Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan City of Lamberton, MN

Purpose:

By implementing the provisions of the Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan, the City is attempting to minimize the disruption to its urban forest due to the inevitable infestation of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). The City will attempt to distribute costs associated with certain and massive tree death, based on the history of EAB elsewhere in North America, over a manageable time period, and lessen the social and economic impact that an extensive loss would have on the quality of life in our community.

Applicability:

This management plan is applicable to all public properties within the City, including rights-ofway, boulevards, parks and open spaces.

Administration:

The Lamberton Public Works Department with help from the City Clerk, shall be responsible for implementing this program and seeing that the provisions are carried out.

Introduction / EAB Background:

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an introduced invasive insect that has now been confirmed in thirtyfive (35) states, including Minnesota, and five (5) Canadian provinces. EAB attacks all species of ash trees (*Fraxinus* spp.) found in Minnesota, which include green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*) and black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*). This is of great concern because Minnesota is home to more than 900 million ash trees statewide and unlike some similar borers in the *Agrilus* genus (such as two lined chestnut borer and bronze birch borer), EAB is not solely an opportunistic pest, it is known to attack both healthy and stressed ash trees alike.

As of the adoption date of this management plan, Redwood County is currently in a quarantine status. EAB has been confirmed in Redwood County in our neighboring community of Sanborn in their park located along the Cottonwood River. This increases the concern for the Lamberton community as the Cottonwood River provides an unrestricted path from the Sanborn park to Lamberton's Kuhar Park.

It is not the adult beetles that are detrimental to ash trees but rather the larvae of EAB (immature stage), which feed on the inner bark of trees, disrupting a tree's ability to transport water and nutrients up to the canopy. As the number of larvae in a tree increases, less and less water and nutrients reach the canopy, resulting in dieback in the upper portions of a tree. By the time visible symptoms are obvious, the population of EAB has grown and likely spread to other trees in the area.

Signs/symptoms of EAB that can help detect an infestation include:

- Increased woodpecker activity/damage
- Bark splitting (vertical slits)
- D-shaped exit holes created by adult insects as they emerge from the tree
- Epicormic branching/shoots near base of tree
- Canopy dieback
- Serpentine (s-shaped) larval galleries that are packed with frass

Making early detection even more difficult is that initial attacks on an ash tree tend to be in the upper canopy. For this reason, increased woodpecker activity is becoming a more reliable early indicator of a possible infestation.

A tree inventory has been conducted in the City of Lamberton. The City Park is 66% Ash trees. Kuhar Park is 69% Ash Trees. The boulevards and road right of ways in Lamberton contain 51% Ash Trees.

The City will implement the following steps to try and slow the spread of EAB and allocate the costs of managing the tree loss and replacement over multiple budget cycles.

Ash Management Plan:

- Complete an inventory of all boulevard trees and trees in maintained park areas. At a minimum, an inventory of all ash trees in boulevard areas and maintained park areas should be completed. However, since the City has no inventory data at all, a complete inventory of trees would be beneficial for a number of reasons including:
 - Determining the percentage of boulevard trees that consist of ash species, which will help clarify the impact EAB will have on Lamberton's street tree program as well as the urban forest as a whole.
 - o Better budget estimation for maintenance (trimming, removing, planting)
 - Developing a master street tree plan to ensure a species rich landscape (diversity is the best defense to insect/disease outbreaks)
 - Replanting efforts
- Education. The City will continue to educate the citizenry and elected officials concerning EAB. Tools that can and will be utilized include newsletter articles, the website and presentations to various groups/organizations. Education will emphasize the importance of monitoring and early detection as well as management strategies including removal and disposal of infested wood and appropriate times of year to complete such work to avoid inadvertently spreading EAB.

Boulevard Trees:

1. The City will institute a new policy that prohibits the inclusion of planting any ash species (*Fraxinus spp.*) on public property and boulevards.

- 2. The City will discourage the inclusion of planting any ash species (*Fraxinus spp.*) as a part of any proposed development, whether commercial, residential or industrial.
- 3. Existing ash trees in poor condition or in fair condition with major defects will be targeted for removal.
- 4. Once discovered, EAB infested ash trees will be removed and disposed of properly.
- 5. Ash trees that are removed will be replaced with another species, budget permitting. Replanting will be done with a keen focus on species diversity and matching the right tree with the right location.
- 6. Plantings will be conducted in the spring and/or fall based on staff availability and budget.
- 7. Pesticide control will only be considered for 'Legacy' trees, those that have significant historical meaning or those that are rated in excellent condition. This option will not be implemented for other ash trees because while it may be less costly than removal and replanting in the short-term, it can be much more expensive in the long-term due to the need to re-treat annually or biannually with the currently available products. Additionally, considering the general age (fairly young) and size (relatively small) of Lamberton's street trees, removal and replacement likely would be more cost effective presently.

Park Trees:

- 1. Ash trees in poor condition or fair condition with major defects in maintained portions of parks will be identified and targeted for removal.
- 2. The City will continue to work with the MN Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the MN Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to establish detection trees and traps as needed in city parks for early detection of EAB.
- 3. Ash trees in wooded areas will not be addressed unless in close proximity to a trail or structure where harm and/or damage could result from a failure. However, if an ash tree in a wooded area is found to be infested and it is in the early stages of infestation, said tree(s) may be removed to slow the spread to other areas.
- 4. Ash trees removed from maintained areas of parks will be replaced budget permitting, again with a focus on species diversity and matching the right tree with the right location.
- 5. Should ash trees be removed from wooded areas, natural regeneration will be relied upon for reforestation.

Trees on Private Property:

- Through educational efforts, property owners will be encouraged to diligently monitor their ash trees for any signs of EAB. They can either contact the City's Offices for additional EAB information or the MDA Arrest the Pest hotline for more information or for a site inspection.
- 2. The City will also continue to encourage property owners to replace lost trees with species appropriate for the site or even in advance of potential infestation and ash removal. As with public lands, the City encourages property owners to diversify the species on their property to buffer against future insect/disease outbreaks.

Monitoring

Monitoring the infestation is the first step to managing it. Though no additional resources have been added thus far to do so, the City of Lamberton will respond to calls for inspections from residents as well.

Removals

By accelerating the removal of these trees and re-planting with a different species, the total financial obligation is spread out in a more manageable way over several years. More importantly, where EAB has gotten out of control because of no structured removal plan, ash increasingly die and become dangerous to people and property that are targets for falling limbs and trees.

- The city will adopt a **Structured Removal Plan** proactively removing **boulevard and park ash trees annually**. Removal would begin as soon as possible of all confirmed EAB trees, those with significant decline, and those in areas scheduled for upcoming planting.
- For removal of nuisance diseased EAB tree(s) on private property: The city will follow the procedures of an updated ordinances on Diseased Trees. In short, once a property owner is ordered to remove a diseased tree and fails to comply within 30 days, the city may abate the nuisance by having it removed and disposed of in the proper way. All associated costs for the abatement will be assessed against the property owner which can be appealed at a hearing with the City Council. Cost: All associated costs will be recovered through assessment At this point, no program has been established to provide private property owners financial assistance for dealing with EAB For removal of nuisance dangerous tree(s), such as a dying or dead EAB tree(s) on private property:
 - The city will follow the procedures of the updated ordinances on the Removal of Dangerous Trees. In short, once a property owner is ordered to remove a dangerous tree and fails to comply within 30 days, the city may abate the nuisance by having it removed and disposed of in the proper way. All associated costs for the abatement will be assessed against the property owner which can be appealed at a hearing with the City Council. Cost: All associated costs will be recovered through assessment at this point, no program has been established to provide private property owners financial assistance for dealing with EAB

Harvesting of ash trees infested with EAB, should happen in the months between October and April. This time frame is optimal to not allow the EAB in the tree to flee and move elsewhere.

Ordinances & Policies

The City has ordinances and policies that affect and outline what actions can and cannot be done. These need to be reviewed, updated, or amended with EAB in mind. Some of the suggested updates include:

- Update ordinances related to diseased trees to include EAB, such as the ability to enter private property for inspection, the ability to order removal of diseased trees, and the ability to abate the nuisance upon non-compliance of property owner.
- The city will adopt a proactive "Structured Removal Plan" of ash trees, including those in decline and otherwise, that meets a set percentage of ash in anticipation of the larger loss of the entire ash population (minus any ash chosen for possible chemical treatment). The intent is to hopefully slow the spread of EAB by reducing host trees, thus, spreading out management costs over several years by avoiding a "spike" in diseased and dangerous trees.
- The city will remove all ash with greater than 30% canopy decline in areas scheduled for upcoming tree planting; and remove all ash with greater than 30% decline in other areas when requested by citizen(s); and remove selected ash with less than 30% decline as part of structured removal goals to manage EAB. This policy is designed to hopefully slow the spread of EAB by reducing host trees, and by accelerating the inevitable removal of ash, will help spread out the program schedule and associated costs.
- Develop a policy for residents who wish to save a public tree through chemical treatment with EAB pesticides:
 - The city will permit residents to chemically treat a public ash tree under the conditions of hiring a competent tree service that is bonded and insured, is a State of Minnesota Licensed Commercial Pesticide Applicator using state approved trunk injection pesticides only. Limiting to trunk injections hopefully reduces pesticide exposure to others and the environment overall. (Note: Chemical treatment would not preclude future removal of said ash tree if deemed necessary.) Cost: Indirect (\$50/per for staff labor and vehicle to check site and issue)

Education & Outreach

The City of Lamberton will proactively get information to their residents about the EAB including what it is, how to spot it, long term effects, and treatment options. The city will get this information to their residents by means of the website, social media page, and utility billings.

Summary:

It is clear that EAB poses a serious threat to Lamberton's community forest. The City will implement this EAB Management Plan to the extent feasible and as budgets permit. The steps outlined above are based on current knowledge of EAB. This management plan is subject to revision(s) as new information about EAB becomes available and/or as new treatment options are identified. Furthermore, this plan is also subject to revision should state and/or federal policies necessitate plan updates. Revisions to the EAB Management Plan would be subject to City Council approval.

Projected Budget/Cost to City

The actual cost per tree for removal and replacement is yet to be determined.

Costs to consider:

- 1. Labor
 - a. Tree removal
 - b. Tree replacement
 - c. Tree treatment
 - d. Administration
- 2. Bobcat and other equipment costs
- 3. Chemical Costs
- 4. Chemical Application Equipment
- 5. Applicators License & Training
- 6. Replacement trees

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