Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – December 5, 2023

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – November 20, 2023

Item No. 5 Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services and submitted the following to Council:

1. That the Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy, attached as Appendix B, be adopted as a long-range strategic plan to guide the planning, growth, management and protection of Winnipeg's urban forest and the delivery of urban forestry services.

2. That the recommended Investment Plan (operating and capital) and accompanying Capital budget detail sheets, attached as Appendix D, be referred to the 2024 - 2027 Multi-Year Budget process to initiate the implementation of the Strategy.

3. That a Project Manager position (1.0 FTE) and required annual estimated salary and benefits of $154,462 increasing annually in accordance with Collective Agreements, be referred to the 2024 - 2027 Multi-Year Budget process, to oversee, guide, and monitor the execution of the Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy jointly with the Winnipeg Parks Strategy.

4. That the following additional positions and required estimated annual salary and benefits, increasing annually in accordance with Collective Agreements, be referred to the 2024 – 2027 Multi-Year budget process:

    A. For Tree Planting Program services:

        i. One (1) Forestry Technician 2 permanent position (1.0 FTE) to coordinate and deliver community volunteer tree planting programs and support partner-funded tree planting programs ($82,010).

        ii. Four Forestry Technician 1 temporary positions (0.8 FTE each) for coordination and technical support of tree planting services including contractor supervision to deliver a 1:1 tree replacement and plant trees in vacant planting sites and provide technical and field support for community volunteer tree planting programs ($216,011).

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – November 20, 2023

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

iii. Five (5) Arborist 1 seasonal positions (0.5 FTE each) for in-house tree planting and watering services to deliver a 1:1 tree replacement, plant trees in vacant planting sites, and support partner-funded tree planting projects ($148,769).

iv. Four (4) Utility 2 seasonal positions (0.5 FTE each) for in-house tree planting and watering services to deliver a 1:1 tree replacement, plant trees in vacant planting sites, and support partner-funded tree planting projects ($114,224).

B. For combined Tree Planting Program and Dutch Elm Disease (DED) Program services:

i. Four (4) Arborist 2 permanent positions (1 FTE each) to deliver in-house tree planting services and DED removal services ($251,104).

C. For DED Program services:

i. One (1) Forestry Foreman 1 seasonal position (0.5 FTE) for in-house DED removals, including prioritized rapid removal ($35,902).

ii. Five (5) Arborist 1 seasonal positions (0.5 FTE each) for in-house DED removals ($148,769).

iii. Four (4) Utility 2 seasonal positions (0.5 FTE each) for in-house DED removals ($102,448).

iv. Three (3) Forestry Technician 1 temporary positions (0.96 FTE each) for enhanced DED surveillance related to prioritized rapid removal and for contract administration and supervision ($194,417).

v. Increase 18 existing seasonal Forestry Technical Assistant seasonal positions by 0.06 FTE each and add two (2) Forestry Technical Assistant temporary positions (0.33 FTE each) for enhanced DED surveillance for prioritized rapid removal ($101,834).

D. For combined DED Program services and Asset Management:

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – November 20, 2023

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

i. Six (6) Forestry Technical Assistant temporary positions (0.63 FTE each) for enhanced DED surveillance for prioritized rapid removal and updating tree asset management system ($255,163).

E. For Tree Pruning and Removal services:

i. One (1) Forestry Foreman 1 permanent position (1.0 FTE) to coordinate and supervise the delivery of in-house neighbourhood pruning services to contribute to meeting a seven-year pruning cycle for street trees and a 12-year pruning cycle for park trees ($71,803).

ii. Four (4) Arborist 2 permanent positions (1.0 FTE each) to deliver neighbourhood pruning services to contribute to meeting a seven-year pruning cycle for street trees and a 12-year pruning cycle for park trees ($251,104).

iii. Two (2) Utility 2 permanent positions (1.0 FTE each) to deliver neighbourhood pruning services to contribute to meeting a seven-year pruning cycle for street trees and a 12-year pruning cycle for park trees ($114,248).

iv. One (1) Forestry Technician 2 permanent position (1.0 FTE) for coordination of a seven-yr pruning cycle for street trees and a 12-year pruning cycle for park trees and contract administration ($82,010).

v. Increase one (1) Forestry Technician 1 temporary position by 0.46 FTE and add four (4) Forestry Technician 1 temporary positions (0.96 FTE each) to coordinate, inspect and supervise contracted pruning services to contribute to meeting a seven-year pruning cycle for street trees and a 12-year pruning cycle for park trees ($290,386).

F. For Tree Protection:

i. Increase one (1) Forestry Technician 1 temporary position by 0.46 FTE and add one (1) Forestry Technician 1 temporary position (0.86 FTE) to consult on, inspect, and enforce tree protection for municipal and development construction projects, including downtown ($89,114).

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – November 20, 2023

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

ii. One (1) Forestry Technician 2 permanent position (1.0 FTE) as a development arborist position to administer regulatory components for trees in zoning bylaws and address tree issues related to development to be referred to 2025 Operating Budget ($82,010).

5. That the Public Service be directed to provide biennial updates to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services on the implementation of the Actions Matrix, attached as Appendix D, with the next report to be received no later than December 2026.

6. That the Winnipeg Public Service be requested to conduct a Council Seminar on the matter before it's to be considered by Council.

7. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – November 20, 2023

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Duncan,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services be concurred in and forwarded to Council.

Carried

David Green, OURS-Winnipeg, submitted a presentation in support of the matter.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On November 20, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service, with the following amendment:

- Add the following new Recommendation, and renumber the remaining Recommendation accordingly:

  "6. That the Winnipeg Public Service be requested to conduct a Council Seminar on the matter before it's to be considered by Council."

and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

D. Domke, Manager of Parks and Open Space Division, Public Works Department, along with M. Barwinsky, City Forester, Public Works Department, provided a presentation on the matter.

The following persons submitted communications with respect to the matter:

- Carmen Rohne
- David Green, OURS-Winnipeg

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – Executive Policy Committee – Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
D. Domke	J. Berezowsky	J. Speidel, acting for C. Kloepfer	M. Jack

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Winnipeg's urban forest is vital to the fabric and health of our city. A healthy and well-managed urban forest provides valuable ecosystem services that benefit human health and well-being, mitigate the impacts of the urban heat island effect and climate change, and support other urban infrastructure.

The City of Winnipeg currently does not have a formal, Council-approved plan to guide future planning, protection, growth, and management of the urban forest. Yet, the urban forest is faced with the combined pressures of invasive pests and disease, climate change, and development. Clear direction and outcomes are needed to steer the management of Winnipeg's urban forest, ensuring its continuity for the benefit of future generations.

The Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy (the Strategy) has been developed to provide a 20-year vision and strategic framework for the City's urban forest. It identifies key recommendations and strategic actions to help protect, preserve, and enhance Winnipeg's tree canopy towards achieving a canopy cover of 24 percent by 2065.

Strategy development included a review and analysis of the City's urban forestry program and services, asset inventory, industry best practices, and extensive public and stakeholder engagement. The proposed targets, policies and actions will help guide decision-making and financial investment to achieve five strategic goals:

1. Plan accountably
2. Plant strategically
3. Manage adaptively
4. Protect prudently
5. Partner purposefully

The recommendations and associated estimated resources in operating and capital budgets are presented to operationalize the Strategy and meet service targets.

This report outlines the Strategy's key recommended policies and associated actions, as well as the resources that would be required for successful implementation. It also summarizes how progress on the plan would be monitored.

Council's Strategic Priorities Action Plan (SPAP) advances the Strategy's vision for an abundant, healthy, diverse and resilient urban forest, by directing an increase to both pruning cycles and tree replacement rates. However, as the Strategy was created prior to the development and approval of the SPAP, the performance targets related to these actions are not fully aligned. Specifically, a seven-year pruning cycle for park trees has been identified within SPAP, while the CUFS targets a less frequent 12-year cycle for park trees. Regarding tree replacements for street and park trees, SPAP targets a 2:1 ratio, while CUFS targets a 1:1 tree replacement ratio.

Measure	**Strategic Priorities Action Plan (SPAP) Target**	**Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy (CUFS) Target**
Pruning Cycle – street trees	Seven-year cycle	Seven-year cycle
Pruning Cycle – Park Trees	Seven-year cycle	12-year cycle
Tree Replacement – Street and Park Trees	Plant new and replacement trees in streets and parks using a 2:1 ratio	Public Trees - 1:1 (one tree replaced for every tree removed)

Increasing the pruning cycle for park trees from 12 to seven years would require pruning an additional 5,300 park trees per year at an estimated cost of $1.9 million (average cost of $350/tree) including an additional 3.0 FTE's. Increasing the tree replacement ratio from a 1:1 to 2:1 tree replacement ratio would require planting an additional 6,250 park trees per year at an estimated cost of $6.25 million per year (average cost of $1,000/tree), including an additional 12.0 FTEs for contract administration and nursery activities, seasonal fleet vehicle rentals, equipment, fuel and other incidental expenses. It should be noted that current industry capacity is not sufficient to meet these additional demands for services and for nursery stock supply in the short term and capacity limits in the City's nursery facilities may further limit the ability to reach the tree replacement targets on a short term basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy, attached as Appendix B, be adopted as a long-range strategic plan to guide the planning, growth, management and protection of Winnipeg's urban forest and the delivery of urban forestry services.

2. That the recommended Investment Plan (operating and capital) and accompanying Capital budget detail sheets, attached as Appendix D, be referred to the 2024 - 2027 Multi-Year Budget process to initiate the implementation of the Strategy.

3. That a Project Manager position (1.0 FTE) and required annual estimated salary and benefits of $154,462 increasing annually in accordance with Collective Agreements, be referred to the 2024 - 2027 Multi-Year Budget process, to oversee, guide, and monitor the execution of the Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy jointly with the Winnipeg Parks Strategy.

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   ii. Four *Forestry Technician 1* temporary positions (0.8 FTE each) for coordination and technical support of tree planting services including contractor supervision to deliver a 1:1 tree replacement and plant trees in vacant planting sites and provide technical and field support for community volunteer tree planting programs ($216,011).

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   i. Four (4) *Arborist 2* permanent positions (1 FTE each) to deliver in-house tree planting services and DED removal services ($251,104).

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i. Increase one (1) *Forestry Technician 1* temporary position by 0.46 FTE and add one (1) *Forestry Technician 1* temporary position (0.86 FTE) to consult on, inspect, and enforce tree protection for municipal and development construction projects, including downtown ($89,114).

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5. That the Public Service be directed to provide biennial updates to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services on the implementation of the Actions Matrix, attached as Appendix D, with the next report to be received no later than December 2026.

6. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On December 12, 2017, Council approved the 2018 Urban Forest Enhancement Capital Project which supported the creation of the City of Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy for Council consideration.

On September 18, 2020, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks referred the Tree Re-planting Donation Program to the Winnipeg Public Service for inclusion in the Comprehensive Urban Forest Management Strategy for the purpose of incentivizing the replacement of trees on boulevards and/or on the 10 feet of public land adjacent to privately owned properties.

In response to an October 15, 2019, decision of the Executive Policy Committee, on December 2, 2020, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks directed the Winnipeg Public Service to provide a verbal report on the progress of a cross jurisdictional scan and consultation with industry and community stakeholders on the creation of a Tree Protection and Preservation By-law. On February 10, 2021, the verbal report from the Public Service was received as information. The report described the cross-jurisdictional scan and consultation results and an overview of the components of a tree bylaw. The Public Service noted this information would be provided in the State of the Urban Forest Report, and policy recommendations and associated strategic actions regarding a Tree Protection and Preservation By-law would be presented in the Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy.

As a long-range strategy document, the Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy requires Council approval.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy would become the long-range strategic plan and guiding document for the planning, protection, growth and management of Winnipeg's urban forest.

This Strategy would have far-reaching implications for the Public Service and City at large, as it would inform decision-making and budget allocation over the next 20 years. Referral of the Recommended Investment Plan to the 2024 Budget process would enable Council consideration of key investment opportunities required to implement the Strategy to deliver urban forestry programs and services that are equitable, high-quality and sustainable for the planning, protection, growth, and management of Winnipeg's urban forest towards achieving a canopy cover of 24 percent by 2065.

Implementation of this Strategy would require an additional 41.7 FTEs in operating budget due to recommended targets resulting in increased services related to asset management, 1:1 tree replacement, planting vacant sites, community volunteer tree planting programming, pruning cycles of seven years for street trees and 12 years for park trees, prioritized rapid removal in DED management, and public tree protection in municipal and development construction projects.

Recommended additions to operating budget and requirements for capital budgets for referral to the 2024 Budget process are listed below:

Budget	**2024**	**2025**	**2026**	**2027**	**2028**
Operating	$ 6,538,462	$ 7,770,841	$ 7,910,652	$ 9,130,073	$ 9,312,675
Capital	$ 9,700,000	$ 9,623,000	$ 9,754,190	$10,043,816	$10,372,130
Total	**$16,238,462**	**$17,393,841**	**$17,664,842**	**$19,173,889**	**$19,684,805**

For clarity, the additional operating budget above includes the costs associated with the

additional 41.7 FTE's being recommended in this report with further detail being provided in Appendix F. There would be ongoing budget approvals required to support the Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy in perpetuity beyond the Recommended Investment Plan. A FTE and salaries and benefits summary is included as Appendix G.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

The importance of trees and nature to Winnipeg has been evident since Winnipeg's beginnings. Residents planted trees in Winnipeg before the City's incorporation in 1873 and now large elm and ash trees provide a beautiful and defining natural character to Winnipeg's streets, parks, and neighbourhoods. The City began planting trees in urban parks and boulevards from the late 1800s to develop Winnipeg as a garden city. Today, the City of Winnipeg has an enviable legacy of mature trees and canopy cover, cared for by staff and green industry professionals, active community partners, and residents.

The City's urban forestry program was initiated in 1975 with the first recorded incidence of Dutch elm disease (DED) in Manitoba (in south Winnipeg). Winnipeg has since been the leader in DED management in North America with strong community activism in DED management, and in other urban forestry activities as urban forestry programs have evolved over time.

Trees are City assets just like roads, sewers, and streetlights. But, unlike the hard assets that depreciate in value over time, trees appreciate in value and deliver more services as they grow and age. Large, long-lived and healthy trees provide the greatest benefits because they have the largest canopy and most biomass. Healthy, well-managed urban forests are increasingly recognized as an essential part of city infrastructure - a natural asset that delivers ecosystem services throughout communities to benefit human health, well-being, and ecological functions; to mitigate the impacts of the urban heat island effect and climate change; and to support other urban infrastructure.

In 2012, the Public Service completed its first inventory of approximately 305,000 boulevard and park trees and developed a geographic information system (GIS)-based public tree inventory database. An inventory of elms on private property and natural areas was completed in 2015, updating a count that predated the discovery of Dutch elm disease. In 2015, total American elm inventory was estimated to be 236,017 with 177,647 on private property and in natural areas and 58,370 on boulevards, in parks, and in open spaces. In 2017, ash trees on private properties and in natural areas were inventoried to prepare for the inevitable arrival of emerald ash borer. At that time, there was an estimated total 356,385 ash trees with 101,00 located on boulevards and in parks and 256,385 on private properties and in natural areas.

In 2019, an analysis of the urban forest canopy cover using the i-Tree Eco program from the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service was completed. This analysis estimated city-wide canopy cover, benefits of ecosystem services provided by the urban forest, and species diversity. Results are discussed in detail in the State of the Urban Forest Report (Appendix E).

Faced with the combined pressures of invasive pests and disease, climate change, and development, clear direction and outcomes are required to steer the management of Winnipeg's urban forest, ensuring its continuity for the benefit of future generations.

Council Dispositions

This Strategy responds to a number of Council and Committee dispositions:

- On January 17, 2017, the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development directed the Public Service to review the development permit process, as part of the Residential Infill Strategy, to determine specific options and incentives aimed at preserving trees on private residential properties.

- On December 12, 2017, Council approved the 2018 Urban Forest Enhancement Capital Project which supported the creation of the City of Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy for Council consideration – as directed by the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks on September 18, 2017.

- On January 7, 2019, the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development directed the Public Service to develop an implementation plan for the Infill Development Strategy which included Action #6: Develop a tree protection policy or by-law that protects the urban forest on public and private lands.

- On September 18, 2020, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks referred the Tree Re-planting Donation Program to the Winnipeg Public Service for inclusion in the Comprehensive Urban Forest Management Strategy for the purpose of incentivizing the replacement of trees on boulevards and/or on the 10 feet of public land adjacent to privately owned properties.

- In response to the October 15, 2019, decision of the Executive Policy Committee, on December 2, 2020, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks directed the Winnipeg Public Service to provide a verbal report on the progress of a cross jurisdictional scan and consultation with industry and community stakeholders on the creation of a Tree Protection and Preservation By-law. On February 10, 2021, the verbal report from the Public Service was received as information. The report described the cross-jurisdictional scan and consultation results and an overview of the components of a tree bylaw. The Public Service noted this information would be provided in the State of the Urban Forest Report, and policy recommendations and associated strategic actions regarding a Tree Protection and Preservation By-law would be presented in the Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy.

Project Framework

Work on the Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy project began in 2019 with an evaluation of the current extent and composition of Winnipeg's urban forest, as well as existing management practices. The Strategy builds on these evaluations and was informed by input and feedback collected through two phases of public and stakeholder engagement. Work on the Strategy was paused for several months due to the emergency response to the October 2019 winter storm and was later redesigned when COVID19 restrictions were implemented in Spring 2020.
Phase 1 of public engagement took place in Fall 2020 (Appendix A: Winnipeg Urban Forest Strategy – Public Engagement). This phase began with the launch of the project website

and provided an opportunity for Winnipeggers to participate in an online survey and mapping tool, tree mail, a discussion forum, self-guided walking tours and virtual tours, two online presentations and one online stakeholder workshop. It set out to develop a long-term vision for the urban forest that captures community perspectives on the city's identity, culture, and aspirations while identifying opportunities to preserve and protect, grow, and enhance the urban forest.

In May 2021, the State of the Urban Forest Report was published (Appendix E: State of the Urban Forest Report). This report provides an overview on the composition of Winnipeg's urban forest, its value, and how it is managed. It introduces performance metrics and indicators for sustainable urban forest management and compares Winnipeg's urban forest management programs and services with those of other Canadian cities. The document provided a baseline and background to inform and help guide the development of the Strategy itself.

Both Phase 1 of public engagement and the current state document informed development of a draft Winnipeg Urban Forest Strategy. The Strategy was released in Spring 2022 to coincide with Phase 2 of public engagement. This phase informed the public of the draft Strategy and solicited input on targets and priorities for implementation. Winnipeggers were invited to provide feedback through a survey, a comments tool, and two online open houses. Stakeholder organizations were also invited to an online stakeholder workshop (Appendix A: Winnipeg Urban Forest Strategy – Public Engagement). Three stakeholder groups provided written responses to the draft Strategy outside this formal process. Feedback received through public engagement activities helped shape revisions to the final draft of the Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy (Appendix B).

Today: The draft Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy

The Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy provides a 20-year vision and strategic framework for the City's urban forest, identifying key recommendations and strategic actions for the protection, preservation, enhancement, and management of Winnipeg's tree canopy towards achieving a canopy cover of 24 percent by 2065. Progress would be monitored and actions reviewed and updated every four years. The Strategy is a critical step towards providing an abundant, healthy, diverse and resilient urban forest, and equitable and sustainable provision of services for the benefit of Winnipeg's people and communities.

Integral to the Strategy is the need to establish target levels of service, with a framework and methodology to measure and evaluate effect and success (Figure 1).

The Strategy has been developed to align with OurWinnipeg, Complete Communities, as well as Winnipeg's Climate Action Plan, the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Winnipeg Parks Strategy. Alignment with Council's Strategic Priorities Action Plan (SPAP) is discussed in the Next Steps section of this report.

Figure 1 - Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy – Strategic Framework

VISION FOR THE URBAN FOREST					
An abundant, healthy, diverse, and resilient urban forest that is an essential component of the health and wellbeing of Winnipeg's people and communities					
PRINCIPLES					
1	Contribute to a healthy and beautiful city	**5**	Build strong partnerships	**8**	Support reconciliation
2	Mitigate and adapt to climate change	**6**	Protect our existing urban forest	**9**	Respect cultural heritage
3	Provide equitable service delivery	**7**	Maintain healthy and safe trees	**10**	Learn and manage adaptively
4	Enhance biodiversity and ecological function				

GOALS				
Plan accountably	**Plant strategically**	**Manage adaptively**	**Protect prudently**	**Partner purposefully**
To achieve an equitable distribution of connected tree and forest assets that will improve the health of our people and communities	To grow a robust and sustainable urban forest that will maximize benefits for human health and ecological function	To improve tree health and safety, achieve planned levels of service, and respond to unplanned demand for services	To preserve and protect Winnipeg's urban forest canopy where it will maximize benefits for human health and ecological function	To foster reconciliation and stewardship that will build capacity to achieve goals and respond to challenges

TARGETS							
							
Canopy cover 20% by 2045 24% by 2065	**American elms lost annually** No more than 2%	**Public planting** No more than 5% potential planting sites vacant	**Public tree replacement** 1:1 (one tree replaced for every tree removed)	**Public tree diversity** No more than 10% species and 20% genus	**Public tree loss annually** No more than 1.5%	**Pruning cycles** Seven-years for street trees 12-years for park trees	**Customer satisfaction** At least 50% across all services

Each of the strategy's goals identify policies to direct decision-making with associated action items. The action items identify estimated implementation timelines and associated investment needs to meet the targets and fulfill the goals. There are 25 policy recommendations and 112 action items to be implemented over a 20-year timeframe (Appendix C: Urban Forest Policy Recommendations Matrix).

Strategic actions that address specific directions from the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks (now Standing Policy Committee on Community Services) are noted below:

- Tree Re-planting Donation Program –
  - Action 6C. Explore opportunities to expand on the current commemorative tree donation program to incentivize the replacement of trees on boulevards and/or on the 10 feet of public land adjacent to privately owned properties.
  - Action 24A. Promote the Tree Donation Program to encourage more participation from businesses and individuals to contribute to reforestation and/or new plantings.

- Tree Protection and Preservation By-law –
  - Action 10A. Update the Zoning By-law (200/2006) and related policy.
  - Action 10B. Update the Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-law (100/2004) and related policy.
  - Action 19A. Pursue revisions to the City of Winnipeg charter to enable the city to regulate tree preservation and protection on private property under a new tree by-law.
  - Action 19B. Consider creating a tree bylaw that regulates removal, protection and replacement of trees related to development, servicing, zoning, and subdivision, including natural areas, and enables enforcement and fines accordingly.

Implementation

Of the 112 action items identified in the Urban Forest Policy Recommendations Matrix (Appendix C), 60 items are in progress or would be undertaken within existing resources and/or as part of other City initiatives and projects. The Recommended Investment Plan (Appendix D) outlines the additional resources required to implement the remaining actions, including associated human resource requirements. Even though action items are tied to specific policy recommendations under specific goals, many are interrelated. For logistical reasons to operationalize the actions efficiently, many action items requiring additional resources are bundled together, as noted in the Recommended Investment Plan (Appendix D).

To meet strategic goals and targets, recommended additional investments are focused on:

1. Planning:
   - Developing a City Tree Policy;
   - Enhancing protection of City trees;
   - Developing a customer service framework for socially equitable delivery of service;
   - Monitoring canopy cover;
   - Measuring progress of meeting service targets;

- Reviewing and updating strategic actions every four years.

2. Planting:
   - Developing tree planting strategies;
   - Increasing street and park tree planting to approximately 6,250 trees per year to reach a target 1:1 replacement of street and park trees and plant vacant planting sites;
   - Supporting community volunteer tree planting initiatives;
   - Developing a civic nursery management plan.

3. Managing:
   - Updating canopy cover analysis;
   - Updating and maintaining the City's tree asset management system;
   - Increasing street and park tree pruning incrementally to approximately 35,500 trees pruned per year by Year 4 to reach target pruning cycles of seven years for street trees and 12 years for park trees;
   - Enhanced DED management with a prioritized rapid removal program;
   - Monitoring natural forest area cover and prioritizing management of invasive species.

4. Protecting:
   - Developing a City Tree Policy;
   - Updating zoning by-laws;
   - Creating a Tree By-law
   - Administering regulatory components for trees in zoning bylaws and developments;
   - Directing and enforcing tree protection requirements for municipal and development construction projects.

5. Partnering:
   - Raising the profile of urban forestry;
   - Developing and implementing a communications and stewardship plan;
   - Developing a community volunteer tree planting program;
   - Working with and supporting partners.

Successful implementation relies on a combination of recommended Capital investments and additional operating budget, including additional full-time equivalents to augment existing staff resources with associated equipment, and additional contracted services with accompanying contract administration. A balance between additional in-house and contracted resources is recommended to strategically meet the tree planting, tree pruning, and DED management targets in consideration of current and future industry capacity. The hiring of a project manager dedicated to oversee, guide, and monitor the execution of the Strategy and support biennial reporting would help to ensure continuous and incremental positive strides are made towards achieving its goals and targets.

Investment required for implementation

Additional operating budgets included in the Recommended Investment Plan (Appendix D), and relative to the four-year budget cycle from 2024 to 2027, are summarized below in Table 1.

Table 1. Recommended additional operating budget 2024 to 2028 (*).

2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
$6,538,462	$7,770,841	$7,910,652	$9,130,073	$9,312,675

(*) – amounts in the table above include salaries and benefits related to 41.7 FTEs

Implementation of the Strategy would require an additional 41.7 FTEs in the department's 2024 Operating Budget at an estimated additional annual cost of $2.79 million beginning in 2024 and continuing to 2028 and beyond (increasing annually in accordance with Collective Agreements). See Appendix F for further details. Of these additional FTEs, 15.0 FTEs are permanent positions. The additional funds presented in Table 1 include these additional FTEs as well as additional equipment and materials.

The total Capital value for the six-year period from 2024 to 2029 is $60.2 million with two Capital programs: the existing Urban Forest Renewal Program and a proposed new Urban Forest Planning Program. The proposed new Urban Forest Planning Program would establish funding for services related to a City Charter review and Tree Protection Bylaw, City Tree Policy, updating tree canopy analysis, and further strategies and plans identified in the Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy. These deliverables and services would support ongoing decision-making, programming development, and the Urban Forest Renewal Program by ensuring investments are prioritized and allocated effectively. The recommended Capital investment is presented below in Table 2.

Table 2. Recommended capital investment 2024 to 2029.

Year	Urban Forest Renewal	Urban Forest Planning	Total Capital Investment (adjusted for 2% inflation)
2024	$ 9,100,000	$ 600,000	$ 9,700,000
2025	$ 9,373,000	$ 250,000	$ 9,623,000
2026	$ 9,654,190	$ 100,000	$ 9,754,190
2027	$ 9,944,816	$ 100,000	$ 10,044,816
2028	$ 10,242,130	$ 130,000	$ 10,372,130
2029	$ 10,549,000	$ 200,000	$ 10,749,000

From 2030 onward, there would be an ongoing Urban Forest Renewal Capital program need to support tree planting and Dutch elm disease management targets in the Strategy in perpetuity. In 2034, an estimated $240,000 is recommended to update canopy cover data analysis (recommended five-year cycle) and for other consultant services to implement action items in Policies 24 and 25.

Regarding accuracy of estimate, the majority of the capital referrals relate to programs and therefore are scalable (i.e. – level of estimate is not applicable). For projects where a class of estimate is applicable, estimates are all at a Class 5 level.

No funding source for the incremental capital budget need has been identified at this time. As a result, debt funding is assumed for the purposes of this financial impact statement presentation. The actual budget source would be reviewed through the 2024 and subsequent budget processes.

Debt Strategy

On October 28, 2015, Council adopted a Debt Strategy for Tax Supported, Utilities and total City borrowing.

Subject to approval of the recommendations of this report, net additional borrowing authority of $3,193,136 is required (to commence in 2024). For clarity, the additional borrowing of $3,193,136 relates only to the incremental capital expenditures to be incurred under the strategy. Debt is not being contemplated for the incremental operating expenditures to be incurred under the strategy and a funding source for these operating expenditures would need to be identified in the 2024 Multi-Year Budget process.

$50 million of Tax Supported and $15 million of Utilities borrowing capacity will remain if Council approves the recommendations in this report. (based on 2023 borrowing estimates).

The impact of this debt financing falls within the debt limits established in the Council Policy as outlined in the table below:

Tax Supported net debt as a percentage of revenue not to exceed	80%
Forecasted peak rate including proposed debt from this report	57.8%
Utilities net debt as a percentage of revenue not to exceed	220%
Forecasted peak rate including proposed debt from this report	119.5%
Total City net debt as a percentage of revenue not to exceed	90%
Forecasted peak rate including proposed debt from this report	87.5%
Tax Supported debt servicing as a percent of revenue not to exceed	10%
Forecasted peak rate including proposed debt from this report	5.1%
Utilities debt servicing as a percent of revenue not to exceed	20%
Forecasted peak rate including proposed debt from this report	10.2%
Total City debt servicing as a percent of revenue not to exceed	11%
Forecasted peak rate including proposed debt from this report	7.6%
Tax Supported Debt per Capita not to exceed	1,500
Forecasted peak rate including proposed debt from this report	1,149
Utilities Debt per Capita not to exceed	1,500
Forecasted peak rate including proposed debt from this report	1,354
Total City Debt per Capita not to exceed	2,800
Forecasted peak rate including proposed debt from this report	2,416

Next Steps

The Recommended Investment Plan (Appendix D) is recommended for referral and consideration through the 2024 Budget process and subsequent budget years, as funding is identified.

Progress would be monitored and actions reviewed and updated every four years. The Public Service would utilize the Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy to inform the ongoing identification of service gaps and investment needs, and bring forward recommendations to Council through the annual investment planning process.

Council's Strategic Priorities Action Plan (SPAP) advances the Strategy's vision for an abundant, healthy, diverse and resilient urban forest, by directing an increase to both pruning cycles and tree replacement rates. However, as the Strategy was created prior to the development and approval of the SPAP, the performance targets related to these actions are not fully aligned. Specifically, a seven-year pruning cycle for park trees has been identified within SPAP, while the CUFS targets a less frequent 12-year cycle for park trees. Regarding tree replacements for street and park trees, SPAP targets a 2:1 ratio, while CUFS targets a 1:1 tree replacement ratio.

Measure	**Strategic Priorities Action Plan (SPAP) Target**	**Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy (CUFS) Target**
Pruning Cycle – street trees	Seven-year cycle	Seven-year cycle
Pruning Cycle – Park Trees	Seven-year cycle	12-year cycle
Tree Replacement – Street and Park Trees	Plant new and replacement trees in streets and parks using a 2:1 ratio	Public Trees - 1:1 (one tree replaced for every tree removed)

Increasing the pruning cycle for park trees from 12 to seven years would require pruning an additional 5,300 park trees per year at an estimated cost of $1.9 million (average cost of $350/tree) including an additional 3.0 FTE's. Increasing the tree replacement ratio from a 1:1 to 2:1 tree replacement ratio would require planting an additional 6,250 park trees per year at an estimated cost of $6.25 million per year (average cost of $1,000/tree), including an additional 12.0 FTEs for contract administration and nursery activities, seasonal fleet vehicle rentals, equipment, fuel and other incidental expenses.

It should be noted that current industry capacity is not sufficient to meet these additional demands for services and for nursery stock supply in the short term and capacity limits in the City's nursery facilities may further limit the ability to reach the tree replacement targets on a short term basis.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: October 20, 2023

Project Name:

Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy

First Year of Program **2024**

	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Capital					
Capital Expenditures Required	$ 9,700,000	$ 9,623,000	$ 9,754,190	$ 10,043,816	$ 10,372,130
Less: Existing Budgeted Costs	6,836,000	9,601,000	11,061,000	9,202,000	9,600,000
Additional Capital Budget Required	$ 2,864,000	$ 22,000	$ (1,306,810)	$ 841,816	$ 772,130
Funding Sources:					
Debt - Internal	$ 2,864,000	$ 22,000	$ (1,306,810)	$ 841,816	$ 772,130
Debt - External	-	-	-	-	-
Grants (Enter Description Here)	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves, Equity, Surplus	-	-	-	-	-
Other - Enter Description Here	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	$ 2,864,000	$ 22,000	$ (1,306,810)	$ 841,816	$ 772,130
Total Additional Capital Budget Required	$ 3,193,136				
Total Additional Debt Required	$ 3,193,136				
Current Expenditures/Revenues					
Direct Costs	$ 6,690,462	$ 8,106,841	$ 8,276,652	$ 9,541,073	$ 9,821,675
Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery	234,000	273,000	266,000	305,000	316,000
Net Cost/(Benefit)	$ 6,456,462	$ 7,833,841	$ 8,010,652	$ 9,236,073	$ 9,505,675
Less: Existing Budget Amounts	-	-	-	-	-
Net Budget Adjustment Required	$ 6,456,462	$ 7,833,841	$ 8,010,652	$ 9,236,073	$ 9,505,675

Additional Comments: Funds are not currently in place to implement the strategy as detailed in this report. This statement reflects the additional resources being referred to the 2024-2027 Multi-year budget process. Capital Expenditures Required represent the amounts in the capital project detail sheets in Appendix D. Existing Budgeted Costs represent the 2024-2027 forecast amounts in the Urban Forest Renewal Program that was approved in the 2023 Capital Budget. As no funding source for incremental capital budget has been identified at this time, debt funding is assumed for the purposes of this financial impact statement. The actual budget funding source would be determined in the 2024-2027 Multi-year budget process. Direct costs represent the incremental operating cost associated with the recommendations of this report with additional detail provided in Appendix G. Incremental Revenue/Recovery represent estimated corporate admin and interest overheads recovered from capital.

J. Ruby, 2023-10-20

J. Ruby, CPA, CA
Manager of Finance & Administration

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with: n/a

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

The report aligns with OurWinnipeg as noted below:

- 1.7 Equitable Service Access: Identify and provide access to, a base level of municipal services to everyone, directly or facilitated through partnerships. Remove systemic barriers to participation, based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, family status, physical or mental ability, official language used, citizenship status, socio-economic status, geographic location or climate change vulnerability.

- 2.19 Leverage Green Infrastructure: Value, protect and integrate green infrastructure solutions within the urban environment, to achieve highest and best use for biodiversity and ecosystem integrity, mitigate servicing capacity constraints, and accommodate only park, recreation, open space, or City operations related uses in City-owned land used as parks or under parks jurisdiction.

- 2.21 Leverage Green Infrastructure: Conserve, restore, and enhance the urban forest as a key contributor to air quality, erosion control, carbon sequestration, storm water management, efficient energy resource consumption, shade, improved health and wellbeing, and mitigation of and adaptation to the urban heat island effect.

- 4.7 Community Safety: Provide capacity to prepare, mitigate, assess risk, respond to and recover from the impacts of climate change, extreme weather, human or natural emergencies, disasters, and diseases, to promote community resilience within a changing hazard landscape.

- 6.43 Heritage Conservation: Conserve cultural, natural, and heritage resources and districts, as defined in Complete Communities, and Indigenous land-based practices to celebrate sense of place through community history, architecture, civic identity and cultural perspectives.

- 6.44 Compatible Growth: Plan for and protect green and built infrastructure and resources from incompatible development that would compromise achievement of this Plan’s goals.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

The report aligns with key directions and actions listed below:

- 1.6 Reduce Consumption and Increase Waste Diversion

- 1.8 Ensure that City Land Use, Transportation and Built Environment Policy, Bylaw, and Regulation Recognize the Council-Approved Climate Protection and Mitigation Priorities

- 7.1 Implement Opportunities to Improve Winnipeg's Resilience and Adaptability to the Effects of a Changing Climate

- 7.3 Preserve and Manage Parks and Natural Areas to Support Climate Change Mitigation

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

Goal 1: Equity and a Culture of Caring are Demonstrated through Strategy Implementation and Systems Change.
Related 10-year Objective:
C. Equity and a Culture of Caring are factored into all service planning and budget decisions, resulting in City-wide system change.

Goal 6: All City Services are Equitable, Inclusive and Accessible:
Related 10-year Objective:
A. Residents have equitable access to City services, in particular demographic groups who experience marginalization.
B. Community development models and collaborative approaches are enhanced or initiated for service planning & delivery in areas of higher poverty.
C. Use of City's tools and resources are maximized to reduce systemic inequities.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Public Works
Division: Parks and Open Space
Prepared by: M. Barwinsky, City Forester
Date: October 20, 2023

Attachments:

Appendix A: Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy – Public Engagement

Appendix B: Winnipeg Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy

Appendix C: Urban Forest Policy Recommendations Matrix

Appendix D: Accompanying Capital Project Detail Sheets

Appendix E: State of the Urban Forest Report

Appendix F: FTE and Salaries and Benefits Summary

Appendix G: Summary of Incremental Operating and Capital Expenditures