

2024 Elm Disposal Pilot Summary

Pilot Description

Elm wood must be disposed of immediately and properly to help prevent the spread of Dutch Elm Disease. It is illegal to store, use, sell or transport elm wood. It must be disposed of at a designated elm wood disposal site such as the landfill immediately. In Saskatoon, it must be disposed of at the landfill at the transfer bins in Scale & Pay.

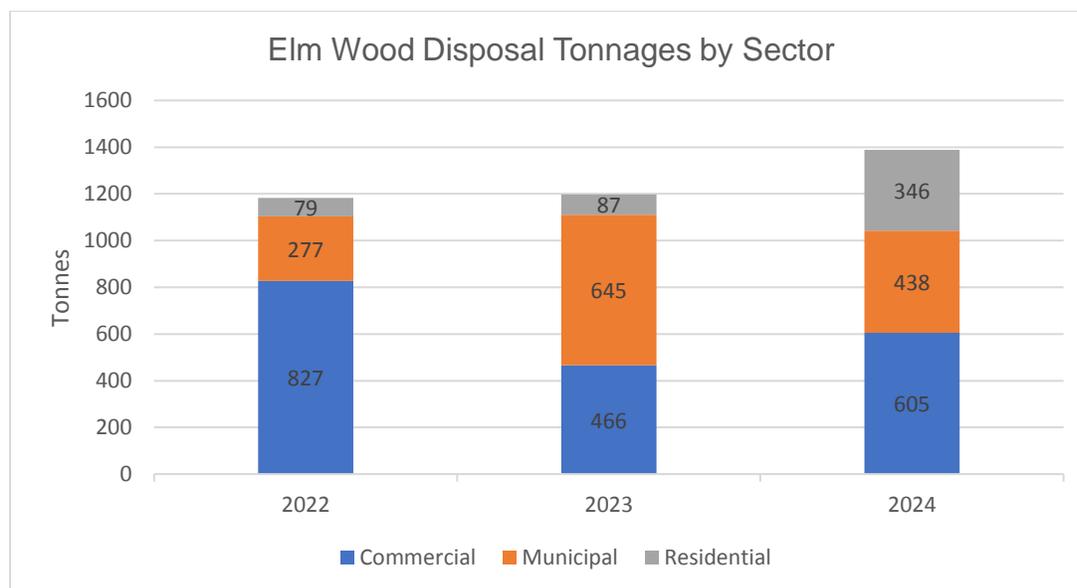
Starting in April 2024, residents were able to dispose of elm wood at the Landfill at no cost (for loads up to 1,000kg) through to the end of 2024. This initiative aimed to encourage the prompt and proper disposal of elm wood, reducing the risk of disease transmission to healthy elm trees.

This initiative built off the previous year's successful one-month pilot in October 2023 that saw all elm disposal fees waived. The 2024 pilot's design however was constrained by the \$75,000 capital funding to cover lost landfill revenue. In addition, the key behaviour that the City identified as a risk to DED spread was the smaller amounts of stored elm wood discovered during DED sweeps. Therefore, the proper elm disposal pilot project focused its limited funds on improving the behaviour of residents with smaller quantities of wood to dispose of.

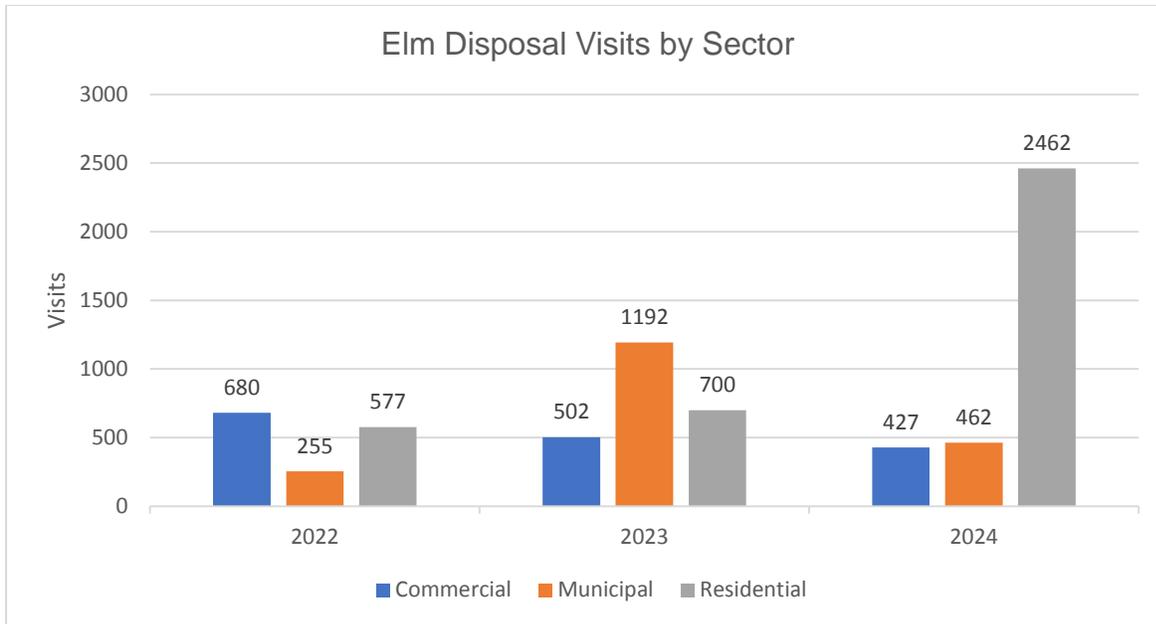
While the elm pruning ban was in place April 1 until August 31; the pilot meant that any elm wood that has been completely removed, previously been cut, has fallen or was intended as firewood could be disposed of for free by residents.

Participation Summary

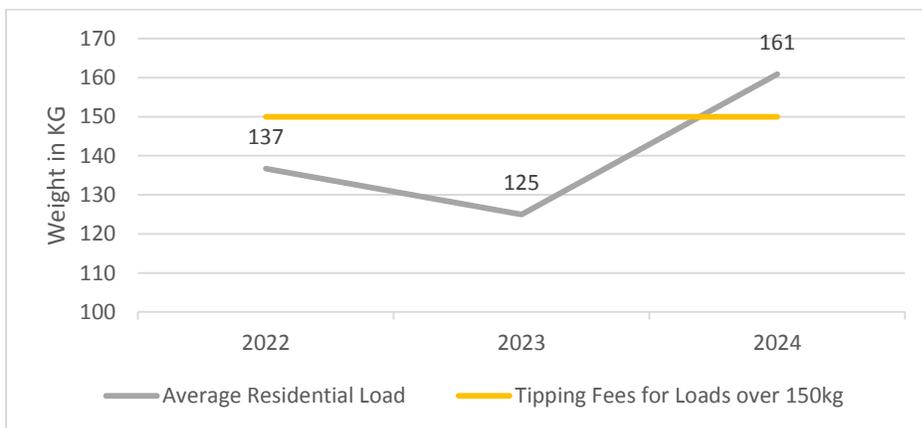
Total elm wood disposal in 2024 was higher than the two previous years. While there was fluctuation between commercial and municipal loads over this period, the total quantities from these two sectors was relatively stable. For residential loads there was over a four-fold increase in tonnages received by the landfill in 2024 when compared to the two previous years.



Total residential visits also increased significantly. 2024 saw 3.5 times the number of residential visits than 2023, when elm fees were only waived for the month of October and over 4 times the number residential visits than 2022 when landfill entrance and tipping fees applied to residential loads of elm.



The average amount per-load for residential elm disposal increased in 2024 from previous years. In 2022 and 2023 the average sized residential load was under the threshold of 150kg, where only the entrance fee applies. In 2024, with all fees waived, the load size increased to be 11kg over the 150kg threshold where tipping fees would have applied.



These results indicate a significant improvement in residents properly disposing of elm wood compared to previous years, with improvements to the tonnage, number of visits and average size of loads.

Financial Summary

The pilot project projected approximately \$70,000 of uncollected landfill fees as outlined in the pilot design. The actual total for 2024 was \$61,849. The uncollected landfill fees were covered through the Proper Disposal of Elm Wood – Program Development capital project (P.10086.01).

The table below shows the actual uncollected landfill fees and tonnages for each month of the 2024 pilot project.

	Uncollected Fees (Actual)	Tonnage
April 25th -30th	\$664	3.17
May	\$4,084	24.79
June	\$4,037	22.01
July	\$6,177	32.62
August	\$6,530	35.77
September	\$19,444	107.6
October	\$16,431	94.67
November	\$4,345	25.37
December	\$137	0.79
TOTAL	\$61,849	346.79

When compared to projections, there was fewer uncollected fees when the pruning ban was in effect and during the winter months and greater uncollected fees than projected during September and October. These results will be used to refine the projections for future program operations.

Summary of 2024 Pilot Feedback

Customer Feedback

Resident feedback for the pilot project for proper elm disposal and the enhanced education was generally positive. Areas of concern that were raised during the pilot reflected the limitations of the pilot's capital funding, which restricted the scope to only include residential loads of elm under 1000kg. Complaints were received for customers that had to use an arborist and could only have the fee waived if they brought the elm wood themselves. Arborists and contractors hauling residential loads were also frustrated that the fee was not waived for them in this situation.

Stakeholder Meeting

A small group of industry stakeholders, including arborists and an advocacy group provided feedback through discussions in 2024. Key feedback from discussions included:

- The importance of taking near-term actions to limit the spread of DED as inaction will lead to higher costs and a greater loss of trees;
- Confusion when residential elm wood disposal is free but has a cost if a certified arborist is hired to dispose of elm wood from a residential property;
- Importance of communicating pruning ban to residents along with elm disposal measures; and
- Other measures that could be taken to improve disposal process, such as looking at grinding wood and working with arborists to improve process at landfill.