

Dear Mayor Gillingham and Council Members of the Executive Policy Committee:

It's not often I get to write to you when all I really have to say is thank-you. Thank- you for patiently listening to presentations made by Trees Please over the past 4 years, urging you to see our urban forest as essential infrastructure and increase the budget for urban forestry in order to effectively deal with the multi-layered threats facing our mature canopy. Thank you, also, to those of you who not only signed the Trees Please Pledge during the last civic election but followed through on its promises.

In this budget you have ensured that over the next four years urban forestry not only has the funds but the capacity to achieve a 2 to 1 planting ratio, a seven year best practice pruning cycle for our mature boulevard trees and hopefully stricter enforcement of existing bylaws aimed at ensuring the protection of our mature public trees during construction. It is a significant leap forward and I have no doubt that you will approve the urban forestry budget without amendment and ensure that the operating and capital budgets as outlined for the next four years are honoured.

We'd also like to thank the Department of Public Works engineering department for dedicating a portion of their own budget to better tree protection practices and silva cells.

The fact that this department and others like Planning are now consulting with Urban Forestry, in an effort to protect and preserve our mature trees, bodes well for the future of our urban canopy.

Winnipeg needs to protect all of its mature trees – public and private - whether they grace our boulevards and parks or stand within the boundaries of our few remaining intact forests. With this budget, you have taken the first steps to ensuring that our most valuable public trees will be protected or at very least rapidly replaced when lost to disease or irreparably damaged by construction and development.

I hope that this budget is a signal of even more assertive action to come, aimed at ensuring the survival of Winnipeg's mature trees, wherever they stand.

Sincerely,

Erna Buffie

Trees Please Winnipeg is coalition of resident groups lobbying all levels of government to make long term sustainable infrastructure investment available to cities like Winnipeg for the protection, maintenance, diversification and expansion of urban forests.

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