

City of Washington, Iowa



Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan January 2018

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The intent of this management program is to mitigate the damage and cost associated with infestation of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). This cooperative effort by the various departments of the City, Tree Committee, and Parks & Recreation Board is a proactive approach and enables the City to address public and private needs in an efficient and effective manner. The City will attempt to distribute the costs of this plan over a manageable time period. It is anticipated that no State or Federal assistance will be made available to local governments to deal with the impacts of the EAB.

1.2 Applicability

This program is applicable to ash trees located on any public property, right-of-way, parks and cemeteries. This program does not apply to private properties unless such trees are deemed a nuisance and may negatively impact public rights-of-way, other properties, or pose a threat to public safety.

1.3 Administration

This plan will be implemented with the advice and consent of the City Council by the Emerald Ash Borer Committee:

Nick Duvall, Cemetery Sexton (Chair)
JJ Bell, Maintenance & Construction Superintendent
Andy Dahl, Tree Committee/University of Iowa Arborist
Steve Donnolly, Building & Zoning Official
Marde McConnell, Tree Committee
Nick Pacha, Parks Superintendent
Don Pfeiffer, Parks & Recreation Board
Brent Hinson, City Administrator

The committee will provide regular reports to the City Council on progress, and City Council will be asked to review and approve all bids of 10 or more tree removals solicited from outside contractors.

2. Background

2.1 Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)

The emerald ash borer (EAB) is a small green invasive wood-boring beetle that attacks and kills ash trees. The adults live on the outside of ash trees feeding on the leaves during the

2.2 State Readiness Plan & Other Resources Consulted

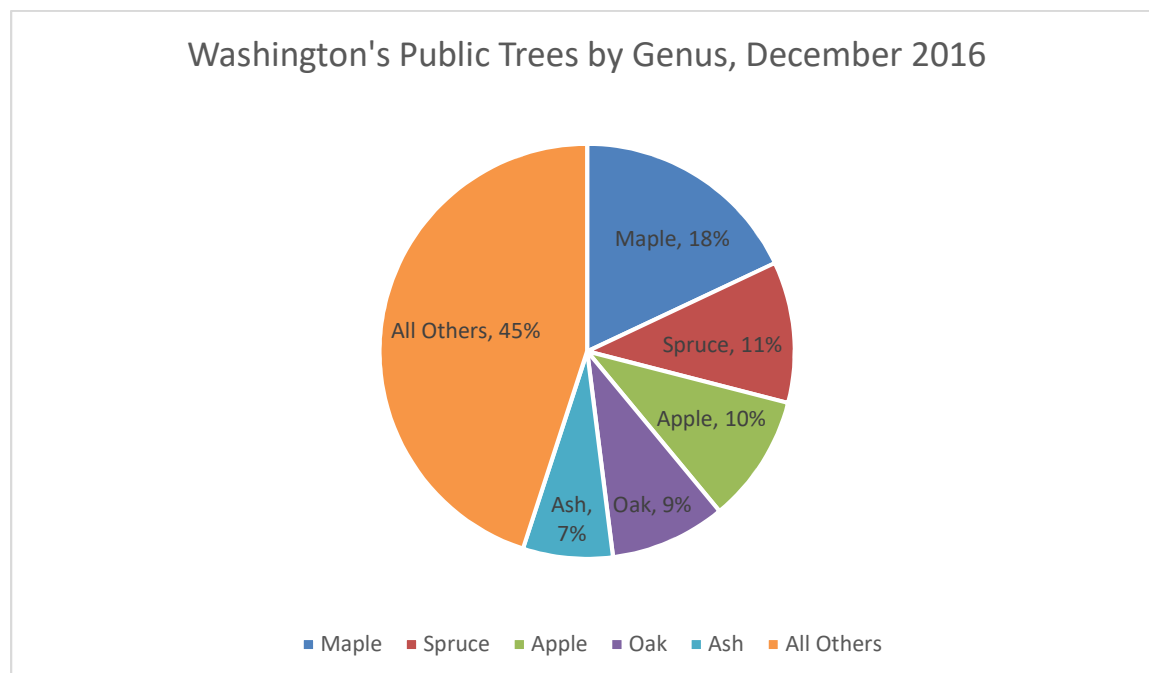
Due to the potentially catastrophic impact of EAB, the State of Iowa has developed the Iowa Emerald Ash Borer Readiness Plan that can be found on the Department of Natural Resources website at <http://bit.ly/IowaEAB>. This plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of State agencies in dealing with EAB as well as the procedures for ongoing monitoring and investigating suspected infestations. The plan does not outline the specifics of regulatory action following a confirmed infestation, nor does it identify any State assistance other than technical expertise.

Additionally, the committee consulted resources prepared by the City of Coralville, City of Waukee, City of Bettendorf, Iowa DNR, and Michigan State Extension.

3. Inventory and Assessment

3.1 Public Tree Inventory & Assessment

In 2016, arborist Andy Dahl, with support from City staff, conducted a tree inventory on public property, right-of-ways, and parks and trails. A total of 3,409 trees were inventoried, 260 were identified as ash trees. Using the field GPS unit, the location of each tree and the perceived general condition of each tree was noted and has been stored in a database for easy retrieval. While the overall condition of the urban forest was determined to be above average, with 89% of trees in vigorous condition. However, 70 trees were deemed to be in severe decline, a number that is expected to escalate sharply in future years as the EAB infestation takes hold. Staff continues to monitor all ash trees and their conditions on a regular basis.



A total of 134 tree species are present in Washington's public trees, and a key goal of future plantings should be to continue to diversify the urban forest. Goals for tree diversity are:

- No more than 10% of any single tree species
- No more than 20% of any genus
- No more than 30% of any family

The City Tree Inventory was presented and approved by the City Council in December 2016.

3.3 Private Trees

The City recognizes that there are numerous ash trees on private property. Currently, the City has no reliable inventory for ash trees on private property. Property owners are urged to monitor the EAB movement. The decision to remove or treat ash trees on private property rests with the property owner.

4. Management Plan

As EAB continues to spread throughout Iowa, State and Federal resources are expected to be limited or non-existent. Therefore, it is necessary that the City has its own strategy to complement State efforts to manage the effects of EAB. The proposed EAB management strategy includes the strategies listed below.

4.1 Monitoring

Staff will regularly update its assessment of all public trees. Staff training on EAB identification and its signs and symptoms will be an ongoing effort. Staff will continue to attend training sessions as provided by the DNR, IDALS, ISU Extension and other opportunities as they become available.

4.2 Pre-Emptive Removal or Treatment

The City does not plan to do any pre-emptive removal or insecticide treatments of any trees with in the right-of-way or other public properties at this time. In the case of the former, hazard and declining ash trees should be removed first. These are generally the largest trees, and younger trees could be left for the time being, as they are generally smaller and less likely to become a hazard than older, larger trees. A "clear-cut" policy need not be enacted at present as these trees still offer the benefits normal trees do. In the case of the latter, the committee believes insecticidal treatment of trees should be discouraged due to damage to non-target species such as birds & butterflies, environmental contamination, and uncertainty of long-term results for the cost of the investment. While the City reserves the right to treat exceptional trees on a case-by-case basis, this will be the rare exception, rather than the rule.

City staff will monitor trees each year and will remove any tree that is deemed dead or a safety concern.

4.3 Removal Plan

Based on the relatively high number of non-ash hazard trees identified in the tree inventory, the committee recommended, and the City Council authorized the removal of 55 non-ash hazard trees in FY18. The funding plan developed for removal of ash trees is based on a 4-year planning horizon, in order to plan for what is hopefully the fastest scenario for loss of all of the public ash trees.

The committee has coordinated with Alliant Energy, and their contractor is expected to remove approximately 24 hazard trees in the next 4 years in conjunction with their normal tree-trimming activities around power lines. The City will be responsible for paying for stump grinding for any of these removals.

It was originally thought that many of the removals would be conducted by City staff, following the purchase of a bucket truck, stump grinder, safety and other equipment, and safety training. However, the pricing the City has been able to secure from private contractors for the removal of trees, and taking into account workload factors for the Maintenance & Construction and other departments, we believe it is most prudent at this time to continue to bid hazard trees out in lots of 10 or larger for removal by private contractors as its primary strategy. However, this policy should be considered to be under continuous review, and should circumstances change, the committee may approach the City Council with amendments to this approach.

4.4 Disposal of Debris

Since the entire state of Iowa was quarantined in February of 2014, there are no restrictions on the transport of ash wood debris within state borders. Standard methods of disposal will be utilized for ash trees that are removed with much of the wood being chipped for use as mulch throughout the park system. Firewood and or mulch will also be made available to residents. The City will also burn under carefully controlled conditions and with the concurrence of the Iowa DNR when it is deemed necessary.

To handle the large increase in tree debris in the coming years, the committee requests City Council approval of the purchase of a grapple bucket for the M/C end loader for easier handling of tree trunks, etc. This equipment would also be very useful in future circumstances such as ice storms that may arise from time to time.

4.5 Planting and Restoration

The Tree Committee will largely be responsible for offering replacement of the many trees that will be removed under this plan. Continuing to improve urban forest diversity will be a key goal. In particular, it is not anticipated that the planting of additional maple trees will be

encouraged due to the high prevalence of that genus. Every effort will be made to replace at a rate of at least 1:1.

5. Communication and Outreach

5.1 Community Education

Community outreach will play an important role in educating the public and raising awareness of EAB. The City plans to accomplish this through its periodic newsletters, website, a flyer staff has developed, notices to adjacent property owners when a removal of a right-of-way tree is needed, the local radio station, and production and distribution of informational door hangers to property owners that appear to have a severely declining ash tree on private property. Residents will be encouraged to have their trees inspected if they suspect EAB.