THE PROBLEM POSED THROUGH THE WOOD UTILIZATION TEAM FOCUSED ON HIGHEST AND BEST USE. IN THE NORTH EAST CHICAGO REGION THERE EXISTS 25,000,000 ASH TREES, ALL ANTICIPATED TO BE LOST TO THE EMERALD ASH BORER OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS. A PERCENTAGE OF THESE ASH TREES, INCLUDING OTHERS REMOVED FOR VARIOUS REASONS, MAKE UP THE REMOVAL NUMBERS LOCATED IN CHICAGO MUNICIPAL AREAS. CURRENTLY CHICAGO MUNICIPALITIES DEAL WITH THESE TREES THROUGH DIFFERENT AVENUES, SOME NOT CONSIDERED TO BE THE HIGHEST SOCIOECONOMIC USE.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION A

Municipalities - Contractors.

Since the municipalities of Evanston, Oak Park, and Wilmette currently contract their work through second party contractors, the will be in a position to change the contractual agreements currently existing between municipalities and contractors to ensure that the wood material harvested is put to its highest possible use. The municipalities have a wide range of changes to their contracts to incorporate this mandate. Since legally binding, the contractors will either utilize the wood themselves, or sell it to third parties which will put the wood to the intended higher use.

RECOMMENDATION B

Municipalities - Small Business/Tax-Profits.

In conducting business based on possible and users of harvested urban wood, a number of businesses have shown interest in utilizing this urban wood for projects ranging from fiberboard processing, to furniture building. While the use of this wood is currently constrained by the availability, there is a myriad of businesses that taken as a whole, can form a significant portion of possible and users. These users range from small business, public/government, to non-profit users. Therefore, one on one relationships between parties involved will be necessary to ensure that in the processing of this urban wood, its highest potential can be realized.

RECOMMENDATION C

Municipalities - Large Scale Businesses.

Through our research phase, a number of large-scale business were identified as being possible end users of urban wood. These are primarily energy generation companies that deal with converting biomass to electricity/heat. Since these businesses use a large amount of "wasteful" material in the processing phase, the inclusion of localized urban wood harvest stocks can play an important role in these power generation facilities.

Conclusion

- Urban wood is generated in significant quantities to be a viable source of wood.
- While the supply of urban wood is harvested in small quantities at a time, with appropriate management, this wood can contribute to our local wood supply.
- There are businesses already working with urban wood, however, they are part of a fragmented market. By conducting surveys to pinpoint businesses using wood products in general, the aim will be to foster interaction among these businesses to stimulate urban wood utilization.
- Potential end users of urban wood are reluctant to utilize this wood in place of their currently existing supply networks. However, most have shown a willingness to utilize urban wood, if shown to be of quality and economically beneficial. With quality of urban wood comparable to forest trees, raising awareness will increase use.
- Current government regulations (due to EAB), create a non-competitive business environment for the utilization of urban wood at the local level. With current regulations, users at the local level are not able to support the purchase of urban wood.
- While forest management in communities is a must concern, there remains a lack of effective communication between forest management programs and relevant businesses and community representatives to put the urban material to its highest use. There are current efforts by the municipalities, (WUT) and this IPRO course to bridge these connections.