

A photograph of a residential street during autumn. In the foreground, a grassy lawn is partially covered with fallen leaves. A paved driveway leads to a house with a garage. A silver car is parked in the driveway. Several trees are visible, with some showing vibrant orange and yellow autumn foliage, while others are still green. The background shows more trees and a clear sky.

Trees Please Winnipeg: Presentation on The Tree Bylaw Report

Introduction

While the recommendation for a consolidated Public Tree Bylaw to protect our public trees is essential and very much welcomed by Trees Please Winnipeg, the delays on enacting bylaws governing trees on private land are concerning and potentially damaging to the city:

- We are currently losing 1000s of trees on private land to construction and development, and **no one is counting those losses**. While we can't save every tree, a reasonable and considered private tree bylaw would help to limit those losses.
- Lack of action on the protection of private trees jeopardizes the city's goal of expanding our canopy from 17% to 24%
- Trees on private land represent a public good as they extend numerous benefits to the entire community.





The Private Canopy – Essential Infrastructure in A Warming Climate

- An estimated 80% to 90% of Winnipeg's total urban canopy sits on private land - either in yards or on privately owned natural lands and riverbanks.
- According to the North American Forest Commission, this is true for most North American cities –only 10% to 15% of most urban canopies are publicly owned. -Paul Reese, Oregon State University.
- That is why more than 10 cities in Ontario, 8 in BC and dozens of American cities and towns have in place both public and private tree bylaws.
- **Research shows that cities with private tree bylaws have more mature trees and more tree canopy cover than cities with no such bylaws.** (Landry and Pu 2010; Sung 2012; Hilbert et al. 2019)

The Cost of No Protection: A Zero-Sum Game

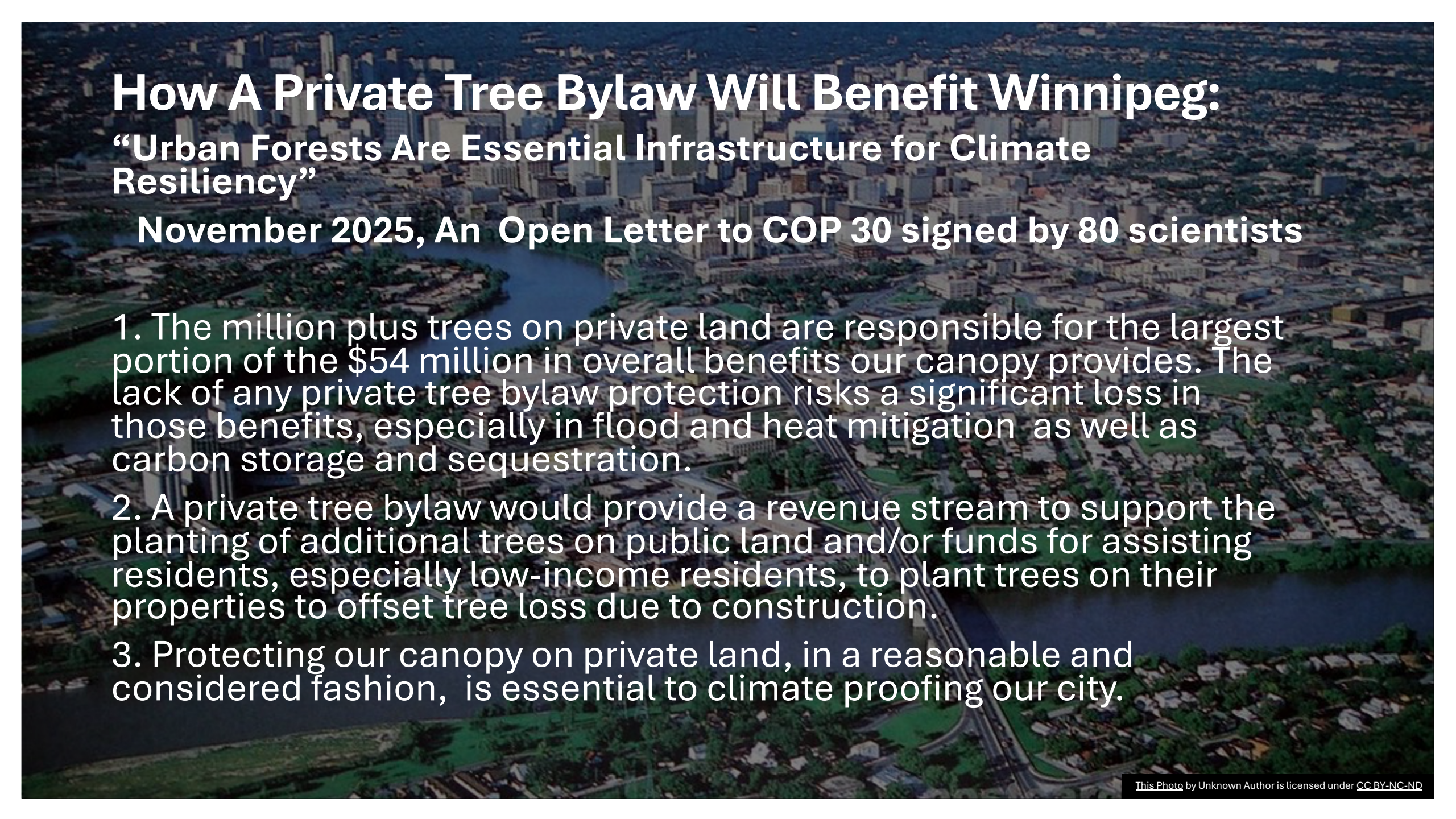
Lessons from the Lemay

Had the province not expropriated the Lemay Forest, 17,000 high benefit, mature trees would have been clear cut.

That action alone would have cancelled out the approx. 17,000 new trees planted on public land in 2024.

Without a private tree bylaw, similar clear cutting could happen at any time on other forested properties currently in private hands.



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Winnipeg, showing a river winding through the urban landscape. The city is densely packed with buildings, and there are patches of greenery and trees interspersed throughout. The text is overlaid on the top left of the image.

How A Private Tree Bylaw Will Benefit Winnipeg:

“Urban Forests Are Essential Infrastructure for Climate Resiliency”

November 2025, An Open Letter to COP 30 signed by 80 scientists

1. The million plus trees on private land are responsible for the largest portion of the \$54 million in overall benefits our canopy provides. The lack of any private tree bylaw protection risks a significant loss in those benefits, especially in flood and heat mitigation as well as carbon storage and sequestration.
2. A private tree bylaw would provide a revenue stream to support the planting of additional trees on public land and/or funds for assisting residents, especially low-income residents, to plant trees on their properties to offset tree loss due to construction.
3. Protecting our canopy on private land, in a reasonable and considered fashion, is essential to climate proofing our city.

Action On A Private Trees Bylaw Is Needed Now:

While we understand a charter change is required to draft a comprehensive private tree bylaw, we feel the city could act now in the area where it does have jurisdiction:

To that end we recommend:

1. That in addition to proceeding with a public tree bylaw, the city also include the protection of trees on private properties adjacent to streets.
2. That city council urge the province to act quickly to implement the charter changes required for a more comprehensive private tree bylaw.

To that end, Trees Please members are more than willing to collaborate in efforts to educate the public on the need for private tree bylaws and expedite the charter change required.





Thank you!