Executive Policy Committee Special Meeting Agenda - March 13, 2019

Re: Parks and Urban Forestry Budget

Presenter – Pam Lucenkiw, Co-chair OURS-Winnipeg

Good Afternoon

Thank you all for working so hard on this 2019 Budget. I can appreciate that it is a difficult thing to do. My presentation today is with respect to the Parks and Urban Forestry Budget and the management of the Emerald Ash Borer threat to the City of Winnipeg.

Winnipeg's urban forest is in a crisis with challenges from disease, climate change, and drought. Dutch elm disease (DED) kills elm trees and has been a problem in Manitoba since 1975. The bulk of the city's tree removal budget goes to removing elm trees. The Emerald Ash Borer has arrived in Winnipeg and will destroy the entire ash tree population in a relatively short period of time. The Cottony Ash Psyllid is has been identified and is attacking black ash trees.

This preliminary budget is not adequate to respond to this crisis. The Emerald Ash Borer which is forecast to destroy the entire ash tree population in Winnipeg over a 10 year period. The total value of all ash trees in the City of Winnipeg is over $1.5 billion. The already substandard budget for tree pruning and tree planting has been further reduced.

This budget follows years of underfunding the management of the urban forest. Of the total homeowner tax bill, investment to Parks and Urban Forestry declined from 5.9% to 4.2% between 2014 and 2018. [i] While revenue from property taxes was increasing, the per cent of funding was decreasing.

For decades the majority of Parks and Open Space Division service levels have been declining. In 2016 Parks identified a funding shortfall to service levels of $13.6 million.[ii] The budget was NOT increased to remedy this. Parks and Urban Forestry must be elevated to a higher priority for the future.

Emerald Ash Borer

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is a much more devastating threat than Dutch Elm Disease (DED)[iii] and we have all seen what the loss of canopy trees from DED looks like. EAB is forecast to kill every ash tree in the city over a 10 year period, based on what is happening in other Canadian cities. The city has not granted funding in this budget for a Forestry Services Supervisor "to coordinate the complex response to this invasive pest".[iv]

The emerald ash borer is bearing down on the City of Winnipeg with the impending loss of 357,385 trees. About a third are boulevard and park trees. The expense to manage this is great, about $100 million.[v] A delay in taking action can be expected to aggravate a troubling situation. The city began preparing for EAB in 2007, the first beetle was discovered in the Archwood area in 2016, and loss of trees is forecast over a 10 year period peaking 5 years after identification of the first infestation. The clock is counting down since the first beetle was found.

Tree Pruning and Tree Planting

Tree pruning and tree planting are essential components of the whole package of urban forest management that supports a healthy urban forest.

Tree Pruning Service Levels

Regular tree pruning keeps trees healthy, safer and longer lasting. Trees are being pruned far less frequently than industry standards recommend and the schedule is getting worse. In 2013, trees were pruned in a once every 12.6 year cycle. By 2017 the cycle declined to once in every 27.3 years. The industry best practice is for 14% of the trees to be pruned every 8 years. [vi].

City of Winnipeg Tree Pruning Cycle[vii]

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total Satisfied	12.6	12.2	17.0	22.2	27.3

Tree Planting Service Level Statistics

Tree planting has not kept pace with tree loss. The 2019 budget reported in 2017, 8668 trees were removed from city property while 2448 trees were planted. A plan to replace river corridor trees does not exist. With all of the trees being lost it is more important than ever to replace trees to maintain the canopy.

City of Winnipeg Number of Trees Planted[viii]

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
1446	2292	2245	2009	2757	2448

City of Winnipeg Number of DED Trees Removed and non DED trees removed[ix]

2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
4,930/2,028	6,508/2,012	5,257/661	4,849/165	6,123/296	6,575/093

Natural Areas

This budget continues to place natural areas at a very low priority with meagre funding while other Canadian cities are moving ahead with plans to protect their biodiversity. Especially outstanding are the cities of Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal and Halifax. Winnipeg must look ahead to protect and enhance and acquire natural areas which in this city make up a paltry 3 per cent of city owned land. Natural areas and river corridors will be hard hit by DED and EAB with no plans by the city to actively manage these areas or replace trees. This will be devastating not only for people but also for wildlife.

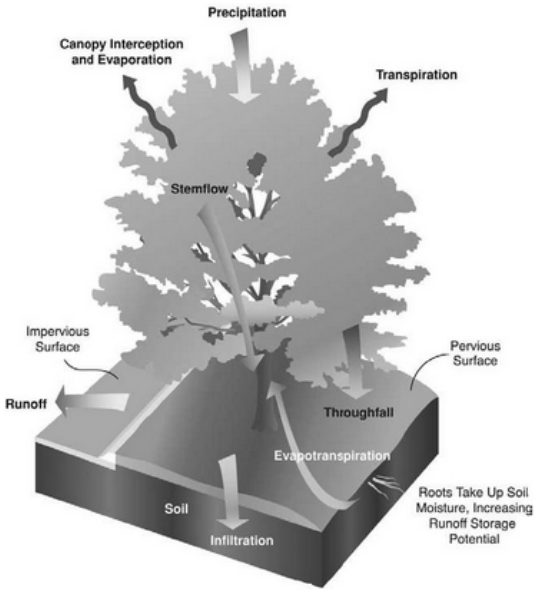
Green Infrastructure Benefits

The urban forest is much more than a lovely thing to look at or even a luxury, a perception that could make it easy to dismiss.

There are services that trees provide and when they are gone those services will no longer be provided and there is a cost to that.

One example of a lost service can be easily calculated with the I-Tree program. I can estimate that the two trees in my yard, an apple and a willow can intercept 2,766 gallons of storm water in a year. Now consider how much capacity for storm water retention and flood protection will be lost when 357,385 ash trees are lost. I-Tree can assist in estimating the annual benefit that a single tree or a community of trees can provide, including esthetics, property value, noise reduction, absorption of carbon dioxide, heating and cooling benefits and reduction of storm water run-off. [x]

Morden, MB and Portland, Oregon are two of many cities that use the I-tree software to calculate the value of the trees to assist in decision making for their urban forest.



Your selected trees will intercept 2,766 gallons of stormwater this year.

Urban stormwater runoff (or "non-point source pollution") washes chemicals (oil, gasoline, salts, etc.) and litter from surfaces such as roadways and parking lots into streams, wetlands, rivers, and oceans. The more impervious the surface (e.g., concrete, asphalt, rooftops), the more quickly pollutants are washed into our community waterways. Drinking water, aquatic life, and the health of our entire ecosystem can be adversely affected by this process.

Trees act as mini-reservoirs, controlling runoff at the source. Trees reduce runoff by:

- Intercepting and holding rain on leaves, branches, and bark
- Increasing infiltration and storage of rainwater through the tree's root system
- Reducing soil erosion by slowing rainfall before it strikes the soil

The City of Toronto's study, Every Tree Counts, concluded Toronto's urban forest provides the equivalent of $28.8 million in ecological services each year. The benefits derived from the urban forest significantly exceeded the annual cost of management. [xi]

According to our very own Prairie Climate Centre "Increasing green spaces and green infrastructure addresses multiple challenges and offers multiple benefits. They often turn out to be more economically viable, even under prevailing economic models."[xii]

Time for Action

Although there is a crisis in the urban forest this budget gives no indication of that. Your decision today will determine how our city will look in 10 years from now and well beyond.

It is on you to ensure we leave a forest canopy for future generations as past generations have left for us. I strongly urge this committee to support the recommendations of the Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness, Response and Management Options report[xiii] to provide a budget for a permanent position for Forestry Services Supervisor (at an additional cost of $92,771) to manage the extra workload of EAB and to resource the Urban Forest Enhancement Project of Parks and Urban Forestry to manage the tree diseases with at an additional $3.5 million.

Now is not the time to shrink the budget for the urban forest and to shrink the vision of Winnipeg as an "urban oasis". The forest is so in need of help to combat drought, disease and development and we are so in need of the significant economic, health and climate change mitigation benefits it provides. There is a cost to maintaining the urban forest but there is a greater cost to not maintaining it.

Budget 2019 Presentations, Parks and Open Spaces Division Preliminary Operating Budget[xiv]

- The Urban Forest Enhancement Project ($4.1 million) will only fund DED removal in 2019
- Additional resources still required for:

Dutch Elm Disease =	0.50
Emerald Ash Borer =	3.94
Cottony Ash Psyllid =	0.87
Tree Pruning Cycle =	2.30
Total (in millions)	**$7.61**

World Health Organization, European Division

"Urban Greenspaces: a Brief for Action" - 2017

1. Urban greenspaces provide multiple benefits and constitute a necessary feature of healthy cities.

2. The benefits of urban greenspaces can be maximized through adequate planning, design and evaluation.

3. Local authorities are responsible for protecting and maintaining existing urban greenspaces.

[i] Winnipeg Community Trends and Performance Report 2019 Vol. 1 https://www.winnipeg.ca/cao/pdfs/CommunityTrendsandPerformanceReportVolume1_2019.pdf Page 202

[ii] Agenda – Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks – December 2, 2016 Item 3 Parks and Open Space Division Service Levels

[iii] Save the trees, please - Losing your ash tree? Consider these replacements https://homes.winnipegfreepress.com/winnipeg-real-estate-articles/content-id-494026011

[iv] Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness, Response and Management Options http://clkapps.winnipeg.ca/dmis/ViewDoc.asp?DocId=17679&SectionId=&InitUrl=http://clkapps.winnipeg.ca/dmis/ViewDoc.asp?DocId=17679&SectionId=&InitUrl= 2019 Budget Review, Item 2

[v] Agenda – Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks – March 8, 2019 http://clkapps.winnipeg.ca/dmis/ViewDoc.asp?DocId=17679&SectionId=&InitUrl=http://clkapps.winnipeg.ca/dmis/ViewDoc.asp?DocId=17679&SectionId=&InitUrl= 2019 Budget Review, Item 2

[vi] Winnipeg Community Trends and Performance Report 2019 Vol. 1 https://www.winnipeg.ca/cao/pdfs/CommunityTrendsandPerformanceReportVolume1_2019.pdf Page 148

[vii] Winnipeg Community Trends and Performance Report 2019 Vol. 1 https://www.winnipeg.ca/cao/pdfs/CommunityTrendsandPerformanceReportVolume1_2019.pdf

[viii] Preliminary 2019 Budget- Service Based https://wfpquantum.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf/2019/99997_CoW%202019%20budget%20review%20WFPS%20march%208%202019.pdf

[ix] Preliminary 2019 Budget- Service Based https://wfpquantum.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf/2019/99997_CoW%202019%20budget%20review%20WFPS%20march%208%202019.pdf

[x] I-Tree https://www.itreetools.org/

[xi] Every Tree Counts, A Portrait of Toronto's Urban forest https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/92de-every-tree-counts-portrait-of-torontos-urban-forest.pdf

[xii] Prairie Climate Centre, Building a Climate-Resilient City:Urban ecosystems Page 1 http://prairieclimatecentre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/pcc-brief-climate-resilient-city-urban-ecosystems.pdf

[xiii] Emerald Ash Borer Preparedness, Response and Management Options Item 2 http://clkapps.winnipeg.ca/DMIS/ViewDoc.asp?DocId=17715&SectionId=&InitUrl=

[xiv] Budget 2019 Presentations, Parks and Open Spaces Division Preliminary Operating Budget Presentationhttps://wfpquantum.s3.amazonaws.com/pdf/2019/29893_CoW%202019%20budget%20review%20parks%20and%20open%20space%20march%208%202019.pdf