SUBMISSION – DENIS DEPAPE

REPORT OF THE STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON WATER, WASTE AND ENVIRONMENT DATED APRIL 17, 2023 – ITEM 4 – THE MONTREAL PLEDGE – CITIES UNITED IN ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY

Sent: Friday, April 21, 2023 5:16:45 PM

Personal information
Full name: Denis DePape
Email address:
Phone:
Job title: Volunteer Vice-President
Organization: Save Our Seine
Address:
City: Winnipeg
Province or territory: Manitoba
Postal code: R2N 1P5

Delegation information
Committee: Council
Committee - council: Support the recommendations
Committee - other: N/A
Agenda item (number and title): Montreal Pledge - Cities United in Action for Biodivesity

Service inquiry: Submit Comments in writing
Participation preference: N/A

Comments in writing: Save Our Seine encourages the Mayor and all City Councilors to vote in favour of the motion to sign on to the Montreal Pledge: Cities United in Action for Biodiversity.

We all need a healthy, sustainable and beautiful city,
- a City where the health and well-being of our urban natural environment and that of current and future generations of Winniggers is paramount,
- a City where ecosystem integrity and health provide a more livable and healthier environment for residents and advance climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- a City where we have restored the relationship between our residents and the natural environment by increasing the area of healthy ecosystems and curbing ecosystem loss, fragmentation and degradation.

By adopting the Montreal Pledge for Biodoveristy, City Council will take an important step towards this vision by strengthening our City's efforts to value, protect, enhance and restore biodiversity, greenspace, natural corridors, and trees in Winnipeg. City Council will also be reinforcing the decisions it has already made to develop a Greenspace and Natural Corridors Plan Bylaw and Biodiversity Policy and to add 1000 acres of greenspace in the City.

Save Our Seine's submission to the Committee in support of the above request is attached.
File: SOS Montreal Pledge Letter to City March 29 2023 Final.pdf

March 29, 2023

Dear Mayor Gillingham and Members of Council:

I am writing to you today to encourage City Council to sign the Montreal Pledge: Cities United in Action for Biodiversity.

Why is this Important?

To demonstrate it is commitment to making the valuation, protection, enhancement, and restoration of our city's biodiversity a high priority, Save Our Seine River Environment (Save our Seine) encourages Winnipeg City Council to support Councillor Gilroy's recent motion to sign onto the Montreal Pledge: Cities United in Action for Biodiversity. Examples of items in the protocol include integrating biodiversity into planning and prioritizing nature-based solutions to protect against extreme weather events and hazards and to regulate air and water quality. Winnipeg is already dealing with some of the items in the pledge but needs to go further in the priority and effort it gives to strengthening biodiversity.

Signing the Pledge demonstrates leadership and ambition to act swiftly and influence others in our city to do the same, in order to reverse declining biodiversity and ensure its future valuation, protection, enhancement and restoration. The Pledge also asks that participating cities voluntarily track and disclose progress in addressing the actions called for in the Pledge. By signing onto the Montreal Pledge, Winnipeg will join 57 other cities, including Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Quebec City and our fellow prairie cities of Edmonton and Calgary that have committed to 15 concrete actions to halt the loss of biodiversity within their jurisdiction.

Save Our Seine encourages the City of Winnipeg to give high priority to valuing, to protecting, to enhancing and to restoring biodiversity, greenspace and natural corridors and trees in the City's planning and budget processes. This includes using nature-based solutions to deal with ever increasing environmental challenges that city faces. Many other cities around the world have come to realize that severe loss of biodiversity, inadequate greenspace and deteriorating tree canopy warrant urgent attention and solutions as they are having a detrimental effect on important ecosystem services these resources provide their cities and, on the health, and quality of living of their citizens.

Save Our Seine's Commitment

At Save Our Seine, we have always been concerned about protecting and enhancing biodiversity and adopting nature-based solutions. However, in recent years, we have given these even greater prominence by formally adopting them as a priority of the Save Our Seine. We have established our **Seine River Urban Restoration and Enhancement Initiative** to spearhead our efforts in this regard. This Initiative is guided by the principals of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. Last year, with the help of an ecological rehabilitation specialist and many volunteers, we started a multi-year project to remove the highly invasive European buckthorn from heavily affected sites of the Seine River Greenway. The spread of buckthorn has decreased the biodiversity of native plant species important to riparian and freshwater

Address:
P.O. Box 83
208 Provencher Boulevard
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2H 3B4

Web:
www.saveourseine.com
info@saveourseine.com

ecosystems. This year we will continue with buckthorn removal and add the following biodiversity related and nature-based solution projects, provided our applications for funding are accepted:

- Establish green infrastructure pilot projects:
    - Establish several duckweed pilot sites along the Seine River in collaboration with the golf courses located near the river. Duckweed is an important freshwater plant for removing toxins e.g., it does a superb job of removing heavy metal through a process known as water scrubbing.
    - Establish several swales planted with cattails to assist in filtering the water that reaches the Seine River from nearby golf courses. Cattails could be an effective means of removing damaging nutrients, such as phosphates, from the runoff.
- Create pollinator habitat including a public education program to encourage Members of Save Our Seine and users of the Seine River Greenway to plant pollinator friendly habitat.
- Undertake reforestation projects to increase the tree canopy along the Seine River Greenway
- Undertake water testing and flow monitoring activities.
- Enhance engagement of partners, organizations, business, individuals, youth, Indigenous organizations, schools on ecosystem restoration and enhancement activities: including enhancement of eyes on the river/citizen scientist program, education, and awareness
- Enhance clean-up activities to restore and maintain biodiversity.
- Create a Geo Mapping system to track areas of ecological strength and areas needing attention along the Seine River Greenway and thus create an ongoing ecological assessment.

Importance of the Pledge for the City

The recent United Nations sponsored conference in Montreal on Biodiversity (COP15) formally recognized that halting the destruction and decline of our natural attributes should be addressed on an urgent basis in all parts of the world. The conference also recognized that cities need to be at the forefront of managing biodiversity, greenspace / natural corridors, and trees by integrating these into planning and development processes, budgets, and decision-making. Given the urgency of the situation, this should occur immediately. In Canada, we have several excellent examples of cities that are already doing this, such as Edmonton and Montreal.

The City of Winnipeg has initiated a project to develop a Biodiversity Policy and create a Greenspace and Natural Corridor Plan By-law. It is likely to take several years before this work is completed and the recommendations are acted on. During that time, the decline of our natural attributes continues, along with the decline in ecosystem services, health and quality of life benefits they contribute. This is happening in spite of the effort of the City Naturalist office to implement Winnipeg's Ecologically Significant Natural Lands Policy.

In light of the above considerations, the City of Winnipeg needs to give high priority to valuing, protecting, enhancing, and restoring biodiversity, greenspace/natural corridors and trees in the City's planning and budget processes. This is not happening at present in a fully integrated and comprehensive basis, although it is important to acknowledge, commitments have been made by City Council on a specific program basis,

Address:
P.O. Box 83
208 Provencher Boulevard
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2H 3B4

Web:
www.saveourseine.com
info@saveourseine.com

such as the significant increase in funding for tree planting in the current budget which is very much appreciated and will contribute to biodiversity as well as providing other important benefits.

SOS Encourages Signing of the Pledge

Save Our Seine has made managing biodiversity and using nature-based solutions a priority and we would like the City of Winnipeg to come with us on this journey by also making it a priority for our city. Thus, Save our Seine encourages the Winnipeg City Council to join its fellow Canadian cities, to make **biodiversity a high priority by supporting Councillor Gilroy's recent motion to sign onto the Montreal Pledge: Cities United in Action for Biodiversity**.

On behalf of the Board of Save Our Seine

Sincerely



Laurie Ringaert
President
Save Our Seine River Environment Inc.
president@saveourseine.com
204-797-2608.

Cc: Ryan Palmquist: Managing Director; Denis DePape, Vice President; All Board Directors; Save Our Seine partners

Address:
P.O. Box 83
208 Provencher Boulevard
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2H 3B4

Web:
www.saveourseine.com
info@saveourseine.com