

Janzen, Heather

Subject: FW: Email - Communication - Simon Kilback - DEDicated to Elms - CK 4200-4
Attachments: DEDicated to elms EAC submission.pdf

From: Web NoReply <web-noreply@Saskatoon.ca>
Sent: Sunday, March 23, 2025 1:09 PM
To: City Council <City.Council@Saskatoon.ca>
Subject: Email - Communication - Simon Kilback - DEDicated to Elms - CK 4200-4

--- Replies to this email will go to [REDACTED] ---

Submitted on Sunday, March 23, 2025 - 13:08

Submitted by user: [REDACTED]

Submitted values are:

I have read and understand the above statements.: Yes

I do not want my comments placed on a public agenda. They will be shared with members of Council through their online repository.: No

I only want my comments shared with the Mayor or my Ward Councillor.: No

Date: Sunday, March 23, 2025

To: Her Worship the Mayor and Members of City Council

Pronouns: He/him/his

First Name: Simon

Last Name: Kilback

Phone Number : [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

I live outside of Saskatoon: No

Saskatoon Address and Ward:

Address: [REDACTED] 3rd St E

Ward: Ward 6

Name of the organization or agency you are representing (if applicable): DEDicated to Elms - Student group

What do you wish to do ?: Submit Comments

What meeting do you wish to speak/submit comments ? (if known):: Environmental Advisory Committee -April 25th

Comments:

To: Environmental Advisory Committee members

From: Simon Kilback, DEDicated to Elms

Comments in support of Dutch elm disease management and resources in Saskatoon, with suggestions for changes to the City website regarding Dutch elm disease. Please see the attached letter.

Attachments:

- [DEDicated to elms EAC submission.pdf](#)72.08 KB

Will you be submitting a video to be vetted prior to council meeting?: No

2025-03-23

Saskatoon City Council

222 3rd Ave North

Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

Dear Councillors and Environmental Advisory Committee Members,

I am Simon Kilback, and I write as a representative of DEDicated to Elms, a student-led group from the University of Saskatchewan that advocates for awareness and prevention of Dutch elm disease (DED). I am also a resident of Ward 6. We write this letter in support of other organizations, such as SOS Trees Coalition, who have raised the issue of DED with the City of Saskatoon in previous years.

DED is becoming a more pressing challenge in Saskatoon; with 11 positive cases of DED in 2024, up from four cases in 2023. DED is best managed proactively, as it can cause extensive financial and environmental damage when it takes hold in urban forests. The only option for infected trees is removal. We believe that the City must commit to provide sufficient resources to maintain proactive monitoring and ensure quick removal times when a case is confirmed. The trees in Saskatoon's neighbourhoods, parks, and riverfront are an integral part of our city and the well-being of its residents. This urban forest is significant, with an estimated 100,000 trees managed by the City, of which 30,000 are elm trees.

However, the City's budget allocation for urban forestry does not currently match the scale of the challenge that DED presents. Winnipeg's 2024 Urban Forestry Budget was \$17.7 million, with approximately \$5 million directly allocated to DED control¹. If we adjust for population, an equivalent urban forestry budget for Saskatoon would need to be \$6 million, 33% greater than the \$4.5 million committed. In Winnipeg, over 30,000 elm trees have been lost to DED since 2016². Without increased investment, Saskatoon risks experiencing a similar level of devastation. And the annual removal costs alone, from losing just 2% of city-managed elms to DED (the yearly rate of loss in Winnipeg)³ would cost Saskatoon an estimated \$900,000 per year ($0.02 \times 30,000 \times \$1,500$ per mature tree removed) in tree removal costs. If all 30,000 elms were lost, removal costs could reach \$45 million—not including the environmental and property value losses associated with a diminished urban forest. By contrast, anticipated savings from slowing or preventing a widespread DED outbreak range between \$831,000 and \$1,663,000 annually⁴.

¹ Winnipeg 2024 Adopted Budget p.242 <https://www.winnipeg.ca/media/3737>

² Trees Winnipeg <https://www.treeswinnipeg.org/our-urban-forest/urban-forest-threats/dutch-elm-disease>

³ Trees Winnipeg

⁴ Saskatoon 2024-2025 Approved Capital Budget Details p.282

Beyond getting the budget right (to match the challenge that DED presents), public education must play a leading role in successful elm disease prevention. New neighbourhood residents in Saskatoon can request American or Japanese elms for boulevard trees. On the list of available trees, the City states that the Japanese elm is more resistant to DED. The City should link their DED information pages to the Request a Boulevard Tree page, increasing awareness and enabling residents to make more informed decisions on the trees they choose to plant. Similarly, while the City of Saskatoon's website outlines the risks associated with Dutch elm disease, it does not provide clarity on the financial consequences for homeowners and their communities if the disease were to take hold. We know that illegal elm wood storage is a significant vector of DED in Saskatoon and residents may be more inclined to comply with and be proactive about preventative measures if they understood the economic impact that DED could have. Transparency about the costs associated with tree removal, canopy loss, etc. (which would need to be recouped or covered through increased property taxes), as well as property devaluation, could encourage greater public participation in prevention efforts.

Concerned citizens such as myself, along with groups organizations such as DEDicated to Elms and SOS Trees Coalition, urge the City of Saskatoon to enhance its Dutch elm disease strategy, which should be focused on:

- Allocating appropriate budget resources for early detection, monitoring, and tree maintenance, bringing Saskatoon's investment in line with comparable cities.
- Implementing stronger regulations and enforcement against elm wood storage.
- Expanding public education efforts to provide clarity and transparency on the financial risks of an uncontrolled outbreak.

The City of Saskatoon already recognizes the inherent value of its urban forest through policies such as C09-011 - Trees on City Property and the Urban Forest Management Plan. However, the allocation of resources does not reflect the urgency required to prevent an urban forest crisis in our city. By taking proactive steps now, the City of Saskatoon can avoid the significant costs and ecological damage that Dutch elm disease can bring.

DEDicated to Elms has developed a website to share information and resources on Dutch elm disease and created maps to track the spread of DED within Saskatoon. You can find our website here: <https://madlabsk.ca/DEDTrees/>

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Simon Kilback

DEDicated to Elms