



2025 Budget Request

Request: Dead and Dying Tree Removal on Township Property

From: Jerry Haan, Manager of Operations, Fleet, Facilities and Waste Services

Department: Community and Environmental Services

Total Financial Ask: \$20,000

Type of Budget Request: Increase to Base Operating Budget

This document and its attachments are public and available in an accessible format upon request.

Background and Strategic Priority

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an invasive insect species first identified in North America in the areas of Ontario and Michigan in 2002. The flying adult stage of EAB bores holes into ash trees to lay eggs. The eggs hatch into a larval stage which feeds on the inner bark of the ash tree, in essence, ring barking the tree and starving it of water and nutrient movement. It is anticipated that 99% of all ash trees will die in the areas where EAB is present and, to date, there is no known chemical, biological or other forms of control.

Ash trees, once impacted by EAB, can die in as little as 12 – 18 months. Across southern Ontario, municipalities are removing ash trees as soon as they are able to after infection, and some areas are pre-emptively removing healthy ash, given that ash is a far safer and easier tree to remove when alive, than after it has died. Ash tree biology means that once dead, ash trees are more problematic than other species; the nature of their wood structure means that dead ash trees become prone to failure more so than many other species that can remain standing as 'dead wood' for many years.



Analysis

Over the past few years, dying ash trees, have become an operational issue that is beyond the capacity of the operations department due to the volume as and nature of trees that need removal.

The operations teams receive a high volume of calls about ash trees and identifies large numbers on Township property that require attention. These are all inspected, and scheduled for removal with the focus of efforts being on those that present the highest risk to the public. While it is expected that ash tree removal will continue to be a reactive program for some years to come, increased capacity to support removals would be beneficial in addressing risks quicker. This will help address higher risk trees before they become emergency removals.

The Township currently retains a tree removal contractor to undertake work that is beyond the department's ability to undertake. The department would like to expand our contractor removal program to attempt to get ahead of the dead and dying trees to reduce the amount of emergency tree removals required and improve the safety and aesthetics of our township properties.

Operations staff are trained and equipped to undertake general tree removal and will continue to undertake that work. However, a significant amount of the tree removals require the use of specialized equipment which the department does not own or operate. The specialized equipment is required to remove trees that are a safety hazard and therefore cannot be removed by conventional means. Safety hazards which require the specialized equipment could be; a tree is too close to power lines, the tree is of a size, condition or location that it requires being removed in several pieces and or it cannot be "dropped" where it stands, the tree could be in a position where conventional equipment cannot be utilized for its removal such as a shoreline road allowance where access is an issue.

Financial Impact

Staff are requesting \$20,000 to be added to the current operating budget.



Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2025 Budget Request - Dead and Dying Tree Removal on Township Property.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	Sep 10, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Niall Lobley, Chief Administrative Officer

Samantha Buchanan, Treasurer