Submission – Alexander Albert

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Mon, 03/24/2025 - 20:09

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
Council,
I am writing in support of the agenda item to expropriate Lemay Forest. It is imperative that the ecological, cultural, and historical significance of this land be preserved. The City of Winnipeg must not allow the destruction of this green space that is home to so much wildlife and so much history. Saving the Lemay Forest will demonstrate a commitment by the City of Winnipeg to protecting the environment as well as its commitment to honouring the history that has taken place here.
Thank you,
Alexander Albert

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Christine Albert

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 17:29

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
1

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I am writing in support of the agenda item to expropriate Lemay Forest. It is imperative that the ecological, cultural, and historical significance of this land be preserved. The City of Winnipeg must not allow the destruction of this green space that is home to so much wildlife and so much history. Saving the Lemay Forest will demonstrate a commitment by the City of Winnipeg to protecting the environment as well as its commitment to honouring the history that has taken place here.
Thank you,

Christine Albert

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Rachael Alguire

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 11:55

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission – Lila Asher

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 12:07

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No 1. Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
Lemay Forest is a site of cultural significance because children are buried there, and it's also an important wildlife corridor. Please support this motion to stop this land from being taken over by development. The City of Winnipeg has made commitments such as Winnipeg's Indigenous Accord and the Montreal Pledge for Biodiversity that ought to make taking action to protect Lemay Forest a natural choice. The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest is diverse and dedicated and has support from thousands of other Winnipeg residents (including me!). We are counting on you to make the right choice today!

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission – Michael Bagamery

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 11:31

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1: Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing
I support the expropriation of the Lemay Forest. It is one of the last intact river bottom forests in the City of Winnipeg, with great historic, cultural, and environmental significance.

Within the Lemay Forest is the abandoned Asile Cemetery of unmarked graves. There are over 3000 children of varying ancestry but overwhelmingly of low socioeconomic status buried here.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action 71-75 emphasize the need for the protection of Indigenous burial sites, reconciliation, and preserving sacred spaces like those in Lemay Forest.

These Calls urge the government to collaborate with Indigenous communities to preserve and protect burial sites as part of the healing process.

Additionally, some 700 impoverished mothers who died without support are buried in the Lemay Forest. It is not acceptable for a government to disturb the resting places of any persons, whether they were Indigenous or whether they or their recent ancestors came from another part of the world.

In addition to its cultural significance, Lemay Forest's trees and ecosystems provide vital environmental benefits to our city, including air quality regulation and wildlife habitat preservation. It is a key part of the lungs of Winnipeg. Diverse old-growth forests like Lemay Forest provide a much more complex, diverse range of services for all the species that use them, relative to young or monocultural forests: more habitats, more food sources, greater potentiality for carbon capture, and so on.

It is a nesting place for migratory birds, songbirds, birds of prey, and keystone species such as the protected pileated woodpecker (many species being protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty). It is also a wildlife corridor providing habitat and safe access for many wild species, importantly reptiles and amphibians.

Just 8 per cent of Winnipeg's land is covered by green space. Intact ecosystems provide for other species and for us in numerous ways. By comparison, 68 per cent of Oslo is green, as are 50 per cent of Vienna,

and almost half each of Sydney, Singapore, and Edinburgh. It would be far more sensible to build on a site that is already developed, especially by repurposing one or more buildings that have been abandoned.

We must ensure this sacred site and its ecosystems are safeguarded for future generations.

Public engagement (optional)
I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission – Evelyn Ball

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 22:35

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item #1 Expropriation and rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

MANITOBA ECO-NETWORK

302 – 583 Ellice Avenue Winnipeg, MB R3B 1Z7
Tel: 204-947-6511 www.mbeconetwork.org

March 26, 2025

City of Winnipeg Council

RE: Agenda– Council – March 27, 2025: Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Dear Winnipeg City Council:

I am writing this letter in support of the motion to expropriate and rezone the lands known as the LeMay Forest. I write this letter both as a resident of Winnipeg, but also in my capacity as Executive Director for Manitoba Eco-Network.

The LeMay Forest is a 22-acre parcel of ecologically significant lands. It an old growth forest, inside the Perimeter (in the St. Norbert area of Winnipeg), with more than 14,000 old growth trees. Ducks Unlimited reviewed this forest several years ago and called it a high conservation value forest.

It is also the site for at least 3,383 unmarked graves of primarily Indigenous children.

It is also an area of historical and cultural significance.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for Winnipeg to create a relatively low-cost legacy project that will benefit the entire City. Does Assiniboine Park only serve the West-side of Winnipeg? Or does it serve the entire province? I would suggest it is the latter.

I would suggest that LeMay even offers even more potential than Assiniboine Park. It can be a statement of Reconciliation.

If the land can be secured, there is a role for Indigenous governments, including the Manitoba Metis Federation, and First Nation organizations such as the Assembly of Manitoba Chief and Southern Chiefs Organization to manage these lands.

Expropriation and the rezoning of the lands is the only option right now. The Manitoba Habitat Conservancy offered to purchase the land for more than $5 million dollars in January 2025, but the developer stated on CJOB that he didn't even consider the offer.

Yours truly,

James Beddome

Executive Director, Manitoba Eco-Network

Submission – Irene Bohémier

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 22:30

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item number one expropriation and rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
It is important to preserve the Lemay Forest, a green space within our city for so many environmental considerations:
Protection of the ecosystem.
The flora and the fauna that resides within it.
Cleaner air/reduction of climate change.
A place to enjoy and rejuvenate.
Green spaces make our city more attractive and appealing.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Jodie Borle

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 11:01

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing
Comments
I am writing to express my strong support for the expropriation of Lemay Forest in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This area holds profound cultural, historical, and ecological significance that warrants immediate action to ensure its preservation.
Lemay Forest is home to the Asile Ritchot Cemetery, the final resting place for numerous infants and young children who died between 1904 and 1948. The cemetery is associated with the Asile Ritchot orphanage, a home for unwed mothers run by the Sisters of Misericordia during that period. Preserving this site is essential to honor and respect these individuals and their families.
Additionally, Lemay Forest has been a site for Indigenous ceremonial practices, including sweat lodge ceremonies, for over 30 years. Protecting this land aligns with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action 71-75, which emphasize the importance of safeguarding Indigenous burial sites and sacred spaces.
From an environmental perspective, Lemay Forest is a vital urban green space that supports biodiversity and provides essential ecosystem services. The area is known to be inhabited by species such as the pileated woodpecker, which is protected under the federal Migratory Birds Convention Act. Recent unauthorized tree cutting in the forest has raised concerns about compliance with federal species protection laws.
Given these factors, I urge the City of Winnipeg to proceed with the expropriation of Lemay Forest to protect its cultural heritage, uphold Indigenous rights, and preserve its ecological integrity. Establishing this area as a public park or protected space would demonstrate a commitment to reconciliation, environmental stewardship, and the well-being of future generations.
Thank you for considering this urgent matter.

Public engagement (optional)
I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Gabrielle Bouchard

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 20:31

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
No.1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
Chers conseillers,
Je crois que c'est une bonne idée de transformer la forêt dans un parc public parce qu'on ne va pas détruire l'habitat des animaux et c'est une bonne place à prendre l'air frais.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Vanessa Bouchard

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 20:26

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
No.1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I am writing to express my strong support for the rezoning of Lemay Forest to designated parkland. Lemay Forest is one of Winnipeg's last intact riparian forests, offering significant environmental, cultural, and historical value to our community.

Rezoning Lemay Forest aligns with Winnipeg's commitment to enhancing green spaces and promoting sustainable urban development.

I urge you to consider the long-term benefits of preserving Lemay Forest and to act in favor of rezoning this land to parkland. Doing so will ensure that this invaluable natural and cultural resource remains a cherished part of our city's heritage.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Diane Bousquet, Warming Souls with Soup

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Fri, 03/21/2025 - 11:14

Delegation information
Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
The Lemay forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Register as a delegation
In person

Submit comments in writing
Statement to Winnipeg City Hall: The Urgent Need to Protect Lemay Forest
Presented by: Diane Bousquet
Spirit Name: Shining Flowering Thunderbird Woman
Bear Clan, Métis Descent

Good morning, Mayor and Council Members,
My name is Diane Bousquet, my spirit name is Shining Flowering Thunderbird Woman. I am of the Bear Clan, a non-status Indigenous woman of Métis descent.
I stand here today carrying the voices of my ancestors, the wisdom of my elders, and the responsibility of speaking the truth—because for far too long, Indigenous voices have been ignored, silenced, and erased.
Lemay Forest is not just trees. It is not just land.
It is a burial ground.
It is a place of ceremony.
It is a place of memory.
It is sacred.
And today, it is under imminent threat of destruction.
The City of Winnipeg has a choice to make.
Will you stand with truth, with history, with justice?
Or will you stand with those who seek to erase all that remains?
The Sacred Significance of Lemay Forest
Do you hear the voices of the children in the wind?
Because they are here.
The trees hold their memories.
The soil cradles their bones.
3,383 children died here.
Over 700 mothers perished here.

They were not given dignity in life.
Will you deny them dignity in death?
For over 26 years, sweat lodges stood here, offering a space for healing, for prayer, for connection.
Now, those sweat lodges stand empty—silenced, erased, cleared away in the name of profit.
Developers have been allowed to move forward, not with consultation, not with respect, but with the same colonial violence that has scarred our people for generations.
This is not reconciliation. This is continued dispossession.
A History of Erasure
This is not new.
• The Canadian Museum for Human Rights was built on an ancient Indigenous burial ground.
• Indigenous cemeteries and sacred sites across this country have been paved over, turned into shopping malls, roads, and developments.
• Time and again, "progress" has come at the cost of Indigenous lives and memories.
But Lemay Forest does not have to be the next site of erasure.
This is your opportunity to break this cycle.
Legal and Ethical Responsibility
If this were a Christian cemetery, would we even be having this conversation?
Would the City stand by while developers desecrate the graves of settlers?
Under Canadian law:
• All activity on land suspected to contain human remains must cease immediately.
• Indigenous burial sites are to be protected and respected.
• Governments are legally and morally obligated to uphold the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
Yet here we are.
Fighting.
Begging for what should already be protected.
This is not just about Indigenous rights—this is about basic human dignity.
A Developer Who Profits Off Our Pain
The developer behind this project has chosen to:
• Shut down Indigenous ceremonies.
• Threaten trespassing charges against those who have always belonged here.
• Turn sacred sweat lodges into a pay-to-pray scheme, banning those who speak out.
• Weaponize lawsuits to silence the voices of those resisting destruction.
This is not reconciliation. This is exploitation.
The developer claims to support reconciliation while profiting off our ceremonies and silencing those who resist.
This is not someone who can be trusted to uphold Indigenous rights.
The City has a duty to intervene.
A Call to Action
We are not asking for favors. We are demanding justice.
• Immediately expropriate Lemay Forest and designate it as protected land.
• Ensure its permanent preservation and public accessibility.
• Recognize and protect the burial sites that lie beneath this land.
• Restore Indigenous ceremonial rights to this space.
• Listen to the voices of Indigenous peoples and act with integrity.
This is not just about Lemay Forest.
This is about who Winnipeg chooses to be.
Will you be the leaders who stand for truth and justice?

Or will you allow another sacred place to be destroyed—another chapter in the long history of Indigenous erasure?
The world is watching.
The spirits are watching.
We will not be silent.
The time to act is now.
Thank you.

Public engagement (optional)
I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission – Solange Bouvier

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Mon, 03/24/2025 - 19:17

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
The Lemay Forest in St Norbert is not just some unused piece of land. It is home to healing ceremonies, and where women and children have been laid to rest. It is home to wildlife and trees that all deserve to be treated with respect. As we see animals all over Winnipeg moving more and more into populated areas and ending up hit by cars this is one of the last safe places away from traffic and heavily populated neighbourhoods that we can offer to them. We need to preserve this scared place. I used to play in this forest as a child and it was a beautiful safe place to play and be in nature. Children these days are being offered less and less chances to just be kids and play in nature. Please think back to a place where you felt safe and blessed when you were a child and how you would feel if this was going to be taken away just for another building. I ask you to please protect the land. Once it is gone, we cannot get it back. Thank you for your time.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Brown, L.

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 10:13

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
1. Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I am in full support of the expropriation and rezoning of Lemay forest. There's no other way. It must be saved and deemed a heritage site.

Submission – Terrance Bruce

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 15:33

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
No. 1 expropriation and rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I am in support of stopping the development of the Lemay Forest.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission: Angela Brydges

To the esteemed City Hall Councillors of Winnipeg,

We stand before you today not just as residents, but as members of a community deeply connected to the land we call home. We implore you to consider the profound emotional weight of the ongoing situation at Lemay Forest and choose a path guided by compassion and a commitment to our shared values.

The story of Lemay Forest is not simply one of a proposed development on a privately owned lot. It is a story woven with threads of ecological significance, historical importance, and the enduring spirit of our community. This forest, one of our city's last intact riparian areas, is a sanctuary for wildlife and a vital green space that contributes to the air we breathe. To disturb it would be to lose a piece of Winnipeg's natural heart.

Beyond its ecological value, Lemay Forest holds a history resonating deeply within our community, particularly for the Métis people. This land, once part of the traditional river lot system, witnessed the very foundations of our province. Adjacent to it stood the Asile Ritchot orphanage, a place where hundreds of vulnerable children, including a significant number of Métis children, tragically lost their lives. The belief that many of these children lie in unmarked graves within Lemay Forest casts a solemn shadow over this land, demanding our respect and remembrance.

Development on this site disregards this profound history and the potential resting place of these children. It would be a decision that echoes the painful legacy of the past and undermines our commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. The proposed development raises serious concerns about the violation of human rights, the trampling of Indigenous rights under UNDRIP, and a stark disregard for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, particularly those concerning the commemoration and protection of burial sites [17, 22, 16, 21, 19, 8, 2, 33, 24, 27, 34, 13, 36, 37, 38, 39, 20, 29, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 41, 64, 70]. Furthermore, proceeding with this development could be seen as a deep offense to the treaties and the ongoing journey of reconciliation with the Métis Nation.

The community has spoken with a unified voice, forming the Coalition to Save Lemay Forest to advocate for this cherished space. Their efforts, born from a deep love for this land, reflect the collective desire to protect it for future generations.

We understand the complexities of this decision, the considerations of private property rights, and the need for development within our city. However, in this unique case, the emotional and ethical imperatives for preservation far outweigh the purely economic interests.

Therefore, we respectfully and earnestly plead with you, our City Hall Councillors, to choose a

path that honors the profound significance of Lemay Forest. We urge you to vote in favor of expropriation, embrace the opportunity to protect this vital green space, acknowledge its sensitive history, and demonstrate your commitment to reconciliation and the well-being of our entire community. Let your decision reflect the heart and soul of Winnipeg, a city that values its natural heritage and people above all else.

Submission – Wendy Buelow

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)
Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 21:14

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing
Comments
Dear Mayor and Council, I support the motion to rezone and expropriate the Lemay Forest land. It has a rich ecological value, and an immense cultural and historic value, not just for St. Norbert but for all Manitobans. It should not be in private hands.
Of huge importance is the information of over 3000 babies and children buried in this land. The little ones are of various ancestry, Metis, Indigenous, European, as well as some of their mothers who would be buried here also. The whole forest should remain intact out of respect for the graves, and because of The Cemeteries Act in Manitoba.
The Lemay Forest has been used by First Nations and Metis people for ceremony for years. The sweat lodges within were active until the chain saws started up. Currently there is a sacred fire beside an entrance to the land, Firekeepers have kept vigil since late December, through the bitter cold months, never leaving the fire unattended. This forest should be protected to honour our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.
The City of Winnipeg has formally signed on to international goals for preserving biodiversity. We are required to protect 30 per cent of the lands and waters by 2030. As well, the City is supposed to be adding more greenspace and park areas, 1000 acres. This proposed Lemay park area fits beautifully into the plan.
Plant life and wildlife within the forest must be protected too. For example, the Pileated Woodpeckers nest in the trees, and they are federally protected animals. On March 8, International Women's Day, we walked around the land on the publicly approved dike area. A Great Grey Owl sat on a nearby branch in the forest, and watched us as we all went by, a special moment. Their nesting season has begun, and we should honour and protect them too. Please see the attached photo.
The City of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba must designate the Lemay Forest as a heritage site to begin the process of making it a protected public park. Thank you.

Submission for a committee of council
2025_03-08 Owl Lemay.jpg

Public engagement (optional)
I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes





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.

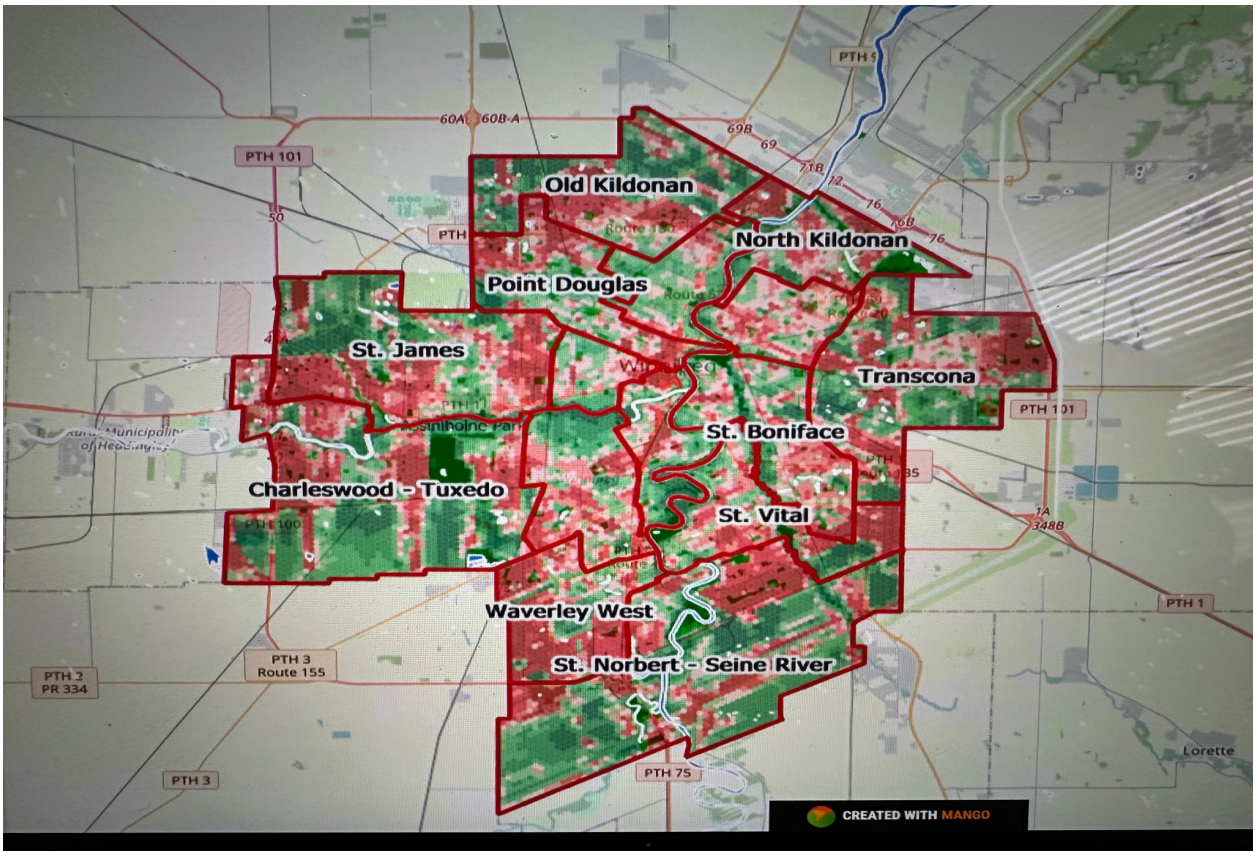
4. **Council voted to sign the Montreal Biodiversity Pledge**. To honour that pledge the city has promised to ensure that biodiversity hotspots and key wildlife corridor links like the Lemay are preserved.

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

Dear Council,

Please preserve Lemay Forest. All of us, especially future generations, need access to undeveloped nature.

We need more natural spaces in and around our city. These spaces do not need to be manicured parks with planted and cut lawns, flower gardens and pruned trees. Simple gravel trails through a bit of the natural area is enough. It's actual nature we need - to see where the endangered pileated woodpecker nests, to see the trails and tracks the deer, the beaver and the foxes leave, to hear the bird calls and smell the fresh leaves of spring. Spaces where we can breathe and see undergrowth and berries and trees grow and be home to all creatures.

Aside from the above important argument for a healthier city and population, the Lemay Forest is the location of the abandoned Asile Cemetery of unmarked graves. Anecdotal stories suggest unmarked graves also exist outside the formal boundaries of the Asile Cemetery. The whole forest should remain intact out of respect for the graves, and because of The Cemeteries Act in Manitoba, as well as operating in the spirit of the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Also, in the spirit of the TRC Calls to Action, the Lemay Forest has been used by First Nations and Metis people for ceremony for over 30 years. The forest should be preserved and ceremony must be allowed to continue.

The City of Winnipeg, the province of Manitoba and the federal government have all formally signed on to international goals for preserving biodiversity. We’re required to protect 30 per cent of the lands and waters by 2030. Protecting Lemay Forest is part of our international commitment.

For many, many reasons, including multiple rejections of the Developers' plans, the Lemay Forest must be protected and preserved for people and biodiversity.

Sincerely,

Angela Chotka Clark

Submission – Jean Clipsham

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing

I am writing to urge Winnipeg City council to vote to expropriate the lands known as LeMay forest for the following reasons:

*The Asile Ritchot orphanage and home for unwed mothers was situated on the lands of the forest and records show that over 3000 children died while at the orphanage and they were buried in the lands around the orphanage. It is also believed that 700 mothers died there and are also buried on those lands.

We in Winnipeg understand that human remains are sacred and must be protected and honoured. And expropriating this land could be an act of Reconciliation by the City.

* The LeMay forest is a riparian forest that contains original growth and is a habitat of protected species. We know that natural spaces are extremely important for human health and well-being. Only 8% of

Winnipeg is natural space and we, as a City, need to do whatever we can to preserve any spaces that are left.

* As a concerned citizen I have been disappointed by the lack of action on mitigating and adapting to climate change by the City of Winnipeg. It is time to start taking action so that Winnipeg will demonstrate that we are concerned about the health and well-being of future generations

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.

Yes

Esteemed members of City Council,

I am writing to express my concern around the protection of Lemay Forest.

This area is home to a healthy, natural environment which has great benefits to human life. Being in nature reduces stress and promotes good health, trees clean our air, cool our temperatures. They provide homes for many different species, and it is important species seen in Lemay Forest are protected under the Migratory Bird Convention and the Canadian Endangered Species Act. Maintaining this biodiversity is more critical than ever for humanity's future given the challenge that we are facing with increasing severe weather events and extremes. Once lost, all these benefits cannot be restored.

Importantly, the Lemay Forest area was the site of Asile Richtot from 1904-1948, an orphanage and young mother's home. The archives of the Société historique de St Boniface have documentation from a survey done in the 1970s that shows the location of a cemetery where children who died during their time at the orphanage were buried, including Métis and possibly Indigenous children whose mothers came from residential school. There is a claim that the cemetery was closed, and the graves moved in the 1950s, however the Catholic diocese of St Boniface, responsible for the orphanage and its cemetery, confirms that they have no record of the de-consecration of the site at Lemay Forest. St Boniface cemetery has no record that the graves were moved from Lemay Forest to the St Boniface cemetery. So further consultation with the community and expert archeologists is needed before the site is disturbed by development. Careful and rigorous examination to gain a better understanding of how many children or other people are buried, where they are buried, and how they lived is our duty to preserve history and advance reconciliation.

For these reasons I urge you to vote for the expropriation of this land from Memaz Incorporated, to keep it protected from development for the benefit of current and future citizens of Winnipeg.

Thank you

Marianne Clipsham

Winnipeg

Submission – Nicole Desautels

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 16:38

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing

The Lemay Forest holds deep historical and cultural significance, particularly for Indigenous communities. It is not just a green space—it is sacred ground, intertwined with the histories of Indigenous peoples ancestors, the legacy of colonial violence, and the responsibility of truth and reconciliation. The calls to expropriate, rezone and protect this land are about more than conservation; they are about respecting burial sites, upholding Indigenous rights, and preventing further erasure of our history. The Lemay Forest is the location of the abandoned Asile Cemetery of unmarked graves. Anecdotal stories suggest unmarked graves also exist outside the formal boundaries of the Asile Cemetery, between 1904 and 1948, 3383 children have died at the orphanage. The whole forest should remain intact out of respect for their graves, and because of The Cemeteries Act in Manitoba.
The developers' plans for the property were rejected by the city. Despite this, the developer is choosing to cut the trees down, and we need that to stop.
Several levels of government have submitted a generous offer to purchase the property in order to make it into a public park.
The developer and owner ignored a federal wildlife officer's request for a pileated woodpecker cavity sweep ahead of tree cutting, thus seemingly not adhering to Federal species regulation.
In media interviews, the developer seemingly dismissed the need to comply with Federal species law and dismissed efforts by all levels of government to preserve this forest.
The City of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba must designate the Lemay Forest as a heritage site to begin the process of making it a protected public park.
The Lemay Forest has been used by First Nations and Metis people for ceremony for years. The forest should be preserved and ceremony must be allowed to continue.
The City of Winnipeg, the province of Manitoba and the federal government have all formally signed on to international goals for preserving biodiversity. We’re required to protect 30 per cent of the lands and waters by 2030. Protecting Lemay Forest is part of our international commitment.

Public engagement (optional)
I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Linda Dietrick

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 15:34

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Expropriation and rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
The reasons are compelling: it's a burial site, it's old-growth forest, it's pileated woodpecker habitat, and Winnipeg needs to preserve and expand its greenspace and treed areas for all the reasons in your own Urban Forest Strategy and your own commitment to the Montreal biodiversity pledge.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – John Dobson

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Mon, 03/24/2025 - 16:18

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I strongly support the motion for the expropriation and rezoning of the Lemay Forest. The owners have offered no plausible explanation for the removal of trees since being denied a permit to build for a housing development on the land, and their actions appear to be a brazen attempt to force Council's hand by making the ecological and other objections to clearing of the land moot. If such extortionistic tactics are allowed to prevail, they will set a dangerous precedent.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Georgette Dupuis

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Sun, 03/23/2025 - 19:54

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
The agenda number and title is: Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I believe we need to protect the Lemay Forest to help keep our City greener to help offset the pollution created daily by the use of car, industries etc. Forests take a long time to grow and we need to protect all green space as we as Manitobans have already clear cut too many trees. We know better now so that does not make sense to allow this to happen again and again moving forward. There are also many species who call this forest home and they need us to protect them from clear cutting this forest. There is also some land that was used as a cemetery. We need to respect those who have pass on and who's remains are in that Forest. Please vote to expropriation and rezone of Lemay Forest.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Emma Durand-Wood

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 10:35

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
Dear members of Winnipeg City Council:

I fully support of the city acquiring the land known as Lemay Forest in order for it to become public park or natural space. From every possible perspective, preserving this forest is the only sensible and just decision. Allowing it to be razed for yet another greenfield development would be both ecologically and financially disastrous for the city, and not at all in keeping with Winnipeg moving forward in its journey of reconciliation.

Sincerely,
Emma Durand-Wood

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Robin Dyck

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
1. Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
To Winnipeg City Council.

I am in support of expropriating and rezoning the Lemay forest. I don't know the entire story of this land, but keeping it as a historic and cultural site will obviously be a significant action towards not only reconciliation and fostering good relations with Indigenous peoples, but also a step in the right direction for climate action. I have a 4 year old kiddo, and a lot of our time, even in the cold, long winter, is being outside. We walk along the Seine River Parkway, we go to Lagimodier-Gaboury and Whittier parks. We snowshoe and bike and bird watch. It is so important for everyone to spend time outside and enjoy nature. It is part of our daily routine. Without these spaces in our city, we would consider moving. Our tree canopy is so important. Every year we see trees that have to be cut down due to disease. Why are we cutting them down now for no reason. Because one developer/owner is stubborn and wants to make a point to the detriment of an entire community/city/province.

This seems to have been a missed opportunity by the city. This site should have been protected long ago, and because of that lack of vision and lack of proactive steps, council now faces an acute challenge. It is time to admit the mistakes, learn the lesson and start in the right direction by protecting this land. The owner will be reimbursed for hopefully just what he paid. Taxpayers may be angry, but that is a potential consequence and accountability that council members face every day and with every decision they make.

Public engagement (optional)
I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission in favour of

Standing Committee on Property and Development

Notice of Motion

Expropriation and rezoning of Lemay Forest

I strongly encourage the Council to approve this motion to save the Lemay Forest.

Mature forests are extraordinarily valuable and rare in Winnipeg.

A forest provides both “lungs” for the neighbourhood and a particularly valuable green space for citizens in the area.

I live near the Assiniboine forest, and I visit it more than 100 times a year; each time I am thankful for the foresight of the people who stopped the forest from being converted into another residential area. It is a popular place, there are always many dog walkers, families, retired people, joggers, cyclists, and walkers enjoying a peaceful and green – or white -- moment in the forest.

The Assiniboine forest plays an important role for thousands of Winnipeggers in River Heights, Tuxedo and Charleswood. The Lemay forest should do the same for thousands of people in the south of the city.

It would be an irrecoverable waste of a valuable resource to knock down this forest to make room for buildings and cars. Building housing is important, but building housing should not be a reason to destroy an important natural resource.

Please do the right thing for the Lemay Forest by setting it aside as a park, and help the developer build a successful project elsewhere.

Charles Feaver

Submission – Lucien Gagnon

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 20:26

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing
Comments
The sacredness, historical and ecological aspects of the Lemay Forest need your protection. There is so much history buried in this land so do not allow it to be concreted over. This land was once owned by Louis Riel's main advisor, Noel Ritchot. He was also the lead of three delegates sent to Ottawa to negotiate the list of 20 provisions drafted by the Louis Riel led provisional government. These negotiated provisions are what led our province to enter confederation as the 5th province of Canada.
On the west end of the forest, Noel Ritchot started an Orphanage which he later donated to the Sisters of Mercy. They named the Orphanage Asile Ritchot. It sheltered individuals without proper supports, including orphans, single expectant girls and women, as well as single mothers. An analysis of the admission registry reported a total of 3,383 deaths associated with the institution. The location of the burials is not recorded as many were buried in mass graves and outside of the cemetery boundaries further east into the forest. The land is a burial ground and very sacred. For decades Indigenous groups have held sacred ceremonies and sweat lodges in the forest, allowing the spirits of the deceased to rest in peace. You need to recognize Truth and Reconciliation and help with the healing process. Every child matters!
The Lemay Forest is also very special. You can't simply plant trees to get what this forest gives. It takes a century or so of caring for nature to create a place like this. Cutting down trees when the property is landlocked and un-developable is not only immoral but a threat to climate resilience and sustainability. This should not be allowed to happen. It is time to start the expropriation process as the owner has already rejected generous offers for the land. I ask council to vote in favor of expropriation.

Submission: Cat Gauthier

March 27 Council Meeting

Agenda Item : Lemay Forest

We urge you to protect the Lemay Forest by whatever means are available.

- For the 3383 babies and young children buried in the Asile Ritchot Cemetery
- For the many more to be found
- For the decades of Healing and Ceremony in Lemay Forest
- For the land and everything it offers us
- For the forest and the creatures who need it
- For the federally protected and species at risk
- For your commitments to protect biodiversity
- For your commitment to truth and reconciliation
- For your commitment to protect greenspace for a growing population
- For your commitment a healthy, sustainable, livable city
- For a better future for all our relatives

Deforestation of a 22 acre forest is not just an environmental issue. It is a cultural and human rights issue.

Submission – Lorraine Gauthier

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 06:23

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I would like to support Exproriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forset. We must work together to save the Lemay Forest in St. Norbert to allow it to continue sharing its many treasures with everyone. With so few natural greenspaces left around us, it is extremely important to preserve even the smallest spaces to ensure that future generations can experience the many important benefits of nature. What is lost can never be replaced.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

March 26, 2025

Dear Winnipeg City Council
Re: Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Greetings! My name is Ariel Gordon. I'm a Wolseley resident and my background is in science and journalism.

Over the past five years I've written two essay collections about Winnipeg's urban ecosystem, Treed: Walking in Canada's Urban Forest (2019) and Fungal: Foraging in the Urban Forest (2024), both published by Hamilton's Wolsak & Wynn.

So: I've spent more than two decades writing about Winnipeg's urban forest and walking in its green spaces.

I've led dozens of urban forest walks in Assiniboine Forest, Munson Park, and Omand's Creek, introducing Winnipeggers to their trees, doing public education.

And one of my favourite things is going for a walk in one of our parks or along our tree-lined streets. My favourite is the Wolseley / Wellington loop but I have spent many joyful hours on the trails along Bunn's Creek and on the Harte Trail.

Based on the city's own Urban Forest Strategy, released in 2023, we know that the urban forest doesn't just provide pleasure and comfort to residents, it delivers real, quantifiable ecosystem services including:

Carbon storage and sequestration, avoiding surface runoff, reducing energy-related costs (specifically cooling on very hot days), pollution removal, and oxygen production.

The annual functional value of Winnipeg's urban forest is $53.68 million.

They've also arrived at a compensatory value of the urban forest, which is to say, the estimated cost to replace each tree in Winnipeg's Urban Forest with a similarly-sized tree, is $3.31 billion.

Municipalities across the country now consider the urban forest infrastructure. What's more, it's the only piece of infrastructure in the city that doesn't depreciate. As trees age, they provide more services, not less!

Winnipeg's urban forest and the ecosystem services it provides are the envy of our prairie neighbours: 17% canopy cover versus 9% in Saskatoon and 8% in Calgary.

In the Urban Forest Strategy, adopted by City council, it sets out a goal of increasing our canopy cover to 24%.

To put that in context, Nature Canada's definitive 2022 report on urban forest equity recommends 30% for Canadian municipalities.

But our urban forest is at risk: our elms are falling to Dutch elm, our ashes are being infested with the Emerald Ash Borer and the Cottony ash psyllid, and our oaks are succumbing to the effects of climate changed weather at an alarming rate.

To put it bluntly: we will not reach our canopy cover targets if we allow developers to remove the 19,000 trees in the Lemay Forest for an enormous nursing home.

In the two years since the Urban Forest Strategy was completed and accepted by council as a way forward, Urban Forestry planted 6,067 (2023) and 6,484 trees (2024), which is a great improvement over the 2,000 it was planting in the early part of this decade.

But it also removed 5,945 (2,757 due to DED, including my boulevard elm) and 6,508 trees (3,028 due to DED) on boulevards and in parks.

We won't get to 24% canopy cover at this rate and we certainly can't replace 19,000 trees. That's three years worth of planting!

All of which to say: this isn't a St. Norbert issue. This isn't just important for those residents living near the forest, who love to walk there and witness the flora and fauna who live there.

It's a city-wide issue. I live in Wolseley and the Lemay Forest, at risk of removal, are part of my urban forest.

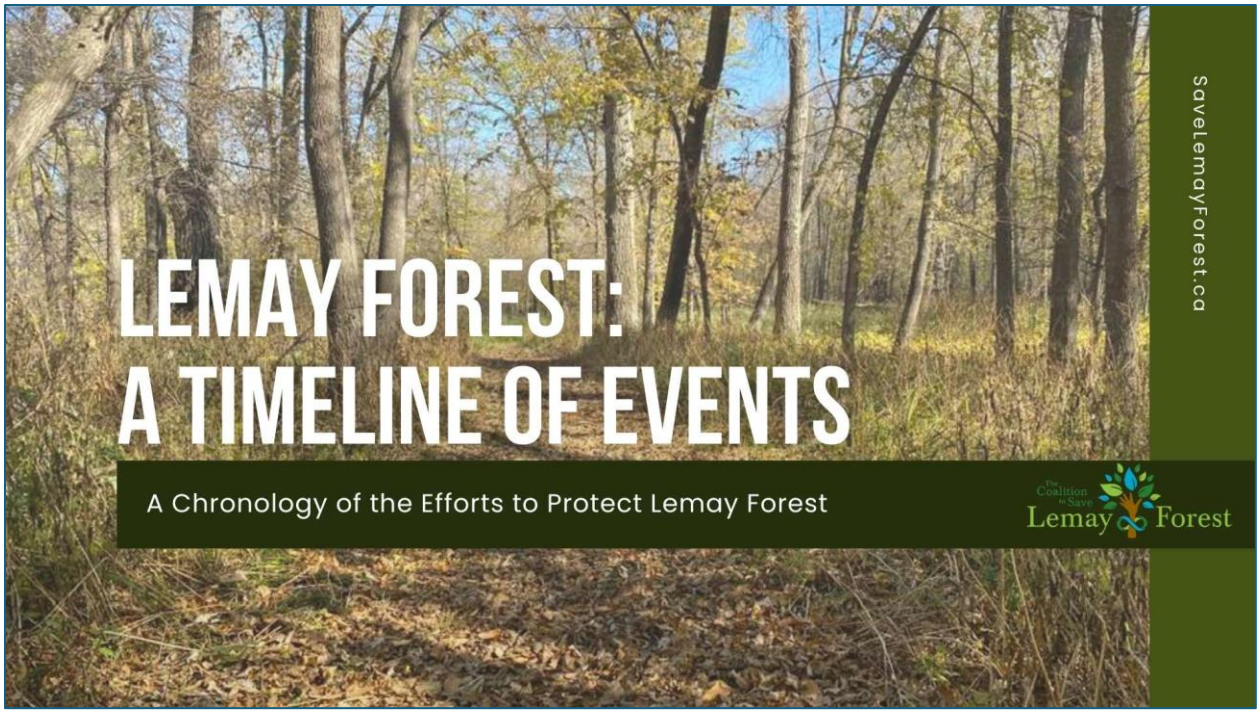
I'm currently working on a third essay collection called *Stumped: Grieving in the Urban Forest*, slated to be published in fall 2026. This collection revolves around the loss of my 112-year-old boulevard elm, but it asks the question:

Why are trees so good for cities? Why are cities so bad for trees?

I'm writing on the threat to the Lemay Forest for *Stumped*. I'm hopeful that the story I tell won't be one where one developer's profit-driven scheme won't trump the public good.

My name is Ariel Gordon. I am in support of the expropriation and rezoning of the Lemay Forest.

Submission: Stacy Gosman





INITIAL PURCHASE AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT PLANS

November 7, 2017

- Mr. Yahyapour purchases the privately owned 22.5 acre land known as Lemay Forest for $1,537,000.

December 19, 2019

- 10049772 Manitoba Inc. purchases residential lot 823 Lemay Ave for $345,000. This house backs on to Lemay Forest.

April 2020

- Landmark Planning (hired by the developer) hosts a community meeting.

The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest

EARLY ADVOCACY

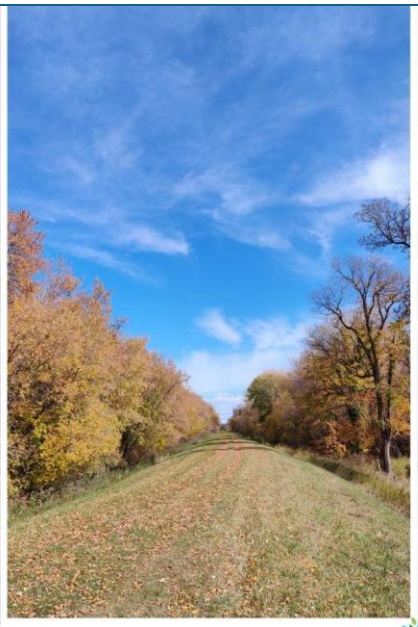
March 2020

- The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest is formed.

October 2021

- Landmark Planning removes the Lemay Forest project from their website.

At this point any updates from the landowner or any hired developers goes quiet.



The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest

2023: DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL RESURFACES



August

- The developer submits a proposal for a 2500-unit, 5000-bed assisted living facility, despite a city report saying no policy exists to support such a large-scale development.



October

- Mr. Yahyapour states his interest in selling the land via Mr. Wintrup.
- Residents receive the first of many letters from Tochal Developments Group Inc. (Mr. Wintrup).

December 1

- No trespassing signs are erected at Lemay Forest.

The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest

KEY DATES IN LATE 2023

Coalition actions

November

- An online petition is launched.
- The first in person meeting of the Coalition in its current form takes place.
- Coalition members hold their first in person meetings with elected officials.

December

- GoFundMe is launched with a goal of $5000 (almost double has been raised to date).
- First steps are taken to become a grassroots non-profit.

Government actions

November

- The motion to purchase Lemay Forest is heard by The Riel Community Committee on November 16 and passes with amendments.
- The same motion is heard by The Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development on November 22 and is held over to the next meeting (a decision is made January 2024).





The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest

2024: ACTIVITY RAMPS UP

January 6

- Tochal Developments Group Inc. (Mr. Wintrup) hosts an open house.

February 2

- The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest officially becomes a non-profit.

March

- Funding is secured to acquire the Lemay Forest land. An offer for fair market value $2,925,000 was made by MHC based on an independent credible appraisal. The offer was not accepted.

April 5

- Easement agreement with the City of Winnipeg is signed for access across city owned at Av. Landry and Rue de la Digue.

May

- An open letter is written by the Coalition to ask Mr. Yahyapour to work together to find a solution that works for everyone.

Summer

- A physical petition is started including a door-knocking campaign and a postcard mailer (over 1200 signatures have been collected).
- The Coalition attends community events including the Winnipeg 150 Celebration in St. Norbert.



SaveLemayForest.ca

The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest

2024: CIVIC AND MUNICIPAL DECISION SUMMARY



Demolition permit for 823 Lemay Ave

The developer applies for a demolition permit of an occupied house to create access to the land-locked Lemay Forest.

- **March 21:** The permit is rejected.
- **May 3:** The decision to deny the demolition permit is upheld during an appeal at the Riel Community Committee.



Subdivision and rezoning application DASZ 9/2024

DASZ is heard and rejected on the following dates:

- **September 6:** Riel Community Committee.
- **September 13:** The Standing Policy Committee.
- **September 17:** The Executive Policy Committee.
- **September 26:** Full Winnipeg City Council.



Municipal Board of Manitoba

The developer applies to the Municipal Board regarding the "Validity of Appeal for Missed Timelines re: DASZ 9/2024.

- **July 12:** Appeal is filed.
- **September 12:** Preliminary hearing takes place.
- **October 8:** Municipal Board rules that appeal is not valid.

The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest

TREE REMOVAL IN LATE 2024



September

- The developer enters land and starts forest removal.
- The City of Winnipeg issues a cease and desist.



October

- The City of Winnipeg issues a tree cutting permit.



December 23-27

- The developer enters Lemay Forest via neighbouring private property and destroys one acre of forest.

The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest

A SACRED FIRE IS LIT AND IS UNDER IMMEDIATE THREAT

December 27-31, 2024

- An elder lights and blesses a sacred fire on city owned land.
- The developer calls police saying there is a blockade.
- Police come – eight officers, no indigenous liaison, no female officers, no indigenous officers.
- The developer announces through the media that he is filing an injunction to have the blockade removed.

January 6, 2025

- Judge Sarah Inness extends the injunction, however says sacred fire can stay and did not approve the developer's request to order the protesters to leave the sacred fire as long as it isn't a blockade.

January 8, 2025

- The landowner's lawyer sends a letter to Coalition members and others on January 7 that the Lemay Forest will be accessed at 9:30 am.
- Sacred Firekeepers and Elders along with supporters move the firewood pile, tables, equipment, and black truck to create 24 foot clearing for equipment to pass.
- Developer arrives in truck with bobcat on trailer. Protestors block the entrance saying they are waiting for police.





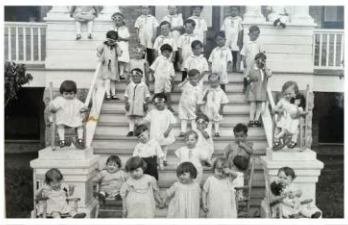
The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest

2025: MORE INFORMATION COMES TO LIGHT AND SUPPORT GROWS



The Wilderness Committee

- **January 8/9:** The Wilderness Committee's "Winnipeg forest razed despite federal species protection laws" press release raises alarm about the protections of the Pileated Woodpecker.
- Grow Nature in Our Neighbourhoods campaign to pressure the Mayor and Premier to designate the Lemay Forest a Heritage Site.
- **February 14:** A fundraiser is launched.



Manitoba Historical Society, Heritage Winnipeg, and The Manitoba Archeological Society

- **January 9:** A joint press release calls for "The Invocation of Manitoba Laws to Stop the Ongoing Deforestation and Disturbance of the Lemay Forest, a significant natural and cultural site."



St. Boniface Historical Society/Société historique de Saint-Boniface

- **February 4:** The SHSB sheds light on the forgotten history of the Ritchot Asylum cemetery through a press release.

The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest

2025: INCREASED PRESSURE FOR PROTECTION



January

- **January 3:** An offer to purchase for $5.25 million dollars by MHC is extended and ultimately rejected, but not before the developer destroys more forest.
- **January 13:** Councillor Wyatt introduces a motion for consideration and verbal report to rezone and assemble the lands at The Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development. This motion is laid over until March.
- January 8: A private Prosecution is filed against the developer and planner for violating the Cemeteries Act (Section 35).

February

- **January 11-13:** The Municipal Board hearing heard the appeal of the city's rejection of the subdivision and rezoning application.
- Several concerned citizens and advocates speak in support of Lemay Forest.
- **February 13:** The Save Lemay Forest: A 100 Days of Creativity Campaign is launched on Social Media.

March 1

- **March 1:** A community art build is held to celebrate five years of the Coaltion.
- **March 6:** The Standing Policy Committee approves a motion to work with stakeholders to assemble and rezone the Lemay Forest lands.
- **March 8:** The Firekeepers of Lemay Forest led a pipe ceremony and a walk for International Women's Day.
- **March 15:** A Town Hall to Save Lemay Forest is held - Awasak Ayahsig Sakahk (Children of the Forest).

The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest

NEXT STEPS: IMPORTANT DATES

- **March 22:** A walk/rally from the CMHR to the Legislative Building.
- **March 27:** Winnipeg City Council is set to hear a motion for expropriation of the Lemay Forest lands.

  This date will mark three months since the sacred fire was lit.
- **April:** Ms. May's private prosecution against the landowner and developer alleging contravention of *The Cemeteries Act* is set to be heard.
- **April:** A motion from the Standing Policy Committee directing the City of Winnipeg to work with stakeholders to assemble the Lemay Forest lands has been laid over at the EPC.
- **April 13:** The Municipal Board of Manitoba has until this date to release their decision.



Submission – Ken Harasym

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 10:15

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
The Council of Canadians Winnipeg chapter urges you to approve the expropriation of the Lemay Forest in recognition of its deep historical and cultural significance.

The forest is home to the abandoned Asile Ritchot Cemetery, where 3383 children tragically died between 1904 and 1948, with many buried in unmarked graves. Preserving the entire forest out of respect for these graves is a moral imperative.

I urge you to consider the lessons we've learned from the tragic and ongoing struggle surrounding the search for the remains of missing and murdered Indigenous women (MMIW), particularly the controversy involving the Prairie Green Landfill. In that case, the previous provincial government, under Premier Heather Stefanson, was initially slow to commit to funding the search for the remains of Indigenous women who were believed to be buried in that landfill. Their hesitation was criticized as a failure to act swiftly and with the respect and care that the families of those women deserved.

Similarly, we now face a critical moment where the City of Winnipeg has the opportunity to make a choice. Will we take action to properly honour the graves of these orphaned children, or will we repeat the mistakes of neglect and inaction that have plagued Indigenous families for years? The failure to act in a timely and respectful manner when it comes to the land where these children are buried could be seen as a continuation of the historical indifference shown to marginalized communities.

Furthermore, the Lemay Forest has long served as an important site for First Nations and Métis ceremonies, and it is essential that this tradition continues. The cultural and spiritual importance of the land cannot be understated, and its preservation ensures that future generations can honour these practices.

As citizens concerned with corporate greed and the increasing influence of developers, we must support efforts to protect spaces like the Lemay Forest. It is a clear example of how we can stand against forces that prioritize profit over the well-being of our communities and our shared heritage. In a time when corporate interests threaten the preservation of our natural and cultural landmarks, it is crucial that we take action to protect public spaces like the Lemay Forest for the people of Winnipeg.

By supporting the expropriation of this land, we have the chance to correct a past wrong and send a strong message that the city is committed to justice, remembrance, and healing. I encourage you to consider how this decision reflects our collective values, and how it can help us move forward with integrity, learning from past mistakes.

For these reasons, we urge the City of Winnipeg to immediately expropriate all of the privately held lands known as the Lemay Forest, work to designate the Lemay Forest as a heritage site and to take the necessary steps to ensure it becomes a protected public park.

Public engagement (optional)
I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission – Robert Ian Histed, Lawyer, Downtown Legal Action

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Mon, 03/24/2025 - 18:31

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
The land needs to be expropriated and set aside as a park. It is utterly indecent to permit condominiums to be erected on the final resting place of children.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission – Cheryl Hodgson

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 12:22

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Report of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development Dated March 6, 2025 Item #2

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing
I am writing to ask Council to protect Lemay Forest for memorialization and ecological preservation.
The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest has been fighting to save this property for five years.
Together with Indigenous leaders, the community has written to councillors, presented and submitted numerous letters to various committee meetings, tended a sacred fire, organized a town hall, and held a march, all under the threat of lawsuits by the developer and his representatives. This shows how important this property is to the community and it should be protected for it's environmental and historical significance, and to honour the 3300+ children believed to be buried on the property in mass graves.
The Lemay Forest is a grade A biodiverse forest with old growth trees that provide habitat for threatened species. It can't be replaced once it is gone. There will be many new housing developments created in Winnipeg, but there will never be a new forest created in the city. The current owner's plan to create an assisted living facility on this property, when there is already a surplus of such units in Winnipeg, will do nothing to alleviate the affordable housing challenges.
Acquiring this property as a public preserve will align with the Winnipeg Parks Strategy, the Montreal Pledge, and allow all Winnipeggers to discover and enjoy the beauty and history of Lemay Forest now and in the future. I believe it could also be a valuable educational opportunity to bring cultures together.
I truly hope that this motion is passed and this valuable resource can be protected.

Thank you,
Cheryl Hodgson

Public engagement (optional)
I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission – Alyssa Hourie

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 10:33

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Executive Policy Committee

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
1 expropriation and rezoning of lemay forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I support the protection of the Lemay forest. Winnipeg's green spaces are disappearing. Our beautiful land was one home to creeks and streams that cut through the city, native prairie grasses, and wildlife like bisons. We have lost so much. How much more must we lose? This forest provides habitats for a variety of important species. The destruction of wild habitats is a major threat to our animals relatives. If you believe in reconciliation you will not destroy this important habitat for many.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission – Tracy Hucul

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Mon, 03/24/2025 - 21:58

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Notice of Motion - item #1 - expropriation and rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
Dear Mayor and Councillors,

I am in support of the expropriation of the privately held lands known as the Lemay Forest, as presented in the motion to Council. The forest should be protected and remain intact as a natural space that can continue to be a home to wildlife in the city and a greenspace to be enjoyed by residents and visitors. It is one of Winnipeg's last remaining intact riparian forests and is critical to helping build climate resiliency.

Submission – Dennis Kachur

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 12:31

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Report of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development Dated March 6, 2025 Item #2

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
As a resident of St. Norbert, I am writing to ask Council to protect Lemay Forest for memorialization and ecological preservation.
This valuable ecosystem offers a great opportunity for the City of Winnipeg to protect biodiversity. I believe that protecting the property would align with the efforts of the Urban Forest Strategy, Park Strategy, and the Montreal Pledge. But there are also other reasons to protect this land – the staggering number of children that are likely still buried there and the land's historical and cultural significance.
I hope that this motion is passed by Council and the City of Winnipeg is successful in protecting this valuable resource.

Thank you,
Dennis Kachur

Public engagement (optional)
I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Social Planning Council *of Winnipeg*
est. 1919
432 Ellice Ave, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 1Y4
Telephone: (204) 943-2561 | Fax: (204) 942-3221
E-mail: **info@spcw.mb.ca** | Website: **www.spcw.mb.ca**

March 26th, 2025

Mayor Gillingham,
Members of Council
City of Winnipeg

Re.: Preserving Lemay Forest

Dear Mayor and Council:

The Lemay Forest is important culturally, historically, environmentally, and a place where people come together to spend time on the land. The impact of losing the Lemay Forest would be profound:

1) There are potential human remains from a cemetery of the Aslie Ritchot;
2) It is the likely home of a protected species;
3) It is a riparian Forest.

The Asile Ritchot orphanage operated between 1904 to 1948 by the Soeurs de Misericorde to house the infants of unwed mothers and poor families.[1] According to preliminary quantitative analysis there are 3,383 deaths associated with Asile Ritchot, including at least 31 identified as Metis.[1] Historical records indicate that there was a cemetery on the land, and two burial records show that 726 children aged 1 and under were buried between 1907 and 1912.[1] According to the Save the Lemay Forest Coalition, even though the cemetery was deconsecrated and moved, it is unlikely that many of the children's remains were moved because "it would have required the assistance of osteoarchaeologists specializing in neonatal remains and no such professionals existed in the province at that time as far as can be determined".[2] The City of Winnipeg has stated that "no building can occur over the cemetery itself and further suggests that no building occur within a 50 m buffer zone around the cemetery as recommended by the province because of the likelihood that individuals would have buried their loved ones next to the cemetery".[2]

The Lemay Forest is also an area of riparian vegetation or River-bottom forest along its rivers.[3] According to the City of Winnipeg's website this type of forest depends "on the spring floods to deposit silt and replenish the soil with nutrients" and "in return, their roots stabilize stream and riverbanks, helping to reduce erosion".[4] These types of forests are very diverse and are home to a variety of plant and animal species and are "by far the most diverse ecological area in St Norbert, and indeed the prairie habitat".[3,4] The "river bottom forest is home to the majority of the plant and animals species found in the area" believed to "have one of the highest species diversity levels of any riparian landscape.[3]

In addition, according to documents filed in the Court of King's Bench, the developer was asked by Environment and Climate Change Canada about the due diligence and measures taken to meet the obligation under the Migratory Birds Regulations.[5] The federal Migratory Bird Regulations indicate that if any nests of the Pileated Woodpecker or other listed species had been found they would need "year-round protection until they can be deemed abandoned".[6] Abandonment is considered after a period of 12 to 36 months, and is 36 months in the case of the Pileated Woodpecker.[6] It is prohibited under the MBR to "to damage, destroy, disturb or remove migratory bird nests when they contain a live bird or viable egg" in the case of active nests.[6]

In the backdrop of all of this, the City of Winnipeg signed on to the Montreal Pledge on July 13, 2023, making a commitment to protecting biodiversity and ecosystems.[7] The City of Winnipeg is currently in the planning stages of their Greenspace Plan and Biodiversity Policies, where they define greenspaces as including parks, cemeteries, forests and trails, all of which the Lemay Forest is or might be.[7] They also state that the Greenspace Plan will aim to expand greenspaces, protect ecologically significant land, and engage with community and stakeholders, while the Biodiversity Policy will "make biodiversity and greenspace protection, restoration, and growth a priority in City processes".[7] According to the City of Winnipeg "the Greenspace Plan and the Biodiversity Policy will reflect the knowledge, interests and values of the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples.[7]"

These are compelling arguments for the City of Winnipeg to acquire or rezone the land to create an area for public use, to respect those buried on the site by protecting the cemetery area, and to protect the habitat and home of a variety of species. Various levels of governments have indicated a past willingness to support financially in the endeavour of creating the park.[8,9]

Therefore, we join the coalition voices asking Mayor and Council to consider just how important the Lemay Forest is, the history and the dignity of the cemetery and how voting to preserve it will help uphold your commitment to the Montreal Pledge.

Thank you for your time and attention. If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at kkehler@spcw.mb.ca.

Sincerely,



Executive Director

References

1. Grover, Shiela. *Manitoba History: Cityscapes: Asile Ritchot, St. Norbert*. https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/11/asileritchot.shtml.
2. *History – The Coalition to Save Lemay Forest*. https://savelemayforest.ca/history-2/.
3. Jones, Andrew. *A Holistic Approach to Dike Design: St. Norbert Manitoba, A Case Study and Application*. Department of Landscape Architecture, Aug. 2000.
4. "Riverbottom Forest." *Naturalist Services - Parks and Open Space - Public Works*, City of Winnipeg, 5 Mar. 2020, https://legacy.winnipeg.ca/publicworks/parksOpenSpace/NaturalistServices/NaturalAreas/Riverbottom.stm.
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6. *Fact Sheet: Nest Protection under the Migratory Birds Regulations, 2022*. Government Canada, Environment and Climate Change, 3 Aug. 2022, https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/avoiding-harm-migratory-birds/fact-sheet-nest-protection-under-mbr-2022.html.
7. *Greenspace Plan & Biodiversity Policy*. City of Winnipeg, 25 Mar. 2025, https://engage.winnipeg.ca/greenspace-plan.
8. Keele, Jeff. "Potential $5.25 Million Bid Made for Lemay Forest." *CTVNews*, 4 Jan. 2025, https://www.ctvnews.ca/winnipeg/article/potential-525-million-bid-made-for-lemay-forest/.
9. Liewicki, Nathan. "Manitoba Habitat Conservancy Makes $5.25M Offer to Buy Lemay Forest." *CBC News*, 4 Jan. 2025. *CBC.ca*, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-habitat-conservancy-offer-lemay-forest-1.7422721.

Submission – Shawn Kettner

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 10:12

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1, Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Comments
Dear Mayor Gillingham, Councillors and members of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development,

I strongly support Motion Item No. 1, Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest.

I ask that you as leaders of our community respect and protect not only the forest and all of the creatures within but also the burial ground of so many lost souls. Furthermore it does not make financial sense for the city to invest in the planting of 17,000 trees last year if it allows for a mature forest of 18,000 trees to be cut down this year. If the city is truly committed to increasing our green space we need to protect the Lemay Forest by expropriation.

We must ensure this sacred site and its ecosystems are safeguarded for future generations for the following reasons:
1. It is one of the last intact river bottom forests in the City of Winnipeg with great historic, cultural and environmental significance.
2. Within the Lemay Forest is the abandoned Asile Cemetery of unmarked graves. There are over 3000 Children buried here.
3. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action 71-75 emphasize the need for the protection of Indigenous burial sites, reconciliation, and preserving sacred spaces like those in Lemay Forest. These Calls urge the government to collaborate with Indigenous communities to preserve and protect burial sites as part of the healing process.
4. In addition to its cultural significance, Lemay Forest's trees and ecosystems provide vital environmental benefits to our city, including air quality regulation and wildlife habitat preservation.
5. It is a nesting place for migratory birds, song birds, birds of prey, and the keystone species such as the protected pileated woodpecker. It is also a wildlife corridor providing habitat and safe access for many wildlife species, reptiles and amphibians.

Thank you for all you do for our city. I hope that you can find it in your hearts to support the expropriation of the Lemay Forest.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

To Council,

I'm writing as a concerned citizen of Winnipeg and more locally, St. Norbert. I am in support of the expropriation and rezoning of Lemay Forest.

One factor in my support of expropriation and rezoning of Lemay Forest is the importance of this particular piece of land to the community as well as the significance of it when considering the history of the area and priorities in reconciliation. St. Norbert is a historically Metis area. This land was part of the property of an orphanage and there are burial grounds onsite. Development of the land may result in unmarked graves getting disturbed as it is difficult to map them out. I have been listening to the people of the land speak of its importance to them as individuals and culturally. Their stories bring the importance of expropriation to the forefront of my mind in order to promote healing from the past and to build a stronger future. We have just begun to build bridges with people and this is another way in which to do so.

Currently the land is prone to flooding, which is why the dyke was built. The land also serves as a habitat for endangered or at-risk species. With Winnipeg's commitments to plant trees, in order to preserve urban forests and green spaces, why not allow mature trees to stand instead? They are irreplaceable. Not only are there financial benefits by preserving trees, rather than planting there numerous other benefits to having more trees. These benefits include…. improved air and water quality, enhanced local biodiversity, reduced heating and cooling costs (which I benefit from with trees in my backyard), increased property values, recreation areas and improved health and quality of life. Health problems such as allergies and asthma are impacted by the air pollution we live with. Enabling mature trees to continue to clean our air will help to combat that.

I believe that expropriating and rezoning Lemay Forest will have both economic, Health and Spiritual benefits to the more local community of St. Norbert as well as the city of Winnipeg as a whole. I ask that you vote to expropriate and re-zone Lemay Forest. We need to preserve our history and nature in order to prepare for the future.

Sincerely,

Amanda Kuyp

Submission – Rejean Lafond

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 10:31

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing
I am writing to express my strong support for the expropriation of Lemay Forest to ensure its preservation as a vital ecological and cultural asset for our community.

Lemay Forest is a cherished neighborhood woodland, home to century-old trees that provide deep shade, a unique microclimate, and habitat for diverse species, including the federally protected pileated woodpecker. The forest's ecological significance is further underscored by its designation as a high conservation value forest by Ducks Unlimited.

Beyond its environmental importance, Lemay Forest holds profound cultural and spiritual value. For decades, Indigenous communities have conducted ceremonial practices within this sacred space, drawing healing and guidance from its serene environment. Additionally, the forest encompasses the site of the abandoned Asile Ritchot Cemetery, with records indicating thousands of deaths and burials, highlighting the area's historical significance.

Despite offers from the Manitoba Habitat Conservancy to purchase the land for over $5 million, the current owner has declined, opting instead to pursue development plans that would lead to the destruction of this invaluable forest. Such actions not only threaten the ecological integrity of the area but also disregard its cultural and historical importance.

Given these factors, I urge the relevant authorities to proceed with the expropriation of Lemay Forest. This decisive action will protect the forest's ecological, cultural, and historical values for current and future generations, ensuring that this irreplaceable gem remains a source of community pride and environmental stewardship.

Public engagement (optional)
I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Justin Lamoureux

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Mon, 03/24/2025 - 07:02

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I am a member of the St. Norbert community. I would like to see the property rezoned to protect it from development. It is an important and biodiverse riparian forest that is home to many forest animals including the pileated woodpecker. Furthermore, it is also considered sacred grounds to First Nations communities that practice ceremony in and around the forest. The historical use of the land by the orphanage as a cemetery must also be considered. Human remains, the resting place of thousands of souls are quite possibly dispersed throughout the area.
Rezoning to park land and honouring the importance of the history of the forest are of primary importance.
I hope that the owner of the development corporation will accept the offer of a fair market value of the land and allow the forest to be what it was always meant to be.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission – Sarah Leeson-Klym

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Sun, 03/23/2025 - 15:47

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
1. Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I support the expropriation of the Lemay Forest. It is one of the last intact river bottom forests in the City of Winnipeg with great historic, cultural and environmental significance. It adds to our City's recreational spaces, preserves important biodiversity, and most importantly can help our City fulfill the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action.

Within the Lemay Forest is the abandoned Asile Cemetery of unmarked graves. There are over 3000 Children buried here. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action 71-75 emphasize the need for the protection of Indigenous burial sites, reconciliation, and preserving sacred spaces like those in Lemay Forest.

I hope Council will support this motion and save Lemay Forest.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Anne Lindsey

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 11:13

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I support the City expropriation of the Lemay Forest lands to create a new Regional Park for the City of Winnipeg. This action is critical to protect the remaining natural forest environment, consistent with the direction to preserve, protect and enhance the tree canopy in the city, and to protect the wildlife therein. It is critical to acknowledge and preserve the historical and cultural nature of the land - a burial ground for many unknown children and women who died at the Asile-Richot institution, and an area that continues to hold sacred significance to Indigenous communities.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

City of Winnipeg Council delegation re: Property and Planning Committee Agenda No. 1 re: Lemay Forest
Council date: 27 March 2025
Submitted by: Ann Loewen, MD
Date of submission: 25 March 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opinion to Council regarding the status of the lands known as Lemay Forest. I am in favour of re-zoning the land as a Park that is open to the public.

There is urgent need to preserve and protect this land for many reasons directly related to the health of the City of Winnipeg citizens, for whom City Councillors and the Mayor bear direct responsibility.

- Heat-related deaths are increasing rapidly. In British Columbia's 2021 heat dome, 600 people died in their homes of heat stroke in 30 days. That's 20 people a day. Imagine if 20 people a day died of cold exposure in Winnipeg? The urban heat island effect is well documented. Trees are essential infrastructure to mitigate, and the City must protect its citizens from this threat.
- Lemay Forest is especially prone to flooding. It is 12 feet lower than Pembina Highway and surrounded by an enormous primary dike. Even with thousands of trees and other vegetation to absorb water, adjacent lots have lost their basements to overland flooding and sewer backup during heavy rainfalls. Removal of the vegetation and paving over the land would make this problem worse. This damage has great personal impact, from grieving to financial hardship to indoor mold, that the City must protect its citizens from.
- Free access to natural spaces is essential to mental and physical health. In the pandemic people flocked to places where greenery grew in abundance, for relief from their anxiety and disappointment, for a chance to be safely with others, to learn and understand and be at peace with the life forms in a forest. Physicians prescribe nature to their patients for this reason through PaRx, Walk With A Doc and other programs. The City must provide its population with ready access to natural spaces. Lemay Forest is a jewel in our midst – why would we destroy it?
- We are in a time of great grieving – of the losses of the pandemic, the devastation of the opioid crisis, climate change harms, fear and divisiveness accelerated by social media and isolation. The losses of the 3383 children in the Asile Ritchot Orphanage Cemetery represent the additional harm of separating children from their mothers, the primary attachment and object of their love in early life. Those 3383 children did not only die of infectious disease and lack of advanced medical care: they died of neglect because there was no one to love them. Babies and young children will wither if they do not achieve immediate, constant secure and loving attachment to a single individual – this was well documented among orphans after the World Wars in Europe. Canada ignored this lesson and continued to separate infants and children from their mothers. We know so well now the tragic outcomes of not just orphanages, but also forced and coerced adoptions, Residential schools, the 60s scoop and what passes for child protection. Our

ranks are replete with these survivors, many of them are homeless on the streets of Winnipeg.

- The Asile Ritchot cemetery grounds and surrounding woods represent a place of both historical, and current, societal sadness and grieving. At the same time it is a place of regeneration and abundant life. A place that deserves stewardship and recognition. To preserve this space gives all of us the opportunity to grow, gain knowledge and express our empathy. The City of Winnipeg can give us a way to take those losses and let them be transformative in their power. In this way we can recognize and honour the ability to care that we all have within us, an ability that is so necessary to survival.

Pam Lucenkiw
OURS-Winnipeg

Council Agenda – March 27, 2025
Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

OURS-Winnipeg fully supports the motion to expropriate Lemay forest and rezone it as Winnipeg parkland.

Paving over a forest, especially when so few remain, would be a grave mistake. Lemay Forest is not just a collection of trees; it is a sacred, natural and heritage space, integral to the city's ecological and cultural identity. Its preservation is essential.

The city is currently facing a critical challenge, with the forest's existence under serious threat. Addressing this will require decisive and bold measures to ensure the forest is protected for future generations.

OURS-Winnipeg stands firm in advocating for the preservation of Winnipeg's remaining natural spaces and believes Lemay Forest must be safeguarded as a lasting legacy.

Submission – Jérôme Marchildon

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Fri, 03/21/2025 - 10:50
Delegation information
Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
City of Winnipeg Council Meeting of February 27, 2025 - Motion

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing

To all City of Winnipeg Councilors and Mayor,

I support the expropriation of the Lemay Forest. It is one of the last intact river bottom forests in the City of Winnipeg with great historic, cultural and environmental significance.

Within the Lemay Forest is the abandoned Asile Cemetery of unmarked graves. There are over 3000 Children buried here.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action 71-75 emphasize the need for the protection of Indigenous burial sites, reconciliation, and preserving sacred spaces like those in Lemay Forest.

These Calls urge the government to collaborate with Indigenous communities to preserve and protect burial sites as part of the healing process.

In addition to its cultural significance, Lemay Forest's trees and ecosystems provide vital environmental benefits to our city, including air quality regulation and wildlife habitat preservation.

It is a nesting place for migratory birds, song birds, birds of prey, and the keystone species such as the protected pileated woodpecker. It is also a wildlife corridor providing habitat and safe access for many wildlife species, reptiles and amphibians.

We must ensure this sacred site and its ecosystems are safeguarded for future generations.

Submission – Mary Mazur

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 11:46

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
In addition to the points outlined in the recommendation being voted on, I would like to point out that the lack of access to the proposed development, and the excessive size of the proposed structure, make development of this parcel of land impractical and unsuitable to the available space. If the developer's design is anything like his previous development, a monstrosity tucked into a back corner of Richmond West where the only access is a back road and parking for residents and visitors are woefully inadequate, the proposed development of the Lemay Forest will likewise quickly become an eyesore and yet another infrastructure problem for you to deal with. As a neighbour whose child attended the adjacent school, I can report that the area floods every spring. This parcel of land would be much better used as a neighbourhood park and a community meeting space for the healing of residents at the Behavioural Health Foundation. The inclusion of green spaces in our city, and access to ceremony for Indigenous people in Winnipeg are both excellent reasons to consider appropriating this small and inadequately serviced parcel of land. Let the gentleman build on a more appropriate space.

Public engagement (optional)
I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Kathleen Messner

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 17:51

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 2 - Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
This is an opportunity for council to be trailblazers in 2025 to preserve the Lemay Forest in support of Truth & Reconciliation, wildnerness preservation, environmental and historical considerations, to name a few ... and to create a green space of paramount significance, which could become a new legacy for Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba. Follow the lead of other great leaders who also faced unsurmountable opposition, but who preserved for the benefit of the community at large e.g. Duff Roblin, Louis Riël.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission – Julien Nayet-Pelletier

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Mon, 03/24/2025 - 14:12

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing

I support the expropriation of the Lemay Forest.

The Lemay Forest is the location of the abandoned Asile Cemetery of unmarked graves. Anecdotal stories suggest unmarked graves also exist outside the formal boundaries of the Asile Cemetery. Between 1904 and 1948, 3383 children died at the orphanage. The whole forest should remain intact out of respect for the graves, and because of The Cemeteries Act in Manitoba.

The Lemay Forest is a beautiful healthy river-bottom ecosystem and a great asset for Winnipeg's natural spaces.

The developers' plans for the property were rejected by the city. Despite this, the developer is choosing to cut the trees down, and we need that to stop.

Several levels of government have submitted a generous offer to purchase the property in order to make it into a public park.

The developer and owner ignored a federal wildlife officer's request for a pileated woodpecker cavity sweep ahead of tree cutting, thus seemingly not adhering to Federal species regulation.

The City of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba must designate the Lemay Forest as a heritage site to begin the process of making it a protected public park.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Emily Payne

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Mon, 03/24/2025 - 14:55

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing

Protect Lemay Forest as a green space and historically important space in our city.
Honour its importance, cherish the trees.

Our city needs to immediately and genuinely take the need for protected outdoor space seriously.

We are suffocating ourselves with sprawl, and noise, and trapping our kids into smaller and smaller places of confinement and then turning around and asking our medical experts why we are so depressed, and why our kids as so restless and disenchanted.

The Lemay Forest is a beautiful healthy river-bottom ecosystem and a great asset for Winnipeg's natural spaces. We can not support our cities growth by simply pouring more concrete, erecting more buildings and pumping more inhabitants into postal codes. We also need to support the land on which we have the privilege to settle and build. The precious wild spaces that give our city moments of calm, and relax. Free and wild spaces that promote movement, creativity, research, and stillness.

What good is it to have a urban studies program at our university's if we blatantly ignore the advice for green spaces in municipal zoning and planning?

The developers' plans for the property were rejected by the city. Despite this, the developer is choosing to cut the trees down, and we need that to stop. This is a serious offence, and should be charged as so. It would be appropriate for fines in step with vandalism, noise and air pollution, and river bank destabilization to be applied, at the very minimum. Without explicit permission, or explanations each treee felled should be met with a $10 000 fine, regardless of age or height. The removal of trees from the forest is a direct assault to the surrounding ecosystem, and communities.

The Lemay Forest has been used by First Nations and Metis people for ceremony for years. The forest should be preserved and ceremony must be allowed to continue.
The Lemay Forest is the location of the abandoned Asile Cemetery of unmarked graves. Anecdotal

stories suggest unmarked graves also exist outside the formal boundaries of the Asile Cemetery. The whole forest should remain intact out of respect for the graves, and because of The Cemeteries Act in Manitoba.

Several levels of government have submitted a generous offer to purchase the property in order to make it into a public park, which is great news. There is some hope still for our elected officials to use their core muscles to stand up for the needs and futures of Winnipegers.

Respectfully, and desperate for the preservation of our forested spaces

Yours truly,

Emily

Public engagement (optional)
I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission – Martine Pelletier

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Mon, 03/24/2025 - 11:07

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I support the Expropriation of the forest Lemay. I support the sacred site and the ecosystem of the forest.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Pierce Plikett

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion

Submitted: Mon, 03/24/2025 - 11:34

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing

Communities of people depend on Lemay forest for their mental, physical, and social health. It would not be much of a stretch to say they live and die with the forest. Countless more people receive great benefit from visiting and even more from green spaces' human health benefits. To take that away is unacceptable and unnecessary. We can house everyone properly without developing one square meter of Lemay Forest.

Do not undo all the work you've done for Indigenous Reconciliation or what you've done to enrich our tree canopy.

Please listen to the people who truly value Lemay Forest and vote to expropriate it so that it's tremendous benefits may be enjoyed forever.

Submission for a committee of council
Lemay Forest Collage.png

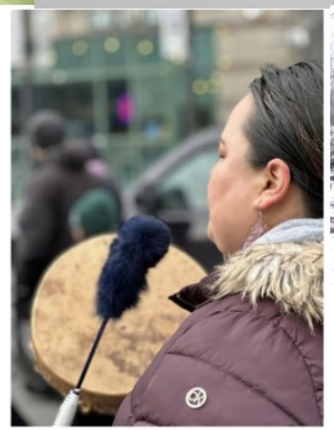
Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes























Submission – Diane Poulin

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 20:32

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I strongly support City Council expropriating Lemay Forest so the next generation of Winnipeggers can benefit from an intact riparian forest. This is also sacred land and saving it from development is consistent with our commitment to advance Reconciliation with First Nations and Metis peoples.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission – Rejean Ricard

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 10:01

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I am vehemently opposed to the development of this land on so many levels. The developer has been offered many reasonable offers for re-purchase and has refused all. This developer has a history of defying local building permits (as you are well aware) with a " ask for forgiveness not permission" approach. His continual taunting of not only the citizens of St.Norbert but of the city at large is in no way community building and should not be allowed to continue. Lastly, this is an ecologically sensitive area and has much cultural and historical importance.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission – E. Rice – Lemay Forest Coalition

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 16:14

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
No.1 Expropriation and rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I support not permitting any building on the site of Lemay Forest…it would have cultural and environmental implications…the forest should be left as a natural habitat as it was…it is hypocritical to promote greenspace and be wary on laws against unstable developers who are on a mission to takeover and manipulate the committee..
It is a heritage Forest.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Subject: Urgent Appeal to Protect Lemay Forest.

Dear Members of the Winnipeg City Council,

We are writing to you today concerning the impending expropriation hearing scheduled for Thursday, March 27, regarding the property known as Lemay Forest. The current owner/investor of this property intends to develop the Lemay forest, which would result in the destruction of a vital ecosystem connected to both the Red and La Salle rivers.

The Lemay forest holds significant importance on multiple fronts. Not only does it support a diverse ecosystem, but it also plays a crucial role in protecting the community from overland flooding. Moreover, the area holds deep cultural and historical significance, particularly for the Métis people, serving as a symbol of heritage and connection to the land.

We understand that all three levels of government are actively engaged in efforts to preserve this invaluable natural asset. Recognizing its intrinsic value, efforts have been made to safeguard the Lemay forest for future generations. However, the proposed development at Lemay Forest poses a serious threat to these preservation efforts.

We also understand that the owners have received several generous offers to buy the land for preservation.

Allowing the destruction of the Lemay forest would not only be detrimental to the environment and biodiversity of the area but also a costly mistake for all stakeholders involved. The long-term implications of such actions extend beyond the immediate interests of the current owner/investor to encompass the well-being of the city, the surrounding community, and the broader ecosystem.

Furthermore, it's essential to consider the impact on traffic routes and safety within the neighborhood. With schools located on both ends of Lemay Ave., the street is already operating near capacity. Introducing a major development without adequate consideration for traffic management and safety could pose significant risks to the well-being of children and residents in the area. We must not allow the proverbial "cart to get in front of the horse."

Lastly, in consideration of the number of community graves throughout the property, one must only consider that each spring, throughout the decades, community graves would be required to bury those unfortunate humans who died at the shelter and possibly who died at the Misericordia Hospital during the winter months when the grounds were too frozen to dig.

Therefore, I urge the City of Winnipeg to carefully consider expropriation and to prioritize the preservation of the Lemay forest. By protecting this invaluable natural asset, we can ensure the continued health and resilience of our community and ecosystem for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I trust that you will make the decision that serves the best interests of both present and future generations.

Sincerely,

Tim and Louise Scatliff

Submission – Matilda Shanks

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 11:58

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
This forest is home to not only the vast majority of my childhood memories, but also a wide variety of wildlife and various plants/trees required to maintain ecological equilibrium. In addition to it being extremely important to the environment, it is also home to the spirits of many children whom lost their lives while being housed at Asile Richot. This forest is such a staple in our community, and it would be heartless and unfair to strip us of it.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

Submission – Katharina Stieffenhofer

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 09:46
Delegation information
Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
Re. March 27, 2025 - COUNCIL Meeting
Notice of Motion Item No. 1, Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Dear Members of Council,
Please note my strong support for Motion Item No. 1, Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest
The Lemay Forest is irreplaceable in its rich historical, cultural and ecological value. This 22.5-acre riparian forest and greenspace needs to receive heritage status and be rezoned and preserved as a public Heritage Park in perpetuity.
I am part of an increasing number of individuals and organisations opposing any further destruction of the forest for development. Manitoba Historical Society, Heritage Winnipeg and the Manitoba Archaeological Society are calling for “a complete stoppage and moratorium on any incursion, damage, deforestation and alteration of the grounds of the Lemay Forest in this heritage area immediately.”
Recent research by respected archivist, Shelley Sweeney, about the 60% child mortality at the Aisle Ritchot Orphanage between 1904 – 1948, revealed the death of 3383 out of 7,365 admitted children. Further research about these children’s burials is needed and ongoing. Children’s and some of their mother’s remains are buried in the former Aisle Ritchot cemetery inside of Lemay Forest and beyond. This fact alone should convince Members of Council, that this land should never be developed and absolutely needs to be “acquired” by any legal means possible and rezoned as a protected public site to remember these forgotten children, who mainly died because of poverty and inadequate care. These children were of all nationalities, but some were of Metis heritage.
The Manitoba Metis Federation has formally called on the City of Winnipeg to acquire and rezone this land in acknowledgement if the profound historical and cultural connection between the Lemay Forest land and the Red River Metis. MMF further support a National Urban Park framework to honour this land’s historical and cultural significance.
The Appellant/Owner’s applications for rezoning & subdivision have already been rejected 4 times by various levels of City of Winnipeg decision makers, because the applications contravene existing City by-laws.

This treed property is not suitable for development because it is land-locked, in a flood plane, and un-serviced. Housing should be built on properties that are more suitable and do not require the removal of mature healthy trees.
It is my understanding that the city-assessed value of this property is 1.7 Mil. Recently, the owner was offered a purchase price of 5.25 Mil., by the Manitoba Habitat Conservancy, which was rejected, claiming an inflated value of 8 Mil. The Developer then proceeded to clearcut ~ one acre of trees without having any permits to build. An action that does not represent “acting in good faith”, in my opinion.
The acquisition of this greenspace needs to be part of the City of Winnipeg’s Climate Action Plan & Climate Resilience Strategy. It takes a minimum of 20 – 30 years for trees to mature; we no longer have this luxury of time in this accelerating Climate Crisis. Our actions and policies need to reflect the reality of this increasing public health crises.
Indigenous communities have been performing sweat lodge healing ceremonies in the privacy of this forest for over 30 years. These sacred grounds must not be disturbed any further, and ongoing access to these much-needed healing ceremonies need to be guaranteed as a gesture of reconciliation. Please see link to a trailer for a documentary film about Nature, Connection & Healing [in progress], which features one of the sweat lodge keepers, who talks about the completeness of the ceremony and the importance of saving this remaining sacred site [0:46 – 1:18]. The Bald Eagle and deer at the beginning of the trailer also live in the Lemay Forest https://vimeo.com/1041957286?share=copy
I respectfully urge the Members of Council to support Motion Item No. 1, to Expropriate and Rezone Lemay Forest.
Thank you for your consideration of my support for this Motion Item No. 1.

Submission for a committee of council
Lemay Forest cemetery should be left undisturbed_Shelley Sweeney_Feb 2025.pdf

Lemay Forest cemetery should be left undisturbed

By: Shelley SweeneyPosted: **2:00 AM CST Thursday, Feb. 27, 2025 Winnipeg Free Press**

OPINION

Recently, the Société historique de St-Boniface discovered that fully 3,383 children died out of the 7,365 admitted to the Asile Ritchot orphanage in St. Norbert.

The Asile, run by the Sisters of Misericordia between 1904 and 1948, served small children and babies. It was also a home for unwed mothers. Some of the children had lost their parents, some had parents who could not care for them, some were abandoned.

Although there were Indigenous children at the Asile, primarily Métis, there were children of all ethnicities. Virtually all were there because they were poor.

The horrifying number of deaths occurred for many reasons. Principally, while the sisters were expecting to take care of 30 babies at a time, the numbers of children quickly grew beyond their means.

Lack of staff, poor nutrition, overcrowded quarters, infectious diseases, and possibly because the orphanage was getting fresh water from the Red River, contributed to this high number of deaths.

The Asile had its own cemetery carved out of Lemay Forest. According to the sisters, once a year the children who had died would be buried together in an unmarked communal grave.

Archivists are still determining how many children were buried in the Asile cemetery, but between 1907 and 1912 alone at least 726 babies were buried there. Likely thousands of children who died at the Asile were buried in Lemay Forest. Further research is required.

Stillborn babies from the Misericordia hospital, the sisters, unwed mothers, people associated with the Asile, and female pensioners who previously lived at the Misericordia hospital, were also buried in the cemetery in Lemay Forest.

Two maps, two aerial photos, and steel posts placed at the corners of the cemetery have established the exact location.

So what is the problem with developing Lemay Forest? No one knows for sure how many and where exactly the children and adults were buried. Remote sensing by the Historic Resources Branch indicates two burial pits that may fall outside of the cemetery proper.

In addition, past practice has shown that people tended to bring their loved ones to be buried close to cemeteries. The Historic Resources Branch has stated that a 50-metre buffer zone around the cemetery must be left untouched and they have asked for a plan for what the developer intends to do with other bones found in the rest of the forest.

In 1974 the sisters abruptly decided to move the identified human remains to the St. Boniface Cemetery on Archibald Street. Desjardins Funeral Home conducted the removal but listed only 15 bodies as having been moved.

The sisters make no mention of moving the children or of any deconsecration ceremony.

The funeral home would have needed sieves and water to pluck the thousands of tiny bones and teeth from the earth. There would not have been any osteo-archaeologist to help Desjardins identify juvenile human remains in 1974.

The details of these deaths is particularly sad. For instance, neighbours of the Asile stated that during the summer when the windows of the Asile were open, they could hear the children crying in the night. There were not enough staff and resources to care for and comfort them.

How have we become so numb that the deaths of nearly 3,400 children is not considered a tragedy of monumental proportions?

The developer has stated that they will find “hot spots” and narrow down any buffer zone. They insist on building a 2,500-unit facility on the remaining land around the cemetery, even though they will need to bring in lots of dirt because Lemay Forest regularly floods from overland water. This will push all the water into the cemetery.

The developer has vowed to chop down all the trees in Lemay Forest. Bringing heavy machinery in will churn up the remains.

We should not disturb this cemetery and the surrounding area. We need to acknowledge the harm to the children, consult with those who lived or had relatives in the Asile, and do something appropriate to acknowledge this terrible history.

Above all the cemetery should not be “private property with public access” as the developer has stated and the children should never be forgotten again.

Dr. Shelley Sweeney is archivist emerita, University of Manitoba and archives and special collections.



Aisle Ritchot children

Submission – Kari Stokke

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Tue, 03/25/2025 - 20:41

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Comments
I strongly urge the council to expropriate the Lemay Forest.

Conserving forests is of paramount importance in this current age of climate crisis and threats to our Canadian identity.

In the United States, President Trump is currently gutting funding to libraries, museums and art programs. Someone lamented on social media "what does 'western civilization' even look like to these [Trump supporters] when every library, museum and park is closed?"
The reply was a devastating picture of a concrete jungle filled with cars and fast food outlets, with the caption "This is Western Culture now."

When I saw this, I immediately thought of Lemay Forest and the plan to destroy it.

This is Canada. We are known for our wilderness areas. That St Norbert has this undisturbed area of forest land is something to be treasured; very few areas of Winnipeg have such a lovely place to walk through. It is there for all people to respect, enjoy and use, in harmony with the many species of wildlife that live there.

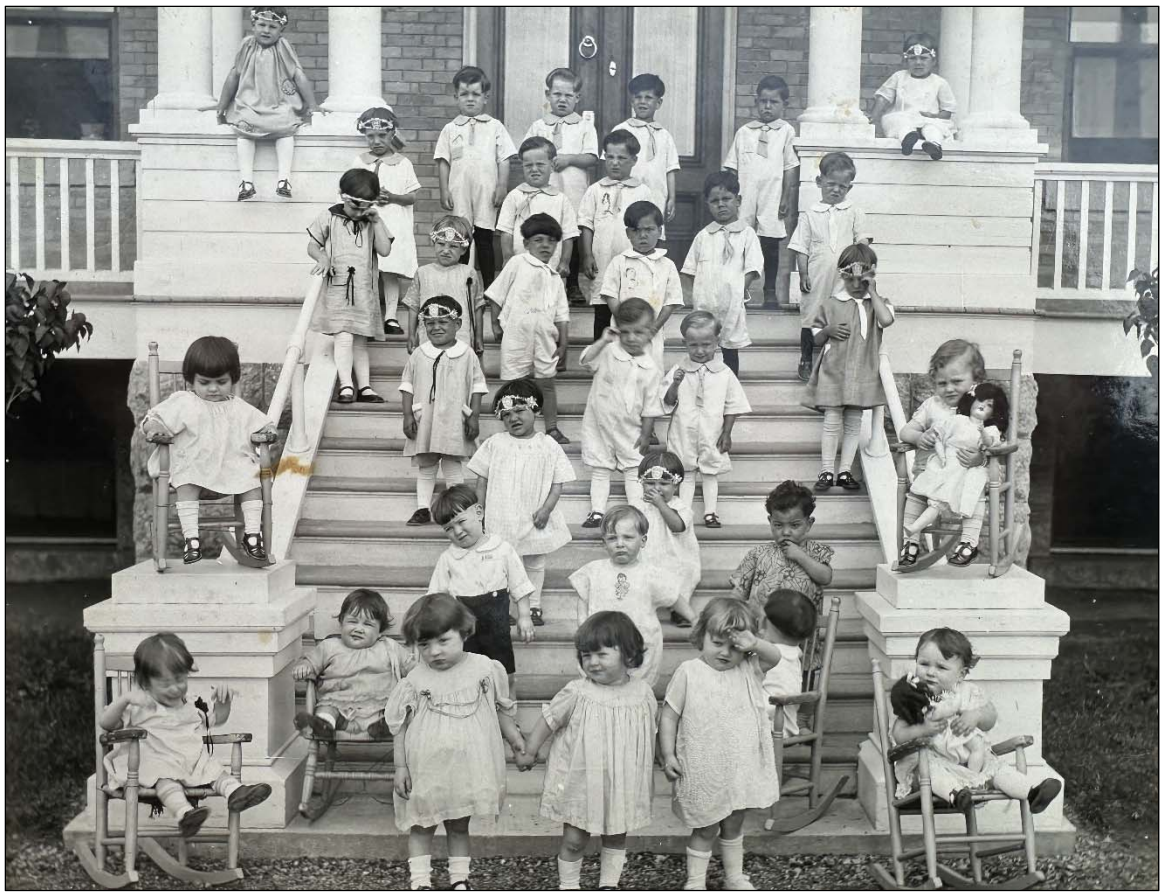
Trees are great warriors in the battle against climate change and a community forest people can walk through is a gift. We cannot pretend not to know that destroying a forest to create a parking lot is not the direction we should be taking at this point in human history.

We must preserve this beautiful patch of land for the sake of conservation, community, and Canadian culture.

Public engagement (optional)
I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

March 26, 2025

To: City of Winnipeg councillors



The Sisters of Misericordia operated an orphanage and home for unwed mothers in St. Norbert called the Asile Ritchot from 1904 to 1948. This institution primarily served pregnant girls and young women from Winnipeg who were too poor to afford other services. The home also served babies and children up to the age of five, again mostly from Winnipeg. Many of the girls, women, and babies came through the Misericordia Hospital system, although the Sisters also found babies left on their doorstep when they got up in the morning.

Although the Sisters expected to be looking after 30 children at a time, they were quickly overrun. There were so many children at the institution it led to overcrowding and deplorable conditions.

Infectious diseases, poor nutrition, a lack of staffing, and possibly getting water from the Red River led to a high number of deaths at the institution.

A stunning total of *3,383 children* died at the Asile.

Many of those children were buried in the Asile's Cemetery in Lemay Forest. They were buried in communal, unmarked graves.

While the identified remains and a few others were exhumed and moved in 1974, according to archival records and testimony, the children were left behind and are still in the cemetery. It would seem the communal graves for the children went beyond the cemetery borders. According to past practice, other people likely brought their loved ones to be buried near the cemetery because it was consecrated ground. There is also a possibility that other burials exist in the rest of the forest.

The children were forgotten over time but we know about them now and they should never be forgotten again. They should most certainly not be lying in a cemetery on private land but be protected in a public space, commemorated and given in death the attention they did not receive in life.

Shelley Sweeney,
Archivist Emerita, University of Manitoba and
OURS-Winnipeg member

Submission supporting the expropriation of the Lemay Forest lands and rezoning to parks.

By now you have all heard of the strong reasons for expropriating the lands known as Tochal Lands aka Lemay Forest. The biodiversity, the protected bird species, the cemetary with potential burials throughout the forest, a sacred land of the indegenous people and not to forget the land is on a flood plain. I must congratulate the various committees who voted to reject the rezoning application RMF-L which is now in the hands of the Municipal Board who have held meetings to hear an appeal by the owner. Now there seems to be some hesitation on the various committees to vote on an assembly/expropriation motion waiting for the MB to come forth with their decision on the matter. Why I ask? Does it really matter what their decision is at this point? You all know the very valid reasons to expropriate and any decision should have no baring on a your yes vote to expropriate.

Throughout this process the owners representative started with a plan for affordable housing. Well there's no money in that so then at a St. Norbert Community town hall the representative showed us a plan showing 500 units of fourlexes and duplexes which then morphed into 1350 units of apartments and condos which then morphed into a 2500 unit assisted living complex with 5000 cars which morphed into 5000 beds. At the MB meetings it was now stated to be a care home and then an age in place. It's all a game people. It's a typical bait and switch We all know if they were allowed to build on this sight it would be high end condos that benefit neither the poor nor the elderly. And just an FYI St. Norbert already has a 55+ complex and a full care home a block away.

On Jan 2,2025 Mr. Intrater sent an email (1) to Mr. Kevin Toyne at 2:27pm with an offer to purchase for 5.25 million. An hour later that same afternoon a less than professional reply from Mr. Toyne stating “to stop playing games”. No offer to sit down and discuss the conditions of the offer or the amount of the offer. I wonder who is “playing games”. This indicates the owner doesn't seem to interested in selling. (1) Email stated in File No. CT 24-01-49863 filed with The King's Bench January 3, 2025 by Memaz Inc.

It also appears to be some notion going around that certain members on council refuse to vote on any issue concerning the lands stating a conflict of interest. Looking around the chamber you are all here because you were voted in by a majority of your constituents NOT some person who doesn't even live in Winnipeg. You are voted in office to represent your constituents and when the huge majority of your constituents want you to vote for or against any issue that is **not** a conflict of interest. Just because many of you, if not all, accept many donations for your campaigns shouldn't mean you can't vote on a particular issue. That's the risk any donor to a campaign faces or is the donor expecting to treat it as a bribe? If that was the case you would all be in jail.

I can see councils hesitation reacting to the owner's representative's threats, intimidation and lies. We the community, Indigenous people, members of council, businesses who have tried to support the saving of the forest, members of the St. Norbert Community Club and even the MMF have all been subjected to these actions.

If it wasn't for the courage of our Indigenous community and a St. Norbert community member Louise May putting themselves in harms way, half that forest would be gone. The OurWinnipeg2045 document clearly states that the city must preserve these urban forests and green spaces. It's time to stop this greed and intimidation, save that sacred land and **vote for this motion to expropriate and impose an immediate cease and desist order on any tree cutting in the forest.**

Paul Thorimbert

March 25, 2025

City of Winnipeg Council Meeting / March 27, 2025
510 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB
R3B 1B9

ATT: Comment on Standing Policy Committee of Property and Development meeting of March 06, 2025
Item #2: Lemay Forest

I will try to keep this letter brief. The attempt to be short of words does not represent a lack of passion in the content. The land now commonly referred to as The Lemay Forest must be preserved as a Historical Site as a way to preserve and respect the history that has taken place on this land.

A listen to the words of Dr. Shelley Sweeney is enough that debate on building on this land should not be considered, let alone even be up for discussion. Dr. Sweeney has stated that potentially over 3000 bodies, mostly, but not limited to infants, were laid to rest on these lands. Some in the designated cemetery, but many outside of that zone, and potentially throughout the forest. She states that the identification of children's remains requires the knowledge and skillset of specialized archeologists. Bones do not start to form in newborns until they are approximately 8 weeks old. Then, the further development is a slow process that occurs right up until adulthood. Therefore, the bony remains of a child are difficult to identify, and it is my opinion, that potential work crews would not even realize the horror of what they were digging up if this land were to be disturbed. Dr. Sweeney states that infant teeth are so small that they take specialized skill to isolate and identify. It is horrific to think building on this land supersedes respecting and memorializing the children of the Asile Ritchot Orphanage that lost their lives during a terrible time in Canadian history.

The City of Winnipeg has pledged at various levels to preserve and plant trees for the sake of our environment. Allowing a functional eco system that The Lemay Forest represents, with it's approximately 14,000 trees, to be destroyed is a slap to what the City of Winnipeg representatives stated they stand for.

This land owner and planner have proven over and over that they do not want to preserve this important eco system. They have been offered significant funds to save the lands, but they have refused. As such, it is time that the City of Winnipeg to step in and do the right thing. It is now time that I request The City of Winnipeg to acquire, assemble or expropriate this land from Mazyar Yahyapour. The people of the City of Winnipeg deserve to have access to this historic land in the form of a protected public park and memorial site.

To the full council of The City of Winnipeg, it is time to do the right thing and preserve this land.

Sincerely,
Gerald Tole

Manitoba Historical Society

710-A One Lombard Place
Winnipeg, MB R3B 0X3

March 27, 2025

To Mayor Gillingham, and City of Winnipeg Council,

Re: Supporting the Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

The Manitoba Historical Society strongly supports that the City of Winnipeg rezone to a PR 'Park' zoning classification, the required City of Winnipeg Right-Of-Way (ROW) backing onto homes located on the north side of Lemay Avenue, abutting up and connecting to an eastern portion of the Rue Landry ROW. B. and Immediately expropriate all of the privately held lands known as the Lemay Forest, which includes forested lands, newly unforested lands, and open lands, that constitute the privately-owned land, popularly referred to as the Lemay Forest lands or property, to create a new City of Winnipeg Regional Park.

The Lemay Forest and Asile Ritchot Cemetery located in the Lemay Forest is a natural heritage and cultural heritage site of massive significance. The Asile Ritchot was an orphanage and home for unwed mothers run by a Catholic order, the Sisters of Misericordia, in St. Norbert from 1904 to 1948. Children, unwed mothers/Madeleines, Sisters, as well as others connected to the community were buried in a Cemetery in Lemay Forest.

The Société Historique de St-Boniface (SHSB) has documented 16 registers that together record 3,383 deaths of children at the Asile. There is no evidence to support that they were exhumed, or reinterred, and the cemetery deconsecrated. Recent oral testimony from the manager of Desjardins Funeral Chapel confirms this. Therefore, **it is highly probable that the mass graves of human remains of thousands of children remain**, and would be disturbed by all development, including deforestation. Independent researchers have been able to obtain records from the Sisters of Misericordia Archives in Montréal that indicate that the children were still in the cemetery in 1974.

The Historic Resources Branch has stated that historic burial patterns in cemeteries are known to also occur around the cemetery grounds, and it is possible that mothers or families whose infants died could have privately buried their children outside the formal boundaries of the cemetery. Further, deforestation, heavy equipment, and elevation grading would alter the drainage of the site and impact the cemetery and deposition of human remains in-situ there. The Lemay Forest is a low-lying river-bottom forest, and the forest and its understory and root systems help to prevent erosion and disturbance of human remains.

A number of these children were orphans of Indigenous backgrounds. As the SHSB press release states, "Preliminary analysis of existing sources suggests that most of these children were of French-Canadian or

Manitoba Historical Society

European descent, as well as Indigenous, Scottish, French, and those of unknown heritage. **From a community perspective, there has been a complete absence of consultation about this development project with rights holders, Indigenous groups, the Manitoba Métis Federation (according to their Resolution #8 framework for consultation), and limited information of specialized knowledge shared with all levels of government. Development of this site may violate UNDRIP, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act.**

No Precedents for the exhumation of mass burial sites exist in Canada. This is potentially the largest mass burial site known in Canada. It is important to feel the weight and responsibility in that statement. While the context is not a Residential School, it is a context of an institution in the City of Winnipeg that reflects our lack of care for Women, children, the poor and the disenfranchised, and we must ensure that these souls are now treated with dignity and care.

As part of the City of Winnipeg's Climate Action Plan, they set targets to achieve the endurance of: An urban forest and committed to protecting, preserving, and enhancing the urban forest systems. Preserving the Lemay Forest aligns with the City of Winnipeg's climate action plan. Further, Winnipeg's Indigenous Accord makes the commitment that "The city of Winnipeg… is a place where people and the environment come first, where everyone has fair access…Be a leader that thinks for yourself and speaks up for change." **It is time for the City of Winnipeg to lead the way for the expropriation and protection of the Lemay Forest Lands.**

Heritage sites like Lemay Forest and Asile Ritchot Cemetery offer unique opportunities to confront political issues in a meaningful way. We must embrace this responsibility—not as a burden, but as an opportunity to foster societal growth. The disturbance of this sacred resting place, where many children lie in unmarked graves, should not be seen as an obstacle, but rather as a chance to reflect and grow as a community. Sites of Conscience, such as Lemay Forest, and Asile Cemetery, bear witness to the abandonment of basic human rights. Yet they also provide a powerful platform for the creation of a collective public memory that acknowledges these injustices.

Preserving this site through expropriation is essential. It is our responsibility to foster a future where this site serves as a beacon for human rights, inviting visitors to engage with its history and consider how they, too, can contribute to shaping a more just and compassionate future. Therefore the Manitoba Historical Society supports the expropriation of the Lemay Forest Lands, and the creation of a City of Winnipeg Park to protect and memorialize these thousands of children - The Children in the Forest.

Regards,



Tracey Turner, MA CS, PhD (c)
Executive Director, The Manitoba Historical Society

Submission – Alan Wardle

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 02:20

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I am opposed to the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I've lived in St.Norbert all my life, with all the land in and around Winnipeg why would you allow anyone to develop an area as beautiful as this it would be a shame. I've walked on Lemay Ave. and the traffic at certain time of day is horrible, and you want to add another 2500 or so more people and vehicles on top of this. I'm afraid for our children and other people with the increase in traffic. The fact that it's already a bus route is bad enough now add more cars…why? I hope that you can fine a way to avoid developing the forest.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

Submission – Rick Wilson

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Fri, 03/21/2025 - 14:20

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
March 27, 2025 Lemay Forest item

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I wish to add my name as in support of the acquisition of the lands shown in Schedule A and B of this agenda item as protected park land to be maintained as riverbottom forest, and suggest only the existing level of access and use types being continued over time.

Public engagement (optional)

I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
No

HILL SOKALSKI
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March 26, 2025

BY EMAIL

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Dear Mayor Gillingham and Councillors,

Re: Tochal Development Group Inc.
Our File: 24044

As many of you are already aware, I represent the owner of the lands that are the subject of DASZ 9/2024 as well as the notice of motion moved by Councillor Wyatt and seconded by Councillor Schreyer at the February meeting of Council. I write with respect to that motion.

Background

City Council has twice declined to pursue acquiring my client's lands in the past number of years:

(a) In April 2018, Riel Community Committee indicated its desire to acquire these lands. The Public Service was asked to investigate but the matter was ultimate referred to the 2020 Budget Review and was not pursued; and,

(b) In November 2023, Riel Community Committee's desire to acquire these lands was rejected by SPCPPD and that rejection was endorsed by EPC and Council in 2024.

When the Riel Community Committee, SPDPPD, EPC and Council considered DASZ 9/2024, none of those bodies suggested that my client's lands were somehow required for City purposes and/or should be acquired by the City. You will recall that the Public Service's recommendation was to authorize a residential development on my client's lands that would double the population of St. Norbert as doing so was consistent with OurWinnipeg2045 and Complete Communities Direction Strategy 2.0.
During the recent hearing before the Municipal Board, the City did not assert that my client's lands were somehow required for City purposes and/or should be acquired by the City.

Extraordinary Breadth of the Proposed Expropriation

The motion calls for the expropriation all of "the privately held lands known as the Lemay Forest" and specifically includes a private residence located at 823 Lemay Avenue.

To be clear, there is no such thing as the "Lemay Forest". The "Lemay Forest" is nothing more than a phrase that has recently began to be used by a handful of individuals to capture not just the lands owned by my client,

but also the lands owned by the Laureate Academy to the east and the Behavioural Health Foundation ("BHF") to the west.

823 Lemay Avenue is one of the many private residences located along the north of Lemay Avenue. If that particular residence is part of the so-called "Lemay Forest", then the entirety of the north side of Lemay Avenue east of Rue Landry is as well.

The motion seeks to expropriate not just my client's lands, but the privately owned lands to the east, the west and south. The breadth of the proposed expropriation is extraordinary.

Potential Expropriation is Unlawful Because it Violates the City's Promise to Negotiate First

The Supreme Court of Canada has stated that "The expropriation of property is one of the ultimate exercises of governmental authority. To take all or part of a person's property constitutes a severe loss and a very significant interference with a citizen's private property rights."[1]

On the City's website, the following representation is made to private land owners: "We acquire land in two ways: an agreement with the owner (preferred method); or land is taken without the owner's approval by expropriation (last resort)." Notwithstanding this representation to private land owners that the City will negotiate first and only expropriate as a last resort:

(a) On January 27, 2025, the Public Service raised the prospect of a land exchange;

(b) On February 3, 2025, I sent an email to the Public Service stating "With respect to potential land exchange, we are not aware of the City owning any lands with similar value and development potential – if there the City does own such lands, please provide details so we can consider same";

(c) On March 20, 2025, I sent an email to the Public Service stating "We continue to await the requested details (if any) and can advise as to any limitations (aside from value, obviously) once we have those details"; and,

(d) Despite the passage of nearly two months, the Public Service has failed to provide any details to my client whatsoever with respect to City owned lands that could form part of the Public Service's proposed land exchange.

My client has relied upon the representation contained on the City's website that negotiation would take place prior to expropriation. The City cannot move forward with any proposed expropriation until those promised negotiations occur.

Potential Expropriation is Unlawful Because it Violates *Charter* and Procedure By-law

The City can only expropriate lands in accordance with sections 204 and 205 of the *Charter*. As previously communicated to the members of SPCPPD and the Public Service, the proposed expropriation is not authorized by those provisions.

Those seeking to expropriate my client's land (as well as the Laureate Academy, BHF and the entire north side of Lemay Avenue) are attempting to prevent my client from lawfully cutting down privately owned trees on

[1] *Toronto Area Transit Operating Authority v. Dell Holdings Ltd.* [1997] 1 S.C.R. 32 at para. 20

privately owned land. The City has no interest in preserving those trees because ***the City has expressly authorized my client to cut them all down*** and Council has not passed a bylaw preventing the removal of privately owned trees from privately owned land.

Leaving aside the accuracy of assertions regarding their applicability to my client's lands, the City has no power whatsoever to expropriate lands for purposes relating to federal legislation and/or regulations. I also note that Council did not designate my client's lands as being "sensitive lands" in Complete Communities Direction Strategy 2.0 despite extensive engagement and consultation with each member of Council and residents across the City.

Council's decision to become a signatory to the Montreal Pledge does not expand either the scope of its jurisdiction or the permissible purposes for which expropriation can be pursued.

Section 205(4)(a) of the *Charter* is the successor to old section 147(3) and it has no application.

In any event, the Public Service has no power whatsoever to expropriate lands. City Council must follow the three-reading process mandated by the *Charter* and the Procedure By-law to adopt a bylaw for the purposes of making a legally effective Declaration of Expropriation.

Monetary Value of My Client's Lands

The Public Service can provide guidance to you on the value of the privately owned lands to the east, the west and the south of my client's lands that the motion seeks to expropriate.

The preamble of the motion suggests that the market value of my client's fully serviced lands is between $1,000 - $10,000 per acre (or between $23,000 and $230,000). This is incorrect for several reasons:

(a) First, on January 2, 2025, an unsolicited offer was made by staff of the Manitoba Habitat Conservancy ("MHC") to purchase the lands excluding 823 Lemay for $5.25 million;

(b) Second, MHC made that unsolicited offer after receiving an appraisal that valued the lands excluding 823 Lemay at $250,000 per acre (ie, in excess of $5.7 million);

(c) Third, this does not take into account the value of the residence located at 823 Lemay. While not indicative of market value, 823 Lemay is currently assessed at $436,000; and,

(d) Fourth, the landowner appealed the rejection of DASZ 9/2024 and the Municipal Board is required to release its decision in mid-April. I note that the pending release of the Municipal Board's decision resulted in EPC's decision to layover the SPCPPD matter relating to my client's property.

The MHC offer was criticized for being too low[2] and my client concurs with that assessment. In any event, I trust that the MHC appraisal valuing the lands excluding 823 Lemay at $250,000 per acre has already been shared with each member of Council by the Mayor's office and/or Councillor Chambers. If not, a copy can be obtained directly from Stephen Carlye at MHC or MHC's realtor Brett Intrater.

In the unlikely event that the City actually has the funds to compensate my client for the market value of these lands, I note that the City has yet to satisfy the $5 million judgment made against it by Justice McCarthy in the

[2] https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-habitat-conservancy-offer-lemay-forest-1.7422721

Parker Lands misfeasance litigation.

Justice McCarthy's decision may also provide some helpful guidance as Council contemplates attempting to unlawfully take my client's land.

Additional Concerns

I would be remiss if I did not also draw to your attention that some of those encouraging you to unlawfully take my client's land are directly involved or supportive of efforts to incarcerate Mr. Yahyapour and Mr. Wintrup. Those efforts also expose City staff involved in maintaining the grounds of the City's three cemeteries (and potentially all municipally owned grounds) to the risk of being prosecuted, fined and/or incarcerated pursuant to *The Cemeteries Act*.

Winnipeg's housing crisis will not be solved by imprisoning housing advocates (and their professional planners) and unlawfully taking their lands. Threats of incarceration cannot be tolerated as a mechanism to intimidate a private land owner into giving up their land. My client therefore respectfully requests that members of Council:

(a) Immediately cease any and all collaboration with those directly involved or supportive of efforts to incarcerate Mr. Yahyapour and Mr. Wintrup;

(b) Vote against the motion seeking to unlawfully expropriate my client's lands; and,

(c) Work with my client to develop these lands in a manner consistent with OurWinnipeg2024 and Complete Communities Direction Strategy 2.0.

Yours truly,

HILL SOKALSKI LLP

Per: 

Kevin D. Toyne

KDT/km

Submission – Claire Woodbury

Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest (Item 1 - Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – Notice of Motion)

Submitted: Wed, 03/26/2025 - 09:42

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Council

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Item No. 1 Expropriation and Rezoning of Lemay Forest

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
I'm urging the council to support expropriating the land of the Lemay Forest back into city hands. It is irresponsible to continue to allow a developer to build on an ecologically important place. This forest contains Red-headed Woodpecker. This bird and its nests are protected from harm through the Canadian Migratory Birds Convention Act (1994) in Canada and the US Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1916) in the United States. Red-headed Woodpecker was listed as Threatened under Schedule 1 of the Species at Risk Act (SARA; S.C. 2002, c. 29) in 2009. Other than the ecological benefits, this proposed housing development would sit on top of over 3000 burials in the cemetery of the former Aisle Richot orphanage. The archaeological studies were rushed and not up to known standards. Further research by experts has determined the cemetery was NOT moved, as previously thought. The identities of these infants and children are unknown but are likely to have a large Indigenous population due to the demographics of unwed mothers in those days (removing children from their families into residential schools and the history of unwanted pregnancies due to rape at residential schools). Even if this condo goes ahead, no one is going to want to live on top of an honest to goodness "Indian burial ground" (to use the crude antiquated colloquial expression). This condo development would likely not be feasibly economically because of this. Allowing this development to continue is repugnant, it's also just a bad look given the current political climate. Do yourself a favour politically and take care of the Lemay forest in the proper manner with respect and allow these children their dignity in their final resting place.

Public engagement (optional)
I consent to being contacted to participate in potential public engagement related to this matter.
Yes

I in support of Item No.1 Expropriation and rezoning of Lemay Forest.

However, I would exclude the house at 823 Lemay Avenue as it is an established home in an established neighbourhood and there is no need to remove it. The developer had sought to include this residence as part of the Lemay Forest and tried to get permission to raze it to provide road access to the land.

We have stood up and fought for the Lemay Forest too many times. Offers have been made and rejected by the developer.

The Lemay Forest is a high quality, **ecologically significant grade A-B river bottom forest**, wetland and grassland habitat that supports **biodiversity, watershed health** and provides an ecological corridor for **safe access and the movement of species**.

Preserving the Lemay Forest aligns with the goals in the **20-year Urban Forest Strategy** and **Winnipeg's Climate Action Plan**, which includes increasing Winnipeg's urban canopy from 17% to 24% by 2065, which translates to planting 17,000 trees per year.

The Lemay Forest must be protected! It houses 18,000+ trees, wildlife and historical artifacts from previous holders of these sacred spaces.

Recently it was discovered that there are over 3000 souls buried at or near the former Asile Cemetery on that land. This should be a sacred preserve that is never developed. It was never intended for development, was never accessible, was never serviced and was zoned RR5. In the spirit of reconciliation, and to preserve the resting place of over 3000 souls, please support this motion.

The developer has already cut down over an acre of trees, and at a recent hearing of the Municipal Board promised to continue cutting down the trees to prepare the land for a development that has not, and should not be approved.

Our trees protect our environment and are commonly recognized as the lungs of the planet. This is a treasure that you cannot allow to be desecrated.

Please save this forest and vote yes on this motion.

Catriona Younger