Submitted: Fri, 12/05/2025 - 16:42

Delegation information

Committee you want to address
Executive Policy Committee

Agenda item you want to address (number and title)
Private Tree Protection by-law for public engagement

Support or oppose recommendations
I support the recommendations

Submit comments in writing checkbox
Submit comments in writing

Comments
Dec 5, 2025
Re: Support for the private tree bylaw motion
Dear Mr. Mayor and Councillors,
I am writing to you as one of the founders of Trees Please, a coalition of neighourhood groups and others dedicated to building capacity and commitment to protect our urban tree canopy in Winnipeg. There has been a discussion for decades about the need for Winnipeg to protect trees on private property, like many other municipalities do.

Winnipeg councillors from this council signed the Trees Please Pledge and have provided the sustainable budget to the first two pledges: planting two trees to every one lost and pruning our trees every 7 years. Now is the time to address pledge number three: to better protect our mature trees from damage or loss due to construction and development.

The motion before EPC on Dec 9, 2025, is for public engagement on the protection of trees on private land adjacent to streets. This motion, which will open a discussion with Winnipeggers about the benefits of protecting private trees over which the city already has jurisdiction, is an essential first step in crafting a more comprehensive private tree bylaw.

Why is this by-law needed?

1-Winnipeg is currently losing 1000s of mature trees to construction and development on private properties but no one is counting those losses. Those additional losses substantially increase the number of trees already being lost to disease and attrition, which are counted and average 6000 trees per year. While we can't save every tree and fully understand that a city charter change is required to craft a bylaw covering all trees on private property, action now to engage Winnipeggers on a bylaw aimed at protecting

private trees adjacent to streets would help to educate Winnipeg citizens about the pressing need for a more comprehensive private tree bylaw.

2-The current lack of protection for private trees jeopardizes the city's goal of expanding our canopy from 17% to even a modest 24%. The international sustainable goal is 30% tree canopy cover for cities.

3-Trees on private land represent the majority of Winnipeg's tree canopy - as much as 80% to 90% of our total canopy of 3.1 million trees. This is true for most North American cities - only 10% to 15% of all trees are on public land. As a result, it is our private trees that delivers the most of the close to $54 million in benefits that our tree canopy provides, including their cooling impact during heatwaves.

4-Given that the average number of +30C days are predicted to double over the next few decades, protecting as many of those HEALTHY SAFE mature trees as is reasonably possible is essential. We need to see trees on private land as a public good, because they extend benefits to the entire community. Those benefits are so profound that 80 scientists recently wrote an open letter to the delegates at COP 30 in which they observed that "urban forests are the most effective and equitable natural infrastructure" to increase urban climate resiliency.

5-More than 20 cities in Canada have already enacted private tree bylaws, meaning Winnipeg is lagging behind. Enhancing our tree canopy is part of making Winnipeg a climate resilient, healthy and beautiful city.

Your leadership in engaging Winnipeg residents in meaningful and informative discussion about the importance of a by-law to protect trees on private property is a good step to fulfilling our tree plan and meeting other goals for a sustainable.
Thanks for your attention and support,
Marianne Cerilli

Public engagement (optional)

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

Personal information

First name
Marianne

Last name
Cerilli