

**VILLAGE OF PALATINE
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

Memorandum

Date: June 4, 2007

To: Reid Ottesen, Village Manager

From: Andrew Radetski, Director of Public Works
Elias Koutas, Assistant Director of Public Works

Subject: Emerald Ash Borer Implementation Plan

On May 21, 2007, the Village Council reviewed a number of policy options regarding the potential infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer. This review included what the Emerald Ash Borer was, the potential impact on the urban forest in Palatine, what steps could be taken to minimize this impact for both parkway trees and private trees, and what assistance, if any, should be provided to Village residents. Based upon this discussion, the following policy direction was adopted:

- Provide an aggressive and proactive public education and information program;
- Systematically begin removing and replacing unhealthy or infested ash trees;
- Expand the Village's Tree Removal Program to include private trees;
- Create a low interest loan program for those residents needing financial assistance in removing infested ash trees;
- Develop a permit/license program for private trees in an attempt to monitor the removal of ash trees throughout Palatine; and
- Adoption of an ordinance addressing the key issues involved with limiting and addressing the Emerald Ash Borer infestation.

Having provided policy direction, the Village Council requested that staff develop an implementation plan for its review by the end of June. Following is Staff's proposed implementation plan to address the Emerald Ash Borer Infestation.

General Program

Public Education and Information Program

The purpose of this program is to raise public awareness of the Emerald Ash Borer infestation and its potential impacts, keep residents informed as to where the infestation is and where it may appear next, inform residents of what steps are being taken and why to address this concern, educate residents about the regulatory requirements in removing and properly disposing of infested trees, as well as advising what step they can take to assist in this effort.

Five (5) avenues of communication have been identified to accomplish the program's purposes. These include: printed material and its distribution; public presentations; the Village newsletter; the Village's website; and the Village's Local Access Television. A brief discussion of how each will be implemented and related time frame follows.

Printed Materials: One key aspect of this program will be developing and distributing printed material to residents directly impacted by this infestation. As such, a series of brochures will either be developed or identified over the next 2 months that will address such subjects as "How do you tell if you have an ash tree and how do you know if it is infested?", "What are my options if my ash tree is infested?", "What is the Village and State doing to address this problem?"

"Is there any assistance that the Village can provide?" By fall of this year, these brochures will be sent to all Homeowner Associations, be available for pickup at municipal facilities and the Library, and sent to individual residents that contact the Village asking about this infestation. It should be noted that information will also be provided at various summer events, possibly as early as this summer. Out-of-pocket cost for development of these brochures is estimated at \$4,000. Reproduction cost will vary with the number of brochures printed. It is estimated that a first printing of 3,000 brochures will be needed at an estimated cost of \$5,000 - \$6,000.

Presentations: Starting this winter, the Department of Public Works will be contacting Civic Groups, Homeowner Associations, and schools offering to make a presentation about this infestation. It would also be the Department's intent to provide a brief overview from time to time at District Advisory meetings, Council Meetings or other public forums that may come up. No out-of-pocket cost will be incurred.

Village Newsletter: It is proposed that a Village-wide newsletter be dedicated solely to the Emerald Ash Borer infestation. This newsletter would be sent to all residents explaining what the infestation is, how to identify an ash tree, how to tell if your ash trees have the infestation, what steps the Village and State are taking to address this issue, how they can help and what assistance is available to them as residents. This newsletter would be prepared this summer and held until such time as the Village was included in an expanded quarantine zone for Emerald Ash Borer. In addition to the Village-wide newsletter, it is proposed that periodic updates be provided through the Village's regularly scheduled newsletters. Out-of-pocket cost for development of this newsletter is \$2,500 with the mass printing and mailing costing roughly \$12,500. A full color newsletter may be of benefit, and may cost more than these amounts, which are based on a standard village newsletter.

Village Website: In all publications and presentations, reference will be made to the Village's website as a way to receive additional information and to link with other sites addressing the question of Emerald Ash borer. In order to accomplish this, the Village website will need to be expanded to include a section dedicated solely to the Emerald Ash Borer. Background information will be provided with maps showing where parkway ash trees are located. In addition, it is proposed that the website become interactive so that questions could be submitted, answers provided, permits applied for and received, all on-line. Work on upgrading the website will begin in late summer and should be

launched by late fall. Out-of-pocket cost for expanding the Village's website as proposed is estimated to cost between \$2,000 - \$4,000.

Local Access Television (Channel 6): Special programming will be identified (if available) or developed addressing such subjects as "How do you tell if you have an ash tree and how do you know if it is infested, What are my options if my ash tree is infested, What is the Village and State doing to address this problem, and Is there any assistance that the Village can provide?" Depending upon existing material, efforts will be made to increase information on Channel 6 by late summer. If programming needs to be developed, this will take place over the winter months and should be available sometime in 2008. Out-of-pocket cost for the purchase of programs is estimated at \$2,000.

Public Parkway Tree Program

Managed Approach to Addressing Emerald Ash Borer Infestation

The purpose of this program is three-fold: address dead or infested ash trees before they become a safety issue; prevent the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer infestation; and minimize the neighborhood impact where the predominant parkway tree is ash.

One issue raised during the May discussions regarding Emerald Ash Borer was "What is the state requirement regarding the removal of ash trees once an infestation has been identified?" In follow-up discussions with Department of Agriculture officials, it was determined that there are no requirements to remove any tree, either infested or within a specified distance of an infested tree. However, it was strongly recommended that they be removed and that all ash trees within one half-mile be removed as well, in an attempt to limit the spread of the infestation. Currently, no trees have to be removed due to Ash Borer infestation. Obviously, once the tree dies, it would be declared a hazard under our ordinance which in turn would require removal.

A second issue raised at that meeting was whether or not the Village proposed to take down healthy trees in an attempt to limit the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer. Initially, it is the Village's intent not to take down any healthy tree. However, depending upon the spread of the infestation, there may come a point where the Village may remove some healthy trees in an attempt to save others.

Much of the Village's response will be dictated by the status of the infestation. That is, if no quarantine zone is declared or infestation found (highly doubtful) the Village will take some preliminary steps to address those neighborhoods with high percentage of parkway ash trees (Level 1). If Palatine were to be included in a quarantine zone (Level 2), which may occur as soon as later this year, additional steps would be warranted. Finally, if the infestation was actually detected in Palatine (Level 3), a more aggressive response would be needed. As such, the following plan has been developed given these three scenarios:

Level 1 (Present Condition): At this time, Palatine is not located in a quarantine zone nor has any infestation been detected. As such, the Village is not required to take any steps. However, attempting to be proactive, especially in neighborhoods with more than 50%

parkway ash trees, an inventory and condition survey has been taken to identify ash trees in poor condition.

The Village has four (4) subdivisions that have 50% or greater parkway ash tree. These four subdivisions include:

- Cinderella Park (80.6%, 212 ash trees)
- Hunting Ridge Unit #2 (60.2%, 124 ash trees)
- Pebble Creek (57.8%, 89 ash trees)
- Banbury Lane (50.0%, 66 ash trees)

A list of all subdivisions having an ash tree percentage greater than 12.2% can be found in Appendix A.

The condition survey indicated that within these four subdivisions, roughly 16% or 77 parkway ash trees are in poor health. "Poor" health is defined by the percentage of dead limbs and branches, overall condition of the canopy, trunk and bark, presence of pest infestation, disease, decay and/or wounds, as well as recent growth patterns. The cost to remove these 77 trees and to replace them is estimated to cost \$54,000. It is proposed that this work begin during the winter months.

Obviously, removal of any parkway tree will impact the neighborhood. As such, prior to any removals taking place, written information will be forwarded to all abutting property owners advising them of the Village's intent to remove the parkway ash tree, why that specific tree was selected, and what benefits are anticipated. If any resident strongly objects to the removal of their parkway tree, the Village will not remove it unless it becomes a safety concern.

The benefit of removing and replacing these trees sooner rather than later is that if the infestation should sweep through these neighborhoods, the replacement trees would provide some buffering for the residents. Furthermore, it would also provide additional time for these trees to get established as well as provide greater diversity within the neighborhood. A complete list of these 77 trees can be found in Appendix B.

Other actions that would be over the coming years include:

1. All ash trees in poor condition will be removed and replaced in neighborhoods which possess 33% or greater of parkway ash trees. Funding for this program will be included as part of future capital improvement project. An additional 208 trees at an estimated cost of \$196,000.
2. All species of the Genus "Fraxinus" (white and green ash) will be added to the Village's "Do Not Plant" list. The Village has already placed a moratorium on planting ash trees on public property.
3. All existing ash trees that are associated with new development of 3 lots or more will be removed and replaced by the developer.

Level 2 (Quarantine Area): If the Village becomes part of an expanded quarantined area, the Department will implement an expanded program to monitor ash trees throughout the Village. Priority will be given to those neighborhoods with the highest

percentage of parkway ash trees. The programs developed under Level 1 would have to be expanded to cover all ash trees in the community, or an additional 546 ash trees at an estimated cost of \$426,600.

Other actions which will be implemented under Level 2 pertain to disposal of wood waste. All woody material generated by these removal programs will be handled by SWANNC or another approved disposal operation, licensed by the State of Illinois to hand infested material. This will have the effect of increasing disposal costs of normal wood waste from residents by \$126,000.

Level 3 (Infestation Sites): There are currently fourteen hot zones or infestation sites in northeast Illinois in which the State has recommended a half mile clear zone. No hot zones or infestation sites exist in Palatine. If a hot zone is identified in the future, the potential exists that all ash trees private and public will need to be removed within this clear zone.

If an infestation site is identified in Palatine, it is proposed that all parkway ash trees within one half-mile of the infested tree be removed. In addition to removing parkway trees, all residents within the ½-mile clear zone would be given written warning of the infestation with information regarding what to look for, what steps can be taken, and what assistance is available. As to whether or not private individuals would be forced to remove any healthy ash tree, the Department of Agriculture has indicated that at this time, it would not be a requirement, only a recommendation, although this is subject to change. The estimated cost of removing all parkway trees within a ½-mile from infested trees will range depending upon the density of ash trees. However, this cost will range from \$95,000 on up for any single tree infestation.

Private Tree Program

Expansion of Village's Tree Removal Program

The purpose of this program option is to provide an opportunity for residents to "piggy back" on the Village contract for ash tree removal. Through this process it is hoped that residents will be able to save dollars, minimize coordination efforts as well as insure proper disposal of infested wood waste.

In discussions with potential contractors, several issues were raised. In summary, it was felt that for this program to be effective, the role that the Village would play would be critical. In particular, it was felt that the Village needed to be involved in the coordination of this work, coordination with utility companies, coordination with residents, and coordination with contractors. Another suggestion was that stump removal be let as a separate contract. Restoration of landscaping would be each contractor's responsibility.

Furthermore, it was suggested that a range of proposals be obtained based upon size of tree and ease of access. In particular, if a tree had total access (free movement of equipment), the cost would be lower than for a tree of the same size with limited access (access for smaller equipment) or for trees with no access for equipment (all hand work). It was noted that even under these circumstances, a number of "difficult" trees (hazardous

trees, trees over houses, etc.) would require special pricing. Another suggested item was that the Village pays the contractor directly for all tree removals.

Given these general conditions, it was felt that a number of contractors would be interested while providing the lowest possible cost to the resident.

Based upon these discussions, the following process is proposed to allow residents to take advantage of the Village's removal contract.

1. Residents desiring to have their private tree removed by the Village would contact the Department of Public Works, providing location, number, and size of trees.
2. The Department would collect these requests and forward to the tree removal/stump removal contractor. The contractor would visit the site and determine the size and how "accessible" the tree was for removal.
3. The contractor would report back to the Village as to their findings, indicating what the cost of removal will be based upon contract bid price.
4. The Village would contact the resident providing them with a not-to-exceed cost for the removal of the tree and stump.
5. If the resident was in agreement, they would forward a check in the amount of the removal to the Village.
6. The Village would then proceed to have all utility lines cleared (if necessary) after which the contractor would be notified to remove the tree.
7. The tree would be removed; the Village would inspect the removal and schedule the stump to be removed. The resident would have an option to remove the stump themselves.
8. Once all work was completed a final inspection would be made prior to the release of funds to the contractor.

As can be seen, Village involvement in this process would be extensive. As such, it is estimated that roughly \$100 - \$125 in administrative cost will be expended for every tree removed under this program.

Implementation of this program will parallel the Level 1 contractor tree removal program, scheduled for this coming winter.

Low Interest Loan Program

The purpose of this program is to assist residents in arranging funding needed for the removal of dead or infested ash trees as a result of the Emerald Ash Borer. It should be noted that this funding also covers the cost of tree replacement if the resident desires to do so.

The initial thought was to set up a low interest program similar to the Sewer Loan Program established in the 1990's. This program, which is administered directly by the Village, has been used roughly 12 times over the last 10 years or so. As such, the amount of resources needed to effectively promote and administer this program has been extremely limited.

When considering the potential number of residents which may be interested in applying for a low interest loan to remove and replace private trees (estimated at roughly 2,500), concerns were raised as to the Village's ability to effectively handle this volume in-house. As such, contact was made with J.P. Morgan Chase to determine what programs they had which might be utilized to assist residents in securing a low interest loan. During these discussions a number of alternatives were identified which limited the Village's direct involvement. Some of these alternatives included "buying down" the interest rate for these loans, extending credit (credit card) for a set period of time without any interest rate, etc. Accordingly, J.P. Morgan Chase was asked to identify other possible options and forward their recommendation to the Village. It is anticipated that a program will be finalized and implemented by the end of this year.

Licensing Program for the Removal of Ash Trees

The purpose of this program is to track the removal and, more importantly, the disposal of ash trees as a result of the Emerald Ash Borer infestation. A secondary purpose would be to identify residents and contractors that will be removing ash trees privately so that information can be provided for the proper disposal of wood waste.

In an attempt to streamline this process, either the property owner or the contractor will be required to submit information about their intent. Information to be gathered includes:

- Location of ash trees to be removed;
- Property owners name and number;
- Was Emerald Ash Borer confirmed, and by whom;
- Quantity and size of tree(s);
- Who is to remove the tree, either private individual or contractor;
- If a contractor is to remove the tree, Village Business License Number is required;
- How and where will the wood waste to be disposed;
- When removal is scheduled and when it should be completed; and
- Emergency contact name and number.

It is the programs intent to make extensive use of the Village's website to handle submittal of this information as well as execution of the license. For those individuals that do not have internet access, license applications can be sent to the Village or called in over the telephone. The Department of Public Works will collect this information, tracking it as work progresses and if necessary following up on any complaints.

Since this program is dependent upon the Village's website being expanded, it should be available this coming winter. As for the cost of administering this program, it is estimated that each license will cost the Village \$25 - \$35.

Adoption of Village Ordinance

At the present time, the only ordinance that could be applied to an Emerald Ash Borer infestation falls under Chapter 16, Section 16-115, Removal of Dead Trees and Limbs; and Section 16-119, Diseased or Infested Vegetation Declared Nuisance. Under Section 16-115, the Village has the ability to order the removal of dead trees or dying limbs which pose a safety hazard. Under Section 16-119, any trees that are diseased and/or

infested are declared to be a nuisance. As such, the Village has the ability to order them removed.

A review is underway to determine if additional ordinances are needed to allow the Village to respond to the Emerald Ash Borer. In particular, the Department is interested in being able to accomplish the following:

- Enter private property for the purpose of inspecting and testing potentially infested ash trees;
- The ability to order the removal of dead or infested ash trees on private property;
- The ability to remove dead or infested ash trees on private property if the owner fails to respond in a timely fashion and to recover said cost;
- Require that either the contractor or property owner obtain a license from the Village for the removal of any ash trees located on private property; and
- Require the removal of all ash trees on private property, regardless of condition, on any development of 3 lots or greater.

One possibility under consideration is to take Chapter 12, Article 10 pertaining to Dutch Elm Disease, and modifying it to include Emerald Ash Borer.

It is anticipated that an ordinance will be coming forth by the end of summer to address the Emerald Ash Borer Infestation.

Initial Budget Impacts

Program Implementation Funding

The implementation program laid out calls for a number of activities to begin immediately. These include;

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| • Design and Reproduction of Brochures | \$10,000 |
| • Emerald Ash Borer Newsletter (Design) | \$2,500 |
| • Upgrade of Village's Website | \$4,000 |
| • Purchasing of Channel 6 Programming | \$2,000 |

Total	\$18,500
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If the Village is included in an expanded quarantine zone later this year, an additional \$12,500 would be needed for the reproduction and mailing of a Village-wide newsletter.

At this time, there is no funding dedicated for the implementation of this program. As such, either existing funds would need to be allocated to cover these costs, or a separate appropriation would need to be approved.

It should be noted that under this proposal, no trees would be removed until after January 1, 2008. Funding to implement this phase would be requested as part of the 2008 Operating and Capital Improvement Program Budget.

APPENDIX A

PARKWAY ASH TREE DENSITY BY SUBDIVISION

Village Ash Tree Density by Subdivision

Subdivision	Total Trees	Ash Trees	Percentage
Cinderella Park Sub.	263	212	80.6%
Hunting Ridge Unit No. 2	206	124	60.2%
Pebble Creek	154	89	57.8%
Banbury Lane	132	66	50%
Joseph H. Anderson's Plum Grove Manor	105	52	49.5%
Cannongate Unit One	111	53	47.7%
Meadowlake Sub.	239	108	45.2%
Willow Walk Unit One	85	38	44.7%
Plum Grove Park Estates Unit #2	93	39	41.9%
Hunting Ridge Unit No. 1	448	180	40.2%
Winston Park Northwest Unit 4	515	206	40%
Shenandoah North Sub.	99	39	39.4%
Winston Park Northwest Unit No. 1 (North Section)	101	39	38.6%
Haven Crest Unit	361	139	38.5%
Morgan's Gate Sub.	207	78	37.7%
Windhill	165	62	37.6%
Pepper Tree Farms Unit No. 3	183	64	35%
Lakeside Estates	259	88	34%
Concord Mills	331	110	33.2%
Wexford Unit 1	174	51	29.3%
Winston Park Northwest Unit 3	794	231	29.1%
Pepper Tree Farms Unit No. 4	313	90	28.8%
Heatherstone Sub.	150	41	27.3%
Willow Walk Unit Two	182	46	25.3%
Hunting Ridge Unit No. 3	403	95	23.6%
Abbey Hill Sub.	85	19	22.4%
Plum Grove Hills Unit 3	149	32	21.5%
Reseda Sub.	600	125	20.8%
Virginia Lake Subdivision	332	63	19%
Reseda North	127	22	17.3%
Willow Wood	419	51	12.2%