

Ecological Protection of Our Waterways and the City of Winnipeg Waterways Regulation 5888/92

June 25, 2026 Council Minute No. 374 – Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment Motion Item #1 - Establishing Policies for the Protection of Waterways

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OURS-WINNIPEG

Website: OURS-WINNIPEG (OUTDOOR URBAN RECREATIONAL SPACES) – Home (weebly.com)

Perspective

- Amenities such as professional sport teams (Jets, Bombers), the WSO, the RWB and ample sports fields are often considered to help entice business and people to move to a city.
- Adequate greenspaces/parks, natural areas, tree canopy and healthy waterways and corridors are just as important:
 - Beneficial and accessible to citizens city-wide;
 - Add to the City aesthetic and livability conditions:
 - ❖ Increase the mental and physical well being of people;
 - Provide meaningful contributions to municipal infrastructure services:
 - ❖ Stormwater retention, carbon storage, and with climate change mitigation effects such as reducing urban heat islands effects to name a few.

Importance

- The health and condition of our city waterways and adjacent river corridors is a reflection of the importance put upon them.
- Properties adjacent to our waterways provide some of the best natural, biodiverse, and treed canopy areas within the city.
 - Development pressures along waterways threaten to reduce and destroy these attributes.
 - Our tree canopy needs further protection because it is also impacted by infestations such as the Emerald Ash Borer and Dutch Elm Disease.
- Ecological protection and environmental stewardship along waterways would support the Greenspace and Natural Corridor plans bylaw and Biodiversity Policy that City is developing.

Waterways Regulation Update

- Need to update the current Waterway Regulation 5888/92 to be comprehensive by including an Ecological Review in conjunction with the Engineering Review.
- This regulation defines an area within the flood fringe zone requiring a permit from the city before any alterations to the landscape can be done - City Clerk's eGovernment.
 - Currently only requires an Engineering review, *i.e.*, for building design measures needed to reduce damage from flooding and to reduce the temporary flood protection required to protect property during flood events.

Additional Considerations

- **Expand development density reductions for higher density structures along waterways as exemplified in Schedule AC – Development Requirements for Low Density Infill in Zoning Bylaw 200/2006 – Restriction clauses 3(1) and 3(2).**
- **Increase structure setbacks of 30 m from top of bank for all new development adjacent to the Red, Assiniboine, Seine, and La Salle rivers, and Sturgeon, Omand's, Bunn's, and Truro creeks.**
 - **Consistent with Complete Communities 2.0 Goal 9 (9.4.1) “Where possible, maintain a setback of approximately 30 meters from the normal high-water mark of waterways and waterbodies, as determined by the Director of Planning, Property, and Development, to help protect riparian areas.”**

Additional Issues

- City owned properties adjacent to waterways should be retained and not sold;
 - The Real Estate Policy Framework needs to be revised where assessment of city-owned land being considered for surplus *'would target to retain properties adjacent to waterways and not be sold.'*
- Parks Branch should not be required to pay full market value and be able to obtain city-owned land from the City's Real Estate Department much easier.

Other Factors

- The City committed to add an additional 1000 acres of greenspace by 2045 in the planning documents adopted in 2022 (only 19 years from now).
 - Potential greenspaces/parkland, especially adjacent to waterways, needs to be kept and acquired where possible before important ecological areas are gone and as land prices continue to increase over time.
- Preservation of riverbanks, natural areas, parks and greenspaces are key components of a sustainable Winnipeg:
 - Aligns with directions in OURWinnipeg 2045; and
 - The strategic opportunity 7 in the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan.

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End

Thank you