

February 21, 2019

By email

Dear Mr. Johanis:

Thank you for your email regarding the centennial American elm located on Parliament Hill.

I commend you and the Greenspace Alliance of Canada's Capital on your efforts to protect green spaces in the National Capital Region. Your work is helping the National Capital Commission (NCC) build a capital that is a source of pride for all Canadians and a legacy for generations to come.

The centennial American Elm is located in the middle of the excavation site for the proposed Visitor Welcome Centre. It would therefore be impossible to leave the tree in its current location unless the entire plan for the Centre is significantly altered by Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC). An inspection of the elm by experts indicated that the relocation of the tree is unrealistic considering its health, age, and the high probability it would not survive a move. The costs of attempting to relocate it would be prohibitive.

To compensate for the loss of the American Elm, we will be requiring through our approval process that the new Visitor Welcome Centre has sufficient soil depth on top of it to grow large mature trees and will specify that new trees will need to be of large caliper in order to make an immediate impact on the site. Additionally, all trees removed from the site including the American Elm will be compensated for at a ratio of 4 to 1. Furthermore, the wood from the American Elm will be repurposed within the Parliamentary Precinct through projects such as furniture or millwork accents to commemorate the legacy of the tree.

I want to assure you of the NCC's commitment to maintaining a vibrant tree canopy on the Parliamentary Precinct. The final decision on the NCC's approval will take place later this month.

Thank you again for your advocacy.

Sincerely,

(original signed)

Tobi Nussbaum
Chief Executive Officer