Dear Mayor Gillingham and Council Members

As a member of Trees Please Winnipeg, I would like to say Thank You to our City of Winnipeg Councillors for increased funds allocated to the Urban Forestry budget in the 2024-2027 multi-year Budget.

Thank you to all of you who signed the Trees Please Pledge during the last civic election. You paid heed to that pledge in this budget: a 2:1 Planting Ratio, 7-year pruning cycle and hopefully more tree protection at construction sites.

It is gratifying to see that the importance of trees matters to you all.

I won't take up your time in the body of this letter tell you once again all of the benefits of trees, and not just aesthetically which is hugely important, but also all of the other health, climate, and economic spinoffs. Instead I have attached a great takeaway, Quick Facts - Winnipeg's Urban Canopy Quick Facts - 2024 -regarding our Urban Canopy.

Did you know that our urban canopy of trees is worth $3 Billion (2023 Urban Forestry Report). Compare this to total cost of the City of Winnipeg Infrastructure (not including trees) at $35 Billion (2018 State of the Infrastructure Report). When you include inflation and assume the inventory stayed the same - the 2018 figure would be worth $42 Billion in 2023. This is a 7% ASSET Category class - that is huge! Our Trees should be considered an 'Asset' and part of our Infrastructure helping to ensure a long-term view to urban forestry program capacity. Putting this into perspective, Water Utility was valued at $4.5 Billion and Sewers at $6.5 Billion. Trees are in the mix.

Thank you for the continued collaboration between departments as evident with the inclusion of monies by the Department of Public Works for dedicating a portion of their own budget to better tree protection.

It is a good first step for the protection and growth of our urban canopy. It is important that we continue along this path for our citizens today and our future legacy.

Sincerely,

Roxana Mazur

Trees Please Member

Kingston Crescent Tree Committee



WINNIPEG'S URBAN CANOPY QUICK FACTS - 2024

- In December 2023, Winnipeg City Council adopted a progressive new 20-year *Urban Forestry Strategy*. The overarching goal would see Winnipeg's tree canopy cover a quarter of the city by 2065.
    - The strategy calls for a 1:1 replanting ratio which requires 17,000 trees to be planted every year. It also increases pruning (once every 12 years for trees in parks, and once every seven years for trees alongside streets).
    - Council boosted those targets in their 2023-2026 Strategic Priorities Action Plan, calling for a **2:1 replanting ratio** to help catch up on the backlog of thousands of as-of-yet replanted losses, and for **both street and park trees** to be pruned at a best practice rate of every seven years.
- Winnipeg has the largest urban elm forest in North America, yet we have 14,000 fewer public trees today than in 2015.
- Winnipeg's existing tree canopy structural value is estimated at $3 billion: value is based on services such as reducing cooling and heating costs, helping to manage storm water runoff, reducing demands on drainage infrastructure, and carbon storage.
- A well-treed neighbourhood can be up to 4 degrees cooler than a neighbourhood without trees. Losing a single tree can increase wind pressure on nearby buildings and drive up heating costs.
- Trees absorb rainwater, reducing the burden on our combined sewers and aging pipes.
- Street trees absorb 9 times more pollutants than more distant trees, converting harmful gasses back into oxygen and other useful and natural gasses.
- A large healthy tree can store approximately 65 times more carbon and remove 15 times more air pollution than a small tree.
- Trees can extend the life of roads. Shade from urban street trees can add from 40-60% more life to asphalt roads.
- Trees are good for public safety. One study found a 10% increase in canopy was associated with a ~12% decrease in crime.

- Trees are good for business. Stores on treescaped streets show 12% higher income streams.

- A fully forested boulevard increases home values. The presence of larger trees in yards and as street trees can add from 3% to 15% to home values.

- Access to green space reduces stress. Urban green space can reduce the burden of chronic health conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease by promoting physical activity, increased immune system, and improved sleep.

- Trees Please and other tree advocates are now working to ensure Winnipeg develops a bylaw that protects our healthy mature trees, especially during construction projects.

  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 maintenance, diversification and expansion of urban forests. Our detailed data sources available on our website at: https://treespleasewinnipeg.com/benefits-of-urban-trees/