Executive Policy Committee

Regular Meeting

Tree By-law Motion

Dave Green

Co-Chair, OURS-Winnipeg: *Website: OURS-WINNIPEG (OUTDOOR URBAN RECREATIONAL SPACES) – Home (weebly.com)*

Member, Trees Please Winnipeg: *Website: Trees Please Winnipeg - Investing in Trees for a Healthy, Thriving City*

OURS-WINNIPEG



December 9, 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 develop policies and 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 governments to make long-term sustainable infrastructure investment available to cities like Winnipeg for maintenance, diversification, and expansion of our 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 Protect Our Tree Canopy

EPC support the recommendations from the SPCCS report for:

1. ***Disposition Item 11*** **- The public service report back by December 2026 with a by-law to protect trees on public or City-owned land and a City Tree Policy, and**

2. ***Disposition Item 14*** **- To initiate public consultations on a by-law to regulate trees on private property adjacent to streets that the City currently has authority under the Winnipeg Charter, and for the creation of a private tree by-law.**

- **EPC to additionally recommend to prioritize increased engagement with the province urging them to change the Winnipeg Charter sooner than later to allow the City greater latitude to start protecting trees on private property.**

Why Needed Now Without Delays?

- **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 the SPCCS 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 uncontrollable tree loss on private properties from developments.**
- **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 is it most comfortable to walk on the sidewalks? – under the trees; and**
    - **Where do people camping want to be? – 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

Trees on private lands makes up the majority of our urban canopy so functional values diminish as private trees are destroyed.

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 for completion of 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.**
- **Getting these initiatives done while the comprehensive zoning by-law review is occurring over the next 1 to 2 years would seem more efficient than having to revisit and adjust that zoning by-law when tree and greenspace issues are to be included.**

Thank you