with major defects will be considered for removal.

Trees on Private Property:

- There are many thousands of ash tree large and small on private property in Plymouth. No reliable inventory exists, and ash densities vary by neighborhood.
- Property owners are urged to monitor for the EAB.
- City of Plymouth Ordinance 2020 – Nuisances; Shade Tree Disease & Pest Control has been updated to reflect the Emerald Ash Borer threat. Procedures and parameters shall be carried out in accordance with current technical and expert opinions and procedures as may be established by the MN Dept. of Agriculture and/or MN Dept. of Natural Resources.
- The City will enforce the relevant sections of Ordinance 2020 should it receive complaints about hazardous private trees. Per policy, the complainant must be negatively affected by the potential hazardous situation.
- It would be prudent for residents to establish a relationship with an ISA Certified Arborist now in the event that ash evaluation, treatment and/or removal are desired. The forestry division encourages citizens and tree firms to focus treatment only on highly valued ash trees.
- The City also encourages residents to replace trees lost with species appropriate for the site, or to plant new trees in advance of EAB infestation and ash removal as a way of tree canopy cover and lessening the large economic and environmental impact of the Emerald Ash Borer. The City conducts a spring Bare Root tree & shrub sale in an effort to make replacement an economically feasible option for all Plymouth residents.

Projected Budget Cost to the City of Plymouth: 2010 DollarsRemoval operations

Park trees = \$31,000

Boulevard trees = \$640,000

Replacement operations

Park trees

B&B trees = \$72,000

or

Bare root trees = \$14,400

Communication:

The City Administrator, City Council, Park Board, Park and Recreation Director,



Superintendent of Parks will receive periodic updates through normal channels. All media relations will follow normal city protocol.