**Minutes – Council – March 26, 2026**

**Minute No. 243**
**Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – March 3, 2026**

**Item No. 1 Home Grown Grant Community Tree Planting Projects 2026**

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services and adopted the following:

1. That grant amounts (plus GST, and MRST as applicable) be approved from the 2026 Urban Forest Renewal Capital Budget for the Home Grown Grant Program as follows:

    A. to Spence Neighbourhood Association Inc., in the amount of $19,819.00

    B. to Old St. Boniface Resident's Association, in the amount of $19,819.00

    C. to South Osborne Residents' Group Inc., in the amount of $19,026.00

    D. to Whyte Ridge Community Centre, in the amount of $18,270.00

    E. to Little Mountain Park Conservancy Inc., in the amount of $19,987.00

2. That the City enter into, execute and deliver Home Grown Grant Agreements with the grant recipients and such other agreements as determined necessary by the City Solicitor / Director of Legal Services to implement the intent of the foregoing (the "Ancillary Agreements"), and that authority be delegated to the Chief Financial Officer to negotiate and approve the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreements and the Ancillary Agreements, in accordance with this report and such other terms and conditions deemed necessary by the City Solicitor / Director of Legal Services to protect the interests of the City.

3. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

**Report – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – March 3, 2026**

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Santos,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services be adopted by consent.

Carried

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On March 17, 2026, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services and submitted the matter to Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On March 3, 2026, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

# ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

**Title:** Home Grown Grant Community Tree Planting Projects 2026

**Critical Path:** Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – Executive Policy Committee - Council

## AUTHORIZATION

| Author | Department Head | CFO | CAO |
|---|---|---|---|
| D. Domke | J. Berezowsky | T. Graham | J. Dunford |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Public Service is requesting approval of five community-led tree planting grants. The grants are part of the Home Grown Grant Program (the Program). These projects will plant approximately 125 trees on publicly owned land. Costs include:

- Buying trees
- Installation
- A two-year maintenance cycle

The Government of Canada and the City of Winnipeg share the costs of the Program. The Federal government will pay back 42.5 percent of the costs to the City once we meet reporting requirements.

The Program improves public access to trees. It helps community groups, businesses, and non-profit organizations plant trees in their communities.

The total amount recommended for award is $96,921.00 (plus GST, and MRST as applicable). The approved 2026 Urban Forest Renewal capital project will fund the grants.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That grant amounts (plus GST, and MRST as applicable) be approved from the 2026 Urban Forest Renewal Capital Budget for the Home Grown Grant Program as follows:

    A. to Spence Neighbourhood Association Inc., in the amount of $19,819.00
    B. to Old St. Boniface Resident's Association, in the amount of $19,819.00
    C. to South Osborne Residents' Group Inc., in the amount of $19,026.00
    D. to Whyte Ridge Community Centre, in the amount of $18,270.00
    E. to Little Mountain Park Conservancy Inc., in the amount of $19,987.00

2. That the City enter into, execute and deliver Home Grown Grant Agreements with the grant recipients and such other agreements as determined necessary by the City Solicitor / Director of Legal Services to implement the intent of the foregoing (the "Ancillary Agreements"), and that authority be delegated to the Chief Financial Officer to negotiate and approve the terms and conditions of the Grant Agreements and the Ancillary Agreements, in accordance with this report and such other terms and conditions deemed necessary by the City Solicitor / Director of Legal Services to protect the interests of the City.

3. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

## REASON FOR THE REPORT

Council has the authority to approve grants to external parties.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

No new money is required for the recommendations of this report as the funding is available in the approved 2026 capital budget – Urban Forest Renewal.

The Home Grown Program allows the Public Service to increase capacity to plant approximately 70,000 additional trees on public property from 2022 to 2026. This grant program enhances direct community participation to increase equitable access to trees with technical support of the Public Service by enabling community groups, businesses, and non-profit organizations to plant trees in their often under-treed communities.

## HISTORY/DISCUSSION

### Background

Natural Resources Canada's Two Billion Trees Program (2BT) is a financial assistance program available to municipalities, non-profit and for-profit organizations, and Indigenous organizations. The program is offered as part of the Government of Canada's commitment to planting two billion new trees over the next ten years as part of a broader approach to nature-based climate solutions, with the goal of achieving significant carbon sequestration in addition to other environmental and social benefits.

In 2019, Mayor Bowman issued the Million Tree Challenge as a call to action for Winnipeg residents, non-profit organizations, and private businesses to help plant one million trees by the time the city's population grows to one million people by 2040. With support from the non-profit sector and corporate partners, the challenge increased public interest in planting trees on private and public property.

The Urban/Suburban stream of the 2BT Program is designed to support planting in and around population centers with an objective of planting a minimum of 10,000 trees per year on average. Funding received from the 2BT Program is twofold. First, it allows the Public Service to increase

capacity to plant approximately 70,000 additional trees on public property from 2022 to 2026. These additional plantings include replacement trees and net-new trees along boulevards and active transportation pathways, in parks, and in native woodlands and riverbank forests. Second, it funds a community-based program to increase equitable access to trees and hands-on support as a means of enabling community groups, businesses, and non-profit organizations to plant in their often under-treed communities. Distribution of funds to community groups and other organizations is determined by a grant application process.

On June 20, 2022, the Public Service received notification from Natural Resources Canada that the City's application to the 2BT was approved for a five-year enhanced planting program branded Home Grown. A cost-sharing agreement between the Government of Canada and the City of Winnipeg was signed on December 2, 2022. The total cost of the program from 2022 to 2026 inclusive is $17.2 million. The City's total projected contribution under approved and forecasted operating and capital budgets is approximately $9.9 million and the Government of Canada's total contribution is $7.3 million.

The approved budget for the 2026 Urban Forest Renewal capital project includes additional funds for the additional incremental expenditures and associated funding from the Government of Canada in the amount of $2,603,750.00, of which $120,000.00 is estimated to be allocated to the Home Grown grants.

**2026 Grants**

On September 3, 2025, the Home Grown Grant Program was reopened to accept applications from community organizations for funds to support tree planting projects in their neighbourhoods. The deadline for applications was November 3, 2025. Five grant applications were received.

Successful projects were determined based on an established set of evaluation criteria (Appendix A), including prioritization of projects in higher-needs areas. Successful applicants will receive further mentorship and technical support from the Public Service to ensure project completion and long-term success.

The grant applications were reviewed by an evaluation committee comprised of staff from the Public Service. Applications for projects to be undertaken on private property, or that did not include sufficient quotes for the proposed services or maintenance from pre-qualified contractors, were ineligible. Applications in which the proposed project was in or adjacent to an area of higher needs, with community tree planting goals, suitable priority locations, and tree maintenance responsibilities clearly defined ranked higher than those that lacked clarity in these areas.

The evaluation criteria for the applications are listed below and described in more detail in Appendix A:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (a) | Project location (including proximity to an area of higher need) and planting suitability | /50 |
| (b) | Technical soundness, planning, and maintenance plan | /60 |
| (c) | Application completeness and quality of information | /30 |
| (d) | Compliance by the Applicant with the requirements of the application or acceptable deviation there from: | pass/fail |

Note that “Project sustainability and overall likelihood of long-term success” was previously removed from the list of criteria this year as experience found it to be redundant and not helpful in ranking projects.
The Public Service is requesting that Council approve tree planting grants under the Home Grown Grant Program to the successful applicants for a total of $96,921.00 (plus GST, and MRST as applicable). These projects will plant approximately 125 trees on publicly-owned land by these community organizations. Costs include the purchase of trees, installation, and a two-year maintenance cycle including watering for successful establishment.

Grants are to be funded by the approved 2026 Urban Forest Renewal capital project, and the City is to be reimbursed by the Government of Canada upon meeting necessary reporting requirements outlined in the cost-sharing agreement.

The successful applicants and their projects are listed below:

1. Spence Neighbourhood Association Inc. for $19,819.00 (Plus GST, and MRST as applicable) to plant trees on the public boulevard of a well-used street to add shade to the adjacent properties.

2. Old St. Boniface Resident’s Association for $19,819.00 (Plus GST, and MRST as applicable) to plant trees in public park adjacent to the Red River to increase canopy cover along pathways and in the park.

3. South Osborne Residents’ Group Inc. For $19,026.00 (Plus GST, and MRST as applicable) to plant trees on the public boulevard to return shade to a popular promenade in the Lord Roberts area, and to increase species diversity.

4. Whyte Ridge Community Centre for $18,270.00 (Plus GST, and MRST as applicable) to plant trees in a public greenspace adjacent to a school, to add shade to the pathways and greenspace, sequester carbon, diversify the greenspace, and provide attraction for pollinators.

5. Little Mountain Park Conservancy Inc. For $19,987.00 (Plus GST, and MRST as applicable) to plant trees at a public greenspace to help protect the park from the increased effects of industrial light pollution and the rapid industrial growth in the surrounding area.

***Home Grown Grant Eligibility Criteria for Community Groups***

- Registered non-profit, non-government organizations are eligible including community, neighborhood, cultural, heritage, youth, environmental, and conservation groups. Schools adjacent to public lands and publicly owned cemeteries are also eligible. Planting locations must be on publicly owned land within the City of Winnipeg (parks, greenspaces, boulevards, and naturalized areas).
- Private land is NOT eligible for this program.
- Projects valued up to $20,000 maximum.
- Sites in underserved areas or geographic areas of higher poverty are prioritized.
- Projects can fall into one of three streams:
    - Restoring habitat and natural areas.

- Enhancing parks and greenspaces.
- Revitalizing our communities with street trees.

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

**Financial Impact Statement** **Date:** January 21, 2026

**Project Name:** **First Year of Program** **2026**

Home Grown Grant Community Tree Planting Projects for 2025

| | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Capital** | | | | | |
| Capital Expenditures Required | $ 103,501 | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Less: Existing Budgeted Costs | 103,501 | - | - | - | - |
| Additional Capital Budget Required | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| **Funding Sources:** | | | | | |
| Debt - Internal | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Debt - External | - | - | - | - | - |
| Grants | | | | | |
| | | - | - | - | - |
| Reserves, Equity, Surplus | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other - Enter Description Here | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total Funding | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Total Additional Capital Budget Required | $ - | | | | |
| Total Additional Debt Required | $ - | | | | |
| **Current Expenditures/Revenues** | | | | | |
| Direct Costs | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery | 6,580 | - | - | - | - |
| Net Cost/(Benefit) | $ (6,580) | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Less: Existing Budget Amounts | (6,580) | - | - | - | - |
| Net Budget Adjustment Required | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |

**Additional Comments:** Total estimated cost of $103,501 is comprised of $96,921 in grants plus overhead charges of $6,580 and will be funded by the 2026 Urban Forest Renewal Program capital project 1850000326. Recoveries represent the department overhead charges and corporate admin charges.

*J. Ruby, 2026-01-21*

J. Ruby CPA, CA
Manager of Finance & Administration

## CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with: Legal Services (as to legal issues)

## OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

The report is in accordance with the OurWinnipeg:

2.1 Climate Action Targets
2.19, 2.20 and 2.21 Leverage Green Infrastructure
3.3 Economic Research and Innovation

## WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

The Report is in accordance with Strategic Opportunity #7:

7.2 Increase and Preserve Tree Canopy (Primary Responsibility: Public Works Department).
7.3 Preserve and Manage Parks and Natural Areas to Support Climate Change Mitigation (Primary Responsibility: Public Works - Parks).

## WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

This report aligns with the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy (2021 – 2031) as follows:

Goal 1: Equity and a Culture of Caring are Demonstrated through Strategy Implementation and Systems Change.
Goal 6: All City Services are Equitable, Inclusive and Accessible
Related 10-year Objectives:

- D. The City advocates for and pursues partnerships to implement the Strategy.

The information and recommendations in this report also advance the following Actions, as listed in the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Plan (2021 - 2023):

- Action 1.3 Grants – Alignment and equity
- Action 6.9 Community Benefits in City Funded Spaces

## SUBMITTED BY

Department: Public Works
Division: Parks and Open Space
Prepared by: Suzie Dyck, Forestry Technician 2
Kerienne La France, Supervisor of Urban Forestry Technical Services
Martha Barwinsky, City Forester
Rodney Penner, City Naturalist
Date: January 22, 2026
Attachment:
Attachment 1 – Home Grown Application Matrix