



COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	March 23, 2023
SUBJECT:	Invasive Spread of Urban Forest Pests: Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Identified on City Property (City Wide) (ES23005)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Cynthia Graham Acting Director, Environmental Services Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

On March 15, 2023, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) confirmed the presence of hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) in hemlock trees within the City of Hamilton and Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) lands in the forested areas adjacent to and within Churchill Park (see map below). The pest was discovered by RBG staff performing regular trail inspections, who reported it to the CFIA. This update is intended to provide Council with information on the situation.

A thorough review of the history and movement of HWA and subsequent consequences for the City of Hamilton was provided in the previous Communication Update, Invasive Spread of Urban Forest Pests: Hemlock Woolly Adelgid and Spotted Lanternfly (City Wide) (ES23001) shared on February 27, 2023.

Due to the confirmation of this invasive pest, the CFIA has issued a Notice of Prohibition of Movement to both the Royal Botanical Gardens and the City of Hamilton to restrict the movement of hemlock material (firewood, branches, mulch etc.) for this area. Staff anticipate additional details regarding limits and restrictions in the coming days. In addition to the Notice of Prohibition of Movement, the CFIA is discussing internally their next steps and developing an external working group including staff from the City of Hamilton, RBG, McMaster University, and Hamilton Conservation Authority.

Residents and trail users are advised that HWA poses no human threat. It can attack and kill hemlock trees, with no other trees affected. To help slow the spread, residents and trail users should remove debris from boots before visiting a new trail, remove

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debris from clothing with a lint roller or wash contaminated clothing, and remove plant materials or insects from dogs.

The insect feeds on the fluid in the hemlock's needles, causing dieback and mortality in as few as four years. HWA can be identified by its egg sacs, which can be found at the base of needles and look like cotton or snow clumps. Movement of HWA is easily transportable by wildlife, particularly birds as well as humans.

Late fall through early spring is the best time to check hemlock trees for evidence of HWA. The city is encouraging the public to participate by surveying hemlock trees on their property. For information on the pest, how to look for it, and what to do if it is found, please visit <https://www.hamilton.ca/home-neighbourhood/house-home/gardens-trees/invasive-species>. The City will be posting this information on social media and website in the coming days.

The City's records indicate that hemlocks comprise a small portion of the forest inventory, with only 321 trees on streets, parks and cemeteries. This makes the threat of HWA low for these areas. The impact of HWA to hemlocks in Hamilton's publicly owned woodlots is harder to quantify because the woodlot inventory is incomplete, and the impact to privately owned woodlots is not known as the city does not have that data. The City of Hamilton website has the updated protocol for residents if they suspect HWA presence on their property, which is to contact CFIA (905-572-2201).

Summary and Next Steps

Staff will cooperate with the CFIA to mitigate the spread and aid in eliminating the pest. Though preliminary surveys have indicated that the infestation is isolated, the CFIA will be conducting more thorough surveys of hemlock stands to identify the extend of HWA spread across Hamilton. During this time, the City asks that residents help by checking privately owned hemlock trees for HWA, not moving hemlock materials from Public or Private land within or outside of the city (wood, woodchips, branches, cuttings etc.) or firewood and following the steps provided for trail users.

A management strategy is currently being developed and more information will be shared with the public as staff coordinates with the relevant stakeholders and landowners. It is the goal of the CFIA and the City to prevent the spread to other areas with hemlock trees. The work to follow the CFIA direction is not anticipated to require additional resources at this time. In future updates, staff will notify council if additional resources are required as plans develop.

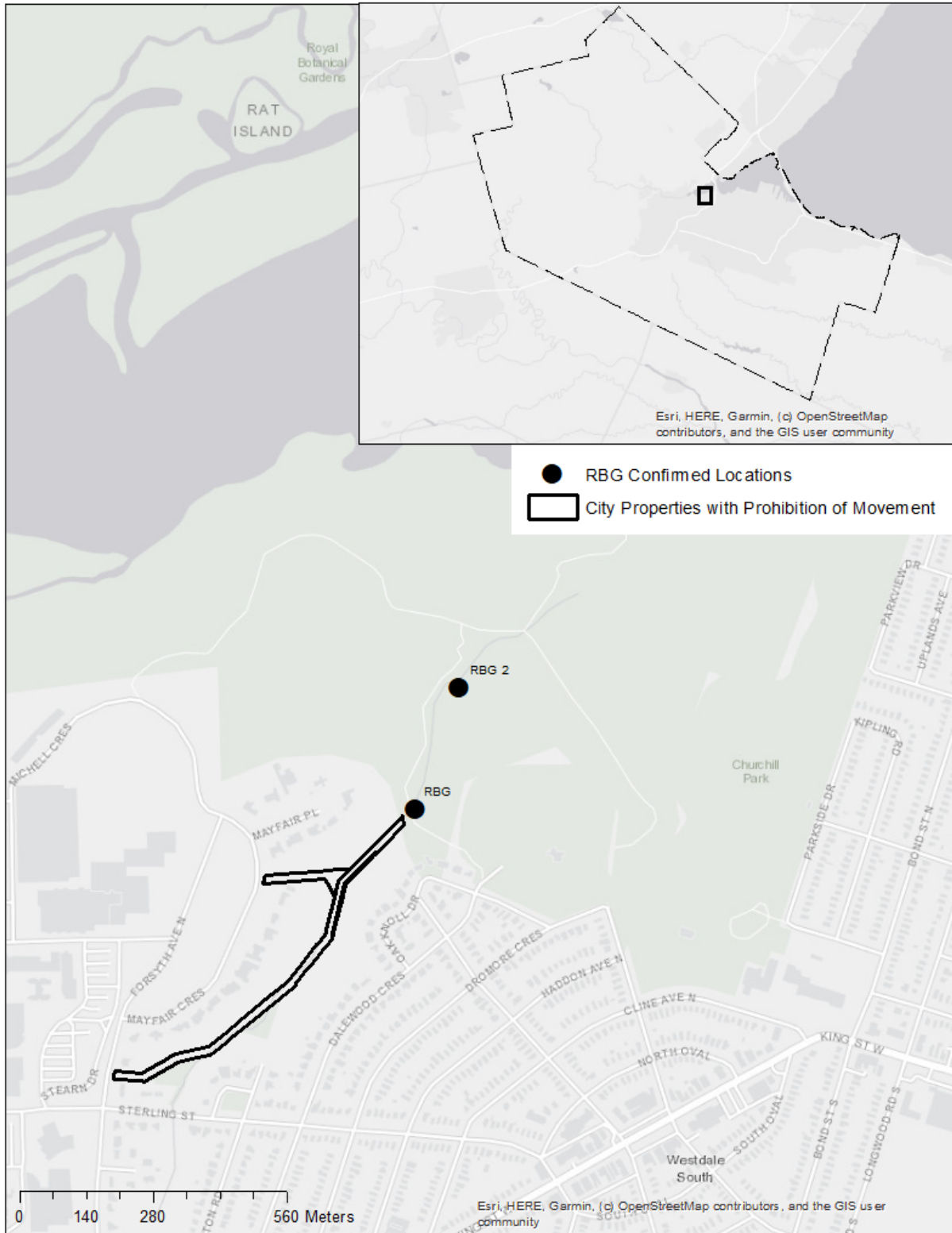
For further information please contact Robyn Pollard, Manager of Forestry and Horticulture by phone at (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3919, or by email at Robyn.Pollard@hamilton.ca

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City of Hamilton Prohibition of Movement locations (PIN#: 17470-0442, 17470-0432, 17470-0431) identified in solid black. Confirmed hemlock woolly adelgid on Royal Botanical Garden (RBG) also shown. The inlay map identifies the City of Hamilton boundary (dotted line) and extent of map (solid black) shown for this Communication Update.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

N/A