

Standing Policy Committee on Community Services

Regular Meeting

Item #11 City of Winnipeg Tree By-law

Dave Green

Co-Chair, OURS-Winnipeg: *Website:* [OURS-WINNIPEG \(OUTDOOR URBAN RECREATIONAL SPACES\) – Home \(weebly.com\)](https://ours-winnipeg.com)

Member, Trees Please Winnipeg: *Website:* [Trees Please Winnipeg - Investing in Trees for a Healthy, Thriving City](https://treespleasewinnipeg.com)

OURS-WINNIPEG



December 2, 2025

- ▶ **OURS-Winnipeg is a city-wide advocacy group that focuses on urban greenspaces, river corridors, and the urban forest/canopy.**
 - **Urge the city to initiate consultations for development of planning documents that preserve and enhance the natural amenities of Winnipeg, and**
 - **Advocate for good stewardship of these valuable resources that belong to us all.**
- ▶ **Trees Please Winnipeg is a coalition of city-wide resident groups lobbying all levels of government to make long term sustainable infrastructure investment available to cities like Winnipeg for the maintenance, diversification, and expansion of urban forests.**
 - **Urban trees and forests are valuable natural infrastructure assets that provide economic benefits, climate change mitigation measures, and enhancement of human health.**

Asks to Recommendations of This Report

- ▶ **Establish a shorter timeline to report back with a draft by-law to protect trees on public or City-owned land and a City Tree Policy (e.g., within Q2 in 2026 instead of proposed Q4) .**
- ▶ **Under existing Charter authority, do an interim amendment to the Winnipeg Zoning by-law to control removal of vegetation and trees on private properties adjacent to streets.**
- ▶ **Prioritize increased engagement with the province and urge them to change the Winnipeg Charter sooner than later to allow the City to start protecting trees on private property.**

Why A Shorter Timeline?

- ▶ **Winnipeg lags behind and continues to be a ‘Johnny-come-lately’ compared to several other jurisdictions in Canada that have a by-law to protect trees on public and private property.**
- ▶ **It has already been over two years (November 20, 2023) since this committee made a motion to check on the Winnipeg Charter and with the Province about how a by-law to enhance tree protection on private property could be brought to Council.**
- ▶ **More delays only means greater tree loss on private properties if nothing is done until after the completion of the comprehensive zoning by-law anticipated for some time in 2027.**
- ▶ **The vast majority of our tree canopy is on private property and these trees are needed to maintain current coverage (~ 17%) and to fulfill increased targets in the Urban Forest Strategy (20% by 2045 and 24% by 2065).**

Why are trees and the urban forest important to cities?

- ▶ **Studies have shown being around trees and nature areas are important for human health and well being.**
- **Our generations have enjoyed the aesthetics and benefits of trees planted and maintained many decades to over a century ago and current generations must do the same for future generations.**
 - ❖ **All trees, public and private, are part of the public good.**
- **On hot sunny days:**
 - ❖ **Where do you find people picnicking in parks? – under the trees;**
 - ❖ **Where do people camping want to be? – under the trees;**
 - ❖ **Where is it most comfortable to walk on the sidewalks? – under the trees.**

Why are trees and the urban forest important to cities continued?

- ▶ **Trees are important contributors for mitigating effects from climate change, make our city more resilient, and provide cost savings.**
 - **Trees intercept and absorb rainfall that reduces inputs to storm sewers and water treatment plants,**
 - **Absorb pollutants from the air such as nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, particulate matter, ground level ozone, and**
 - **Reduce the urban ‘heat island effect’ along with providing shade to cool our houses to reduce air conditioning use and costs.**

Estimated monetary benefits in 2019
State of the Urban Forest Report 2021

Compensatory value	CAD \$ (billion)
3,075,000 trees on public and private land	3.31
Functional value	CAD \$ (million)
Carbon storage	39.2
Carbon sequestration (annual)	0.83
Avoided runoff (annual)	3.23
Pollution removal (annual)	4.01
Building energy savings (annual)	5.80
Avoided carbon emissions (annual)	0.61

Why are trees and the urban forest important to cities continued?

- ▶ **A well-treed neighbourhood can be up to 4° C cooler than a one without trees (Arbor Day Foundation).**
 - **An article in the 'New Scientist Journal' showed trees cooled the land surface temperature of European cities by up to 12°C. This was an analysis of satellite data from 293 cities in Europe [Urban heat: Trees cool land surface temperature in cities by up to 12°C | New Scientist](#)**
- ▶ **The urban forest provides biodiverse habitat for species from large wildlife to pollinating bees, to the variety of plant species that are important to ecosystem survival and restoration.**
- ▶ **Trees and urban forest areas along water courses are important natural corridors and habitat areas for wildlife including birds.**

In Conclusion:

- ▶ **Act sooner than later on ways to keeping our urban canopy and what remaining urban natural areas we have from diminishing uncontrollably (*i.e.*, no hesitation on developing and instituting a by-law for trees on public and private property, as well as the greenspace and natural corridor plan by-law, and biodiversity policy).**
- ▶ **Delays in action only exacerbate the issue of losing more and more healthy, mature trees.**
- ▶ **Waiting to do something for trees on private lands until after the comprehensive zoning by-law is done only means having to revisit and adjust that zoning by-law when private tree issues are to be included.**

Thank you