

# Memorandum



CITY OF DALLAS

DATE August 1, 2022

TO Honorable Members of the Environment & Sustainability Committee: Paula Blackmon (Chair), Paul Ridley (Vice Chair), Carolyn King Arnold, Adam Bazaldua, Jaime Resendez, Jaynie Schultz, Chad West

SUBJECT **City Forestry Quarterly Update**

The City Forestry Taskforce (Forestry Taskforce) has been working on several initiatives since the June 6<sup>th</sup> Briefing to the Environment and Sustainability Committee meeting. This memo serves as an overview of actions taken during this time.

## **Partnering Sessions**

The City met with multiple departments and our local, state, federal, and non-profit partners/stakeholders in June as part of our Quarterly Partnering Session. The focus of this meeting was to address the confirmation of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) within the City of Dallas, discuss upcoming planting activities for the fall, and to brainstorm ways to continue to diversify the tree canopy.

EAB discussions included an overview of the City's approach to assess and treat, and the development of education and outreach materials and videos for use by the City and others. All material produced by the City is reviewed and approved by the Texas A&M Forest Services (TFS) to ensure accurate and consistent messaging. Several non-profits have offered to distribute all materials to their members and volunteer groups, and to work with the private community of arborists and nurseries. The group discussed the ability of non-profits or non-municipal entities to provide funding assistance to residential property owners for treatment, removals, and potential replacement.

## **Emerald Ash Borer Update**

Staff from various departments met with the TFS on site at Camp Broadway to observe the impact of EAB infestation five years after the initial confirmation. This visit provided an opportunity to review TFS outreach and education efforts, how to increase our partnerships, and explore the next steps. In conjunction with the TFS, the City will continue to assess and inventory the existing ash canopies on public property and treat when significant ash or grove of ash is present. TFS confirmed the approach and is encouraged by the number of actions taken by the City and is using our EAB Action Plan and planting plans as a template for other communities. However, TFS has stressed that it is important to recognize the long-term strategies as the EAB will likely be prevalent for the next decade and that planting new and diverse canopies is integral to the overall health of urban forests for future generations.

The staff has been assessing and inventorying the ash canopies in areas most at risk for infestation (Northwest, West, and Southeast) and will be moving strategically through the City over the next six months. To date, staff is primarily seeing weather-related damage to the ash population that will warrant additional follow-up assessments over time but has identified and will be treating certain significant ash trees over the next month in these areas. All work is inputted into Tree Keeper.

It has been determined that updates to Article X to address EAB will require Zoning Ordinance Advisory Committee (ZOAC), City Plan Commission (CPC), and City Council. This action is anticipated to occur in August for ZOAC, and September/October for CPC and City Council. The requested actions will:

- Modify the definitions of Class 3 tree and Unprotected tree to remove Arizona ash from Class 3 to Unprotected
- Amend acceptable plant materials to prohibit nursery stock ash trees from required landscaping and city property to allow for control of regulated landscaping and city tree species
- Amend Reforestation Fund definition of “natural deforestation event” to include invasive insect under Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) determination to allow for providing trees to damaged private property
- Include the provision of defense to prosecution for vulnerable or threatened tree species as determined by the TDA to allow for removal of protected ash prior to infestation, as needed

### **Public Education and Outreach Efforts**

Efforts to publicize and encourage residents and businesses to utilize the City Forestry website continue through our social media campaign, Council newsletters, and our public, private and non-profit partners. Over 2,200 people have viewed the website, which was soft launched in March 2022 and officially launched in May 2022.

Community meetings were held in July with interested residents to provide information on EAB by the City of Dallas. Several non-profit partners also held informational meetings with their members to provide an overview of EAB and instructions on how to tell if an ash tree is on your private property.

EAB water bill inserts have been prepared and will be in the August billing insert. In addition, the City’s electronic billboard messaging contract includes an EAB message that will run during the next several months. Also, the website continues its updates with information for the general public.

City staff and TFS will participate in a series of filmed PSA and panel discussions on Urban Forestry and EAB in August for use on public channels, websites, and social media. The short PSAs will be a future One Dallas Update.

The City–Wide Forestry Technical Team will be conducting trainings with all Code Compliance staff to train them on EAB to better educate residents during community meetings and presentations. Also, the team will partner closely with CCS’s Citizens Code Academy and the Community Clean Trash–Off program to increase messaging on EAB to residents.

Annual training’s such as Park Maintenance, Arborist School and Community Forester Academy all include EAB training and updates.

### **Tree Assessments and Survey**

City staff has completed training associated with Tree Keeper and has begun to utilize the assessment and inventory software as part of the daily activities related to inspections and inventory. Additionally, the Forestry Taskforce has been working with the Fund Development Unit in the Office of Government Affairs to seek funding opportunities for tree inventory and assessment of City of Dallas properties. Several options are being pursued, including a direct Congressional appropriation via a Community Project request in the House budget and grant opportunities.

## Fall Planting Efforts

Branch Out Dallas, the program providing 2600 trees for residents in Dallas, is scheduled for Dallas Arbor Day on November 5, 2022. This program will be open for registration on September 1 and more information will be shared as we move closer to the overall program.

Branching Out Dallas, the program for public parks and open space has finalized the fall planting schedule will be planting 300 trees, and Texas Tree Foundation are in the planning stages for Cool School Program. As a reminder, the reforestation fund provides supports for these two programs and has provided 1700 trees in FY22 with a similar level of support in FY23.



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