



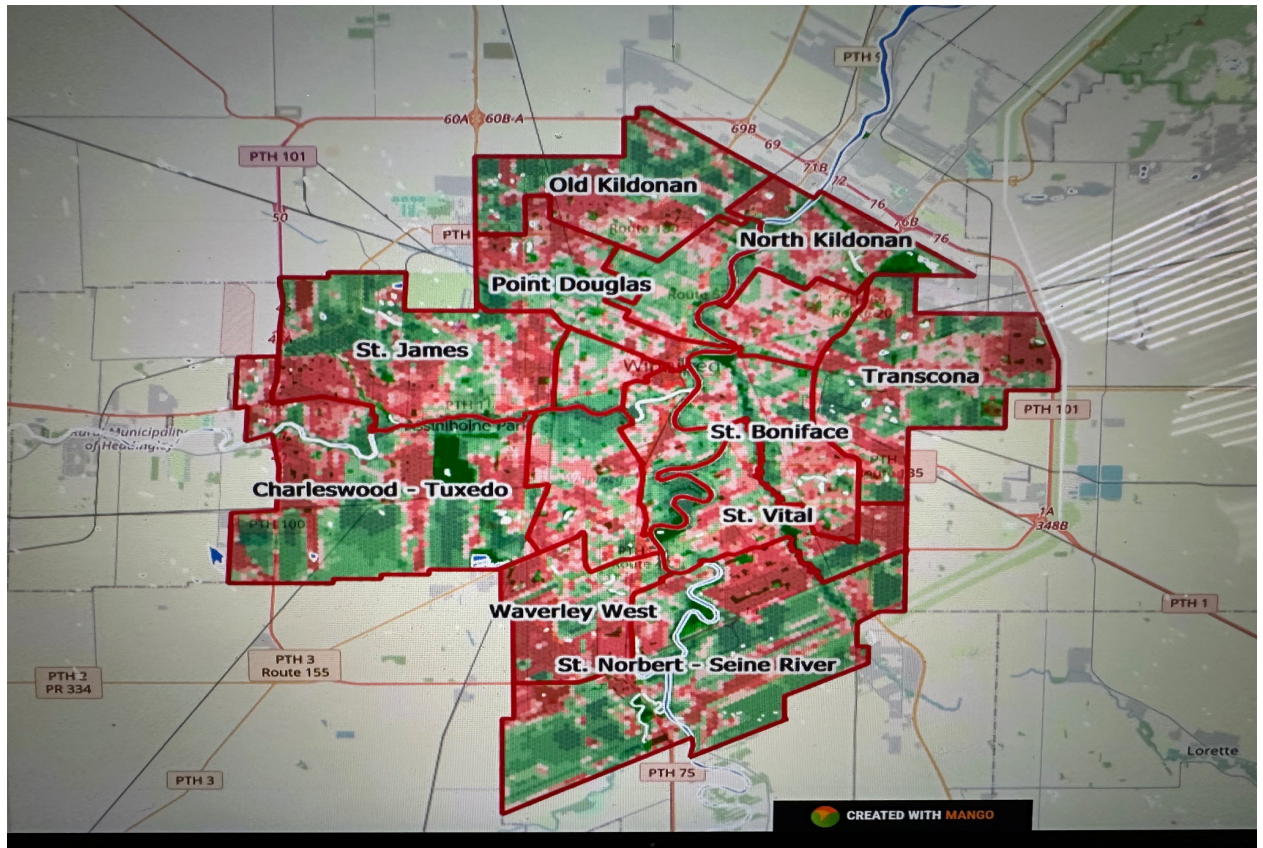
Monday, March 24, 2025

Dear Mr. Mayor and Councillors:

My name is Erna Buffie, and on behalf of Trees Please Winnipeg, I am writing to you in support of the expropriation and rezoning of the Lemay Forest. Given that Tochal Developments has turned down two generous offers to purchase the Lemay forest, I am writing to urge you to vote “Yes,” to expropriation of that land for the following reasons:

1. **In 2024, Urban Forestry planted a record 17,000 trees.** If the estimated 19,000 mature trees in the Lemay Forest are clear cut, it will not only cancel out those gains, it will also rob the city of the substantial benefits those mature trees provide. Benefits which newly planted trees won’t produce for at least another decade.
2. **Recent scientific studies indicate that intact mature urban forests like the Lemay produce the biggest benefits for cities,** in terms carbon sequestration, air pollution reduction, heat reduction and superstorm flood protection.
3. **Council endorsed the 20-Year Urban Forest Strategy,** which commits the City to expanding our canopy from 17% to 24%. If the Lemay is destroyed we risk not meeting even that conservative goal.
4. **Council voted to sign the Montreal Biodiversity Pledge.** To honour that pledge the city has promised to ensure that biodiversity hotspots and key wildlife corridor links like the Lemay are preserved.

5. **Both the Council adopted Parks Strategy and Centre Plan indicate the dire need for more greenspace in the city.** Council has committed to adding 1000 acres of parkland to its inventory. Expropriation of the 22 acre Lemay forest would mark an important first step toward meeting that target.
6. **Winnipeg has the lowest greenness score of any major city in Canada. That is a national embarrassment.** In a climate change context, council must strive to reverse that trend by using any and all means, including expropriation, to acquire and preserve significant green spaces like the Lemay.
7. **In addition to its positive environmental benefits, the Lemay Forest is also significant historic site.** The graveyard immediately adjacent to the forest contains the graves of more than 3300 children from the Asile Ritchot Orphanage and Home for Unwed Mothers, many of whom were likely Indigenous or Metis. Based on those facts, archeologist and Executive Director of The Manitoba Historical Society, Tracey Turner, contends that the Lemay forest must be declared “A Historic Site of Conscience.” She indicated that any tree removal or excavation in the area risks the disruption of those graves and a desecration of the graveyard.
8. Finally, I am attaching a heat map generated based on open source data from the summer of 2017. Since then our city has lost in excess of 6,000 trees a year (8000 in both 2022 and 2023. As a result the heat islands, indicated on this map in red, have worsened not improved. If you take a look at Seine River-St Norbert you will see, in graphic terms, how the Lemay Forest significantly offsets heat island effect in that ward.



Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

Erna

Erna Buffie

181 Ethelbert St.

431-307-6990