

Near-Term Options to Reduce the Burden of Proper Elm Disposal

The following options were explored by the Administration as near-term options to reduce the burden for properly disposing of elm wood. This Appendix provides an overview of the options, the impact on Dutch elm disease (DED) mitigation, the impact to landfill financing and operations, as well as additional advantages and disadvantages from a triple bottom line perspective.

1. Status Quo fees and operations;
2. Exempt elm from special handling fees;
3. Exempt elm from special handling fees and change tipping fees (lower per tonne or a flat fee); and
4. Exempt elm from special handling fees and tipping fees or exempt elm from all landfill fees (special services, tipping and entrance).

Assumptions and Risks of Data Used in Options

The options below are presented using the quantities of clean wood landfilled from the past three full years. There is currently no method in place to determine what proportion of the wood is specifically elm, however, it is assumed to be a high percentage due to the comparatively inexpensive disposal option provided by the West Compost Depot for all other tree waste.

There is a risk that projections may be inaccurate by using previously accepted wood quantities. For example, it is unknown why there has been reductions of clean wood disposal at the City's landfill over the past three years and whether there is any correlation to the broader trend of declining landfill tonnages or neighbouring landfills that accept clean wood. Furthermore, with additional cases of DED there is a risk that the quantities of elm wood received at the landfill will increase, both from the need to remove infected trees and the inspections of surrounding properties.

The financial implications rely on current landfill fees as follows:

Entrance Fee	\$15	Applies to all loads
General disposal fee	\$105/tonne	Applies to all loads 150kg and over
Special Waste	\$130/tonne	Minimum of \$275 per load, applied to stumps or logs greater than 10 inches in diameter and greater than three feet in length

Assessment of Near-term Options

Option 1: Status Quo

This option is presented as a baseline. The current practice of charging special handling fees as applicable, tipping fees, and landfill entrance fees will continue. There would be no operational changes to the handling of elm wood.

Dutch Elm Disease Impact:

This approach is not expected to improve compliance with the proper disposal of elm wood, enhancing the risks for the spread of DED.

<p>Landfill Revenue Impact: This approach is expected to have no impacts on landfill revenues, since the full cost of disposal is covered by current fees and there are no operational changes.</p>	
<p>Additional Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The user-pay model would result in a lower subsidy by residents and landfill users with low-to-no volumes of elm waste. • This option has the highest compatibility with the current Waste Bylaw and provincial regulations for elm waste management – no changes would be required. • This option provides the greatest flexibility and least risk for the elm wood disposal at Recovery Park since a decision has not been made on user fees. • This option has no impact on current landfill operations. • No additional development and approval by Urban Biological Services and provincial regulators would be required for this option. • No changes to elm wood handling results in no new safety risk for landfill staff or users. 	<p>Additional Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landfill users with high volumes of elm waste would pay the highest landfill fees of all options. • This option has the highest complexity on how to educate users on how to properly prepare elm wood waste for disposal and what landfill fees they may expect. • This option is most likely to result in bylaw infractions and other corrective measures being carried out.

<p>Option 2: Eliminate Special Handling Fee for Elm Wood This option would continue the status quo on charging landfill entrance and applicable tipping fees however, elm would be exempted from special handling fees. There would be no changes to landfill operations.</p>	
<p>Dutch Elm Disease Impact: The elimination of special handling fees would decrease the cost for proper disposal of large pieces of elm, which is only 6% of loads in 2021 since the fee began being consistently charged for elm wood as outlined in the Waste Bylaw. This would be similar to 2020 and earlier when special handling fees were not consistently charged for wood waste.</p>	
<p>Landfill Revenue Impact: This approach is expected to not have significant impacts on landfill revenues, with some loss of special handling fees and no change to current operations. Over the course of four months in 2021 since special handling fees started to be charged, a total of \$25,000 has been collected on 75 loads. Had the special handling fee not been charged, approximately \$15,000 would have been charged for these loads (at regular fees). If a similar application of fees were projected for a full year, an estimated \$30,000 per year in revenue would be not collected and an alternative funding source would need to be identified to offset costs of increased handling requirements.</p>	
<p>Additional Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landfill users with high volumes of elm waste would see an elimination of the special handling fees. • The funding model remains largely user-pay, resulting in a low subsidy by residents 	<p>Additional Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Waste Bylaw amendment to the schedules would provide clarity on the application of special services fee. • Landfill users with high volumes of elm waste would still pay all entrance and tipping fees.

<p>and landfill users with low-to-no volumes of elm waste.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option mostly maintains flexibility and minimizes risk for the elm wood disposal at Recovery Park since a decision has not been made on user fees. • No additional development and approval by Urban Biological Services and provincial regulators would be required for this option. • This option has the minimal impact on current landfill operations, other than training for scale attendant and other operators on the identification of elm wood. • No changes to elm wood handling results in no new safety risk for landfill staff or users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option has some complexity on how to educate users on how to properly prepare elm wood waste for disposal and what landfill fees they may expect. • This option is only slightly less likely to result in bylaw infractions and other corrective measures being carried out than Option 1.
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Option 3: Flat fee or reduced tipping fee for Elm disposal
This option would see the elimination of special handling fees and general tipping fees for elm wood and instead create a new, lower fee specifically for elm wood disposal. The new fee could either be a per-tonne fee or a flat fee. Entrance fees would still apply.

Dutch Elm Disease Impact:
The reduction of fees would decrease the cost for proper disposal of elm, while maintaining the provincially approved approach of immediately burying elm wood.

Landfill Revenue Impact:
The impact of this approach would scale based on the specific fee selected. Depending on the fee selected, the resulting revenue loss to the landfill would require alternative funding to be identified. Options have been generated by the Administration as examples to demonstrate the potentials impacts. It applies a low and high projection based on the number of loads and tonnes from the past three years and applies the assumptions described above.

Annual Landfill Revenue Loss Projections by Funding Model		
Fee Options	Low Projection (4,000 customers + 2,250 tonnes)	High Projection (6,500 customers + 3,250 tonnes)
Option 3a - Eliminate Special Handling Fee + \$75 Tipping Fee	-\$97,500.00	-\$127,500.00
Option 3b - Eliminate Special Handling Fee + \$50 Tipping Fee	-\$153,750.00	-\$208,750.00
Option 3c - Eliminate Special Handling Fee + \$25 Tipping Fee	-\$210,000.00	-\$290,000.00
Option 3d - Eliminate Special Handling Fee + \$50 Flat Fee	-\$66,250.00	-\$46,250.00
Option 3e - Eliminate Special Handling Fee + \$25 Flat Fee	-\$166,250.00	-\$208,750.00

<p>Additional Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landfill users with high volumes of elm waste would see a reduction in tipping and special handling fees. • The user-pay model would partially remain in place and result in a moderate subsidy by residents and landfill users with low-to-no volumes of elm waste. • No additional development or approvals by Urban Biological Services and provincial regulators would be required. • This option has the minimal impact on current landfill operations, other than training for scale attendant and other operators on the identification of elm wood. • No changes to elm wood handling results in no new safety risk for landfill staff or users. 	<p>Additional Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Waste Bylaw amendment to the schedules would be needed clarity on the application of special services fee and a change to elm wood tipping fees. • This option has some complexity on how to educate users on how to properly prepare elm wood waste for disposal and what landfill fees they may expect. • This option is somewhat less likely to result in bylaw infractions and other corrective measures being carried out than Options 1, 2, and 3. • This option results in somewhat lower flexibility and greater risk for the elm wood disposal at Recovery Park since a decision has not been made on user fees.
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Option 4: Exempt elm wood from special handling and tipping fees, option to also exempt elm wood from entrance fee.
 Elm wood only would be exempted from tipping fees and special handling fees, with no operational changes. There is an additional option to exempt elm wood from entrance fees.

Dutch Elm Disease Impact:
 The elimination of tipping, special handling and possibly entrance fees would significantly decrease the cost for proper disposal of elm, eliminating the financial barrier for proper disposal. Elm wood waste pricing for users would be the most comparable to the fees for all other wood waste which is accepted at the Compost Depots.

Landfill Revenue Impact:
 The impact of this approach would vary based on whether or not the entrance fee is waived. Depending on the fee selected, the resulting revenue loss to the landfill would require alternative funding to be identified. Options have been generated by the Administration as examples and applies a low and high projection based on the number of loads and tonnes from the past three years.

Annual Landfill Revenue Loss Projections by Funding Model		
Options	Low Projection (4,000 customers + 2,250 tonnes)	High Projection (6,500 customers + 3,250 tonnes)
Option 4a - Eliminate Special Handling + Tipping Fees	-\$266,250.00	-\$371,250.00
Option 4b - Eliminate Special Handling + Tipping + Entrance Fees	-\$326,250.00	-\$468,750.00

<p>Additional Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landfill users with high volumes of elm waste would see a significant reduction in cost to properly dispose of elm waste. 	<p>Additional Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property taxpayers and/or landfill users with low-to-no elm wood waste would be
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This option does not require additional approvals by Urban Biological Services and provincial regulators. • This option would be one of the least complicated to educate users on how to properly dispose of elm wood waste and what landfill fees they may expect. • This option is the least likely to result in bylaw infractions and other corrective measures being carried out. • No changes to elm wood handling results in no new safety risk for landfill staff or users. 	<p>providing a subsidy for elm wood waste disposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Waste Bylaw amendment to the schedules would be needed to clarify the exemption of elm wood waste from special service and tipping fees. • This option has some impact on landfill operations, customers may be required to go through the scales twice to dispose of elm and non-elm wood separately. • This option results in lower flexibility for future funding model and greater risk for the elm wood disposal at Recovery Park since a decision has not been made on user fees.
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One other option was considered but not found to be feasible as a near-term solution to reduce the burden of proper elm disposal. It proposed reducing special handling fees through operational changes that would see the temporary storage of elm wood and a regular schedule for burial in the landfill. This option would require approval by provincial regulators before it could proceed, and it is unclear what those timelines might be for a regulator decision. The Administration also felt there would be an increased risk of DED due to the temporary storage of elm wood, even if regulatory approval was obtained.

Additional Near-Term Initiatives to Encourage Proper Elm Disposal

Through this review, the Administration identified the following additional measures that could be beneficial in encouraging proper disposal of elm wood. These initiatives could be incorporated into any of the user fee options and could be further developed by the Administration.

5. Expanded education for residential and commercial sectors;
6. Expanded education for staff in elm and Dutch Elm Disease identification; including landfill staff; and
7. Expanded enforcement of elm wood storage and proper disposal.

Medium-Term Considerations for Proper Elm Disposal

The operating plan for Recovery Plan is in progress, which will finalize the accepted materials and funding model, including whether fees will apply to resident and commercial loads. Elm wood has been prioritized during the design to be an accepted material. A Request for Information (RFI) is in progress at the time this report was being prepared, which will help determine what diversion or processing options may be available for elm wood. Additional reporting on materials accepted by Recovery Park is planned.