

Ottawa Forests and Greenspace Advisory Committee
Motion to Council on the Emerald Ash Borer
April 30, 2012

Whereas, Ash Trees make up approximately 25% of trees in Ottawa;

Whereas, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) has spread across the city and has been recognized as a major and immediate threat to Ottawa's ash tree population, with the potential to kill every ash tree in the city in the next few years;

Whereas, this major loss of canopy trees will have profound negative impacts on biodiversity across a broad biological spectrum;

Whereas, there will also be potentially profound negative impacts on other aspects of city operations and responsibilities including: storm water management; ground water recharge; surface water purification; soil protection; heat events; energy use; air quality; human health; property values; residents' sense of well-being; community walkability; and carbon storage and sequestration;

Whereas, the above-mentioned impacts will have significant financial implications for the city and its taxpayers including increases in energy, health care and infrastructure costs, coupled with decreases in property values and the marketability of buildings, resulting in less tax revenue for the city;

Whereas, residents of Ottawa are deeply concerned about the impacts of EAB and the widespread loss of one of the most common canopy trees in the Ottawa area;

Whereas, the city forestry services department's current EAB strategy involves a range of responses including cutting of heavily infested and dead ash trees, new plantings of city trees to replace removed ash, treating some trees with Treeazin to prevent them from dying, and a public outreach and education program;

Whereas, there are many benefits to the city of retaining as many living and healthy ash trees as possible;

Whereas, other cities in Ontario have adopted an approach to the EAB problem of preventative treatment of trees as a first priority;

Be it resolved that, the Forests and Greenspace Advisory Committee (OFGAC) strongly encourages the city to immediately shift its priority policy response to EAB, to a proactive approach of treating trees with Treeazin, or other appropriate methods as they become available, to prevent and mitigate infestation with Emerald Ash Borer.

Be it resolved that, the city immediately and significantly expand and strengthen its public education and outreach on the issue of EAB to better help residents understand the

issues, the options available and the possible outcomes, and that this be as much a priority as other components of the EAB program response;

Be it resolved that, in 2012, the city more actively involve residents in the response to the EAB by convening an on-going (as long as the EAB still poses a threat to Ottawa's ash trees) Working Group of appropriate city staff and representative members of the public from Community Associations, and other agencies and organizations with valuable expertise to contribute, so that residents can be well-informed, and actively participate in policy and program development and implementation to aid the effort to preserve ash trees in Ottawa. The City should also look for opportunities and collaborate as much as possible in joint efforts with residents, businesses, other agencies and organizations to preserve both city and private ash trees.

Be it further resolved that, OFGAC strongly urges the city to provide the financial and human resources required to meet these goals beginning in the 2013 budget document, and continuing in all future budget documents, as long as the Emerald Ash Borer is a problem.