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## **ATTACHMENT 'E'** **Communications Plan**

**Business Client: Community & Fire Services - Operations**  
**Project: Emerald Ash Borer**

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### **1. Current Situation**

- I. The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is a small metallic green beetle that is known to kill all species of ash trees
- II. 2008 roughly mapped Ash locations
- III. Joint Technical EAB Working Group (York Region and nine area municipalities) formed in 2011
- IV. Survey using "green prism traps" undertaken in partnership with York Region to determine presence of the EAB
- V. Markham data collected – of 42 traps, all showed positive results for the presence of the EAB
- VI. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) confirmed the presence of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in Markham in July 2011
- VII. Briefing note delivered to Markham Council July 2011
- VIII. Presentation delivered to General Committee by Jeff McMann on October 17, 2011
- IX. Inventory and health assessment of 16,738 Ash trees on municipal boulevards, open spaces in our park, and follow-up health assessment of inventoried trees completed summer 2012
- X. Jeff McMann presented EAB Management Plan update to General Committee on Nov. 19, 2012.

### **2. Business Objectives**

- I. Develop sustainable EAB management plan that focuses on preserving as many ash trees as possible and includes treatment for substantially healthy trees, and removal including stumping and replanting, taking the following factors into consideration:
  - a. Financial
  - b. Environmental
  - c. Aesthetic
- II. Commence Implementation of Management Plan once fully developed

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### 3. Strategic Considerations

#### a. Issues/risks:

- i. Unknown number of ash trees in Markham woodlots and natural areas
- ii. Ash trees break down quickly once they die, potentially dropping large limbs in public areas or on personal property
- iii. Trees are costly to treat or remove/replace (Treatment is inclusive)
- iv. Removal and disposal within quarantine areas (CFIA regulations)
- v. Need for municipalities to lobby senior levels of government for financial assistance for municipality and residents
- vi. Credibility of arborists consulted by residents regarding ash trees with potential EAB infestation
- vii. Affect on residents of ash trees in Markham dying
- viii. Replacement program – size and type of tree used to replace ash trees that are cut down
- ix. Current tree preservation bylaw does not address removal of EAB infested ash trees though it does address dead or hazardous trees
- x. Limited action on the part of the York Region EAB Communications Subcommittee of the EAB Working Group
- xi. Concern expressed by Council & residents regarding limited number of ash trees currently designated for injection treatment
- xii. Some residents have expressed interest in caring for City ash trees not designated for treatment based on best practice of many other municipalities
- xiii. Some residents have expressed interest in upgrading the caliber of the replacement City boulevard tree(s) planted adjacent to their homes

#### b. Threats

- i. Cost – municipal budget availability; inability to acquire provincial/federal funding support
- ii. Lack of facilities to handle magnitude of wood disposal and utilization
- iii. Non-City owned land – Ontario Realty Corp. (ORC) and other government agencies
- iv. Illegal dumping of wood/debris
- v. Homeowner refusal to remove dead or hazardous tree(s)
- vi. Viable Contractors/Service and available skilled arborists
- vii. Availability of effective injection treatment product(s)

**c. Opportunities**

- i. Leverage communications strategy/tactics development and delivery in collaboration with York Region EAB Communications Subcommittee of EAB Working Group
- ii. Leverage partnerships with/promotion of community-based advocacy groups and programs related to combating the effects of EAB and/or supporting maintenance and enhancement of Markham's urban forest

#### **4. Key Stakeholders**

- a. Markham residents
- b. Markham Council
- c. Local media – mainstream & ethnic
- d. York Region
- e. TRCA
- f. ORC
- g. Crown landowners
- h. Ontario One
- i. *Trees for Life*, the Urban Tree Canopy Coalition
- j. Local arborists
- k. Markham staff

#### **5. Communications Objectives**

- i. Education/awareness of all Markham residents regarding:
  - a. Current situation; what EAB is and how it impacts ash trees
  - b. Due diligence steps prior to development of Markham's EAB Management Plan
  - c. Markham next steps and timing
  - d. Tree preservation bylaw change, if applicable
  - e. Course of action re. ash trees on municipal property
  - f. Course of action / options available re. ash trees on residents' private property
  - g. Increasing the urban tree canopy – *Trees for Tomorrow*; *The Greenprint Community Sustainability Plan*, LEAF backyard tree planting program
  - h. Disposal protocol

- i. Opportunity to treat City boulevard ash tree(s) adjacent to their property not identified as treatable by the City
- j. Opportunity to upgrade the size of replacement City boulevard ash tree(s) adjacent to their property

## **6. Key Messages**

### **General**

- a. In Markham, we recognize that the Emerald Ash Borer infestation is a major issue for our community.
- b. With an inventory of 16,738 Ash trees on municipal boulevards and in open spaces in our parks, we know the Emerald Ash Borer infestation is going to have a significant environmental, social and financial impact.
- c. Markham is working in partnership with York Region to coordinate efforts in addressing this issue.
- d. The Emerald Ash Borer affects Ash trees only.
- e. Ash trees located on private property are the responsibility of the property owner.
- f. Markham has moved quickly and in a responsible manner in response to EAB.
- g. The City of Markham's response to the EAB infestation is considered among the best in Ontario.
- h. Detecting EAB is extremely difficult and usually only possible after the beetle has been present for several years, as evidenced in almost all municipalities in Canada and the U.S. working to manage EAB.

### **Due Diligence**

- a. The City has taken the necessary steps to determine the extent of the infestation on municipally-owned land through:
  - i. Years of best-practice education about how to detect the EAB
  - ii. Mapping City ash tree locations (early 2008)
  - iii. Partnering with the Region to set traps to determine if EAB was present in our communities (May 2011)
  - iv. Participation on Joint Technical EAB Work Group with Region and eight other municipalities (formed 2011)
  - v. implementation of a branch sampling program (January to April 2012),
  - vi. An initial ash boulevard and park tree inventory and tree health assessment (May to August 2012)

- vii. a subsequent tree health assessment to determine the rate of decline in all identified ash trees (August/September 2012)
  - viii. a tree injection pilot project in Ashton Meadows Park (August 2012).
- b. The results from our branch sampling, boulevard tree inventory and health assessment programs, and our pilot injection treatment in Ashton Meadows park, enabled Markham to assess the Emerald Ash Borer's environmental, aesthetic and financial impact on our community.
  - ix. Environmental impact – canopy reduction
  - x. Aesthetic impact
  - xi. Financial impact – cost of treatment, removal, disposal and replanting of affected trees.
- c. The first phase of Markham's inventory and tree health assessment program started as soon as the trees began to leaf out in spring 2012 - a critical best-practice step required before taking action and developing a management plan.

### **EAB Management Plan**

- a. Best practices from other North American municipalities that have been managing EAB for many years were accessed through expertise hired by the City to assist in the development of Markham's EAB Management Plan.
- b. Markham has developed an efficient, effective and sustainable Emerald Ash Borer management plan (Fall 2012).
- c. Markham's EAB Management Plan is designed to protect the environmental, social, health and economic benefits of our urban forest.
- d. Markham is committed to an EAB Management Plan that preserves our tree canopy through maintenance and management, and recognizes the social, economic and environmental value of our trees in an environmentally, socially and fiscally responsible manner.
- e. The City's plan will build on the best practices of other municipalities and utilize expertise to make informed and appropriate decisions in a transparent manner.
- f. Markham will preserve as many ash trees as possible based on informed criteria.
- g. Markham is committed to increasing the urban tree canopy, as identified in Markham's Greenprint Community Sustainability Plan, and is partnering with *Trees for Tomorrow*, the Urban Tree Canopy.
- h. The City is committed to further development and implementation of its management plan that responds to the environmental challenge of the EAB infestation while continuing to demonstrate fiscal responsibility.

## 7. Strategy

- a. Clearly communicate to all Markham residents outlining what Markham is currently doing and advising that staff are working on next steps, in particular, implementation of the City's Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan
- b. Provide residents with resources that explain:
  - i. What the EAB is
  - ii. How to identify an ash tree
  - iii. How to hire a qualified, reputable arborist
  - iv. When and how the City is preserving City ash trees based on best practices and manufacturers recommendations
  - v. When and how the City is removing and replacing City trees adjacent to their homes and in their parks that are in significant health decline.
- c. Clearly communicate key aspects of Markham's EAB Management Plan presented to General Committee 19 November 2012 including:
  - i. Opportunity for residents to treat City ash tree(s) adjacent to their private property at their own expense
  - ii. Opportunity for residents to upgrade size of replacement City ash tree(s) adjacent to their private property at their own expense (cost differential)

## 8. Tactics

- a. Leverage portal to allow residents to:
  - i. Obtain information on the health of the boulevard tree(s) adjacent to their homes, using GIS links
  - ii. Submit a "notification" regarding their boulevard tree(s) if they wish to treat, and pay for the treatment of, their boulevard tree(s) the City has identified as untreatable
  - iii. Request a different size replacement tree than the City's standard 60 mm DBH, paying the cost differential
  - iv. Connect with third-party resources
  - v. Obtain updates on Markham current state/next steps/EAB Management Plan programs
  - vi. Get answers to frequently asked questions
- b. Social media – Twitter, Facebook, YouTube to share information updates, deliver advocacy/informational/instructional videos and drive residents to markham.ca for details

- c. Article(s) in Markham Life magazine that provide information and updates as timing permits
- d. Advertising on Markham city page, and via other print media outlets (mainstream and ethnic) that drives residents to markham.ca and social media sites for more information
- e. EIBs
- f. Press releases
- g. Public meetings, as required
  - i. Jan/Feb 2013 – communication information meetings (5)
  - ii. Others TBD
- h. Direct marketing materials; e.g. door hangers/brochures for distribution to City residents, impacted property owners in particular:
  - i. Those with ash trees designated for treatment or removal and replacement – how, why, when
  - ii. Those with ash trees on their private property – provide resource information to assist them with best-practice options for treatment

## 9. Tactical Schedule

Tactic	Details	Timing	Resp.	Status
markham.ca	Initial update to markham.ca content to reflect current state and ensure all resource links are working	Fall 2011	Jeff McMann/Diane Samek	<b>DONE</b>
Markham.ca	EAB specific page under Residents/Parks & Trees to include new information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current state</li> <li>• Planned next steps</li> <li>• How to identify ash trees, infested trees &amp; the EAB</li> <li>• Protection of trees on City property</li> <li>• Protection of trees on private property</li> <li>• How to determine if EAB is in private trees</li> <li>• What options are if EAB is present in private trees, including tree</li> </ul>	Nov/11 – Feb/12 & Ongoing	Jeff McMann/Diane Samek / By-laws / Waste & Env't Mgmt	<b>FRAMEWORK BUILT AND CONTENT POPULATION DONE</b> – Updates on an ongoing basis as new/additional information available.

	<p>preservation by-law &amp; how to hire a licensed, reputable contractor – International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Removal/waste instructions for private trees</li> </ul>			
Social Media; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotion of public meetings, plan updates, new online information/resources, advocacy groups/programs</li> <li>Gathering feedback from residents, as applicable</li> <li>Videos clips – advocacy, instructional, informative                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mark Cullen, <i>Trees for Life</i>, the Urban Tree Canopy Coalition</li> <li>Mayor Frank Scarpitti</li> <li>Davey Resource Group Rep, Barb Rabicki</li> <li>Jeff McMann, Supervisor of Forestry</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing</li> <li>As required</li> <li>M. Cullen &amp; Mayor – Mar. 2013</li> <li>J. McMann &amp; Davey – Spring 2013</li> </ol>	Diane Samek / CCE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>ONGOING</b></li> <li><b>AS REQUIRED</b></li> <li><b>Creative brief prepared by CG Group; Videographer engages; in process of coordinating March video shoots.</b></li> </ol>
Markham Life magazine	<p>Articles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlining current state and next steps, directing residents to markham.ca/social media sites for more information</li> <li>How to source information related to caring for private ash trees</li> <li>updates as required</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Summer 2012</i> intro</li> <li><i>Winter 2012</i> update</li> <li><i>Spring 2013</i> – Management Plan</li> <li><i>Summer 2013</i> – Update on removal, replanting and monitoring programs</li> </ol>	Jeff McMann / Diane Samek	<p><b>DONE</b></p> <p><b>DONE</b></p> <p><b>DONE</b></p> <p>April 2013</p>



Information brochure	<p>Management Plan Overview - summary of key info including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FAQs</li> <li>• Steps re. ash trees on private property</li> </ul> <p>And driving residents to website/social media for more information</p>	Jan 2013	Jeff McMann / Diane Samek	<b>DONE – being distributed at community information meetings and via all Markham community centres, libraries, Contact Centre &amp; Information Markham</b>
Public meetings	<p>Six initial meetings:  <b>February 4 – Unionville Ratepayers Group – Civic Centre (Canada Room)</b>  <b>February 21 – Centennial CC</b>  <b>February 27 - Thornhill CC</b>  <b>February 28 – Armadale CC</b>  <b>March 21 – Cornell CC&amp;L</b>  <b>March 28 – Angus Glen CC&amp;L</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide update on Markham's response to EAB infestation and management plan highlights</li> <li>○ Share information re. programs for residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Interested in caring for City ash tree(s) adjacent to their property that are not designated for treatment by best practices.</li> <li>2. Interested in 'upgrading' the size of their replacement City tree(s)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Jan / Feb 2013	Operations / Forestry  Supported by CCE – Diane Samek	Operations to set meeting dates & locations – <b>DONE</b>  <b>First three meetings complete with resident attendance as follows:</b> Feb. 21 – 30 Feb. 27 – 35 Feb. 28 - 12
City page advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-empt treatment activities</li> <li>• Remind residents about <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What EAB is</li> <li>○ How to identify</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	March / April 2013	Jeff McMann / Diane Samek	<b>ONGOING</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Next steps             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drive to Markham.ca/social media sites for more information</li> <li>• Invite residents to local information meetings</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			
EIB advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness messaging driving residents to markam.ca</li> <li>• Supplements city page advertising, as applicable (see above)</li> </ul>	December 2012 / ongoing April/May 2013	Jeff McMann / Diane Samek	<b>ONGOING</b>
Press releases	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Announce tree injection pilot in Ashton Meadows Park – Aug 2012</li> <li>2. <b>Significant milestones /findings / results / events (e.g. public information meetings)</b></li> </ol>	As required	Jeff McMann / Diane Samek	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>DONE;</b> advisory plus release post-event &amp; FAQs</li> <li>2. <b>ONGOING</b></li> </ol>
Door hangers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notification of removal for residents whose ash tree(s) located on Markham property</li> <li>2. Notification of tree injection for residents</li> </ol>	Starting Sept. 2012 Mar. 2013	Jeff McMann / Diane Samek	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>DONE</b></li> <li>2. In dev't</li> </ol>
Tree injection pilot program	<p>Pilot using TreeAzin conducted in Ashton Meadows Park; first blind injections completed August 2012.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press conference post-injections – last week of Aug. 2012</li> <li>• Partnered with Mark Cullen, Founding Chair of Trees for Life, the Urban Tree Canopy Coalition</li> <li>• Media advisory &amp; release</li> <li>• FAQ document</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	Starting August 2012	Jeff McMann / Diane Samek	<b>DONE</b>
Press conferences	Tree Injection Treatment Pilot Program Launch	Last week of August 2012	Diane Samek	<b>DONE</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Press conference post-injections</li> <li>• Partnered with Mark Cullen, Founding Chair of <i>Trees for Life</i>, the Urban Tree Canopy Coalition</li> <li>• Media advisory &amp; release</li> <li>• FAQ document</li> </ul>			
Email-friendly FAQ document	PDF version of FAQs developed for use on portal website that can be emailed to stakeholders by staff and Council	Oct 2012	Diane Samek	<b>DONE</b> Updated version posted to portal
Councillor newsletter articles	Adaptation of Markham Life articles/other communications or marketing material for Council members to use in their constituent newsletters, as desired	Launch December 2012	Diane Samek	First edition drafted – updates t/b made based on 11/28 Council briefing note

