

Submission to Council - July 16 2026

Item No. 5 Funding Parkland Acquisition

Pam Lucenkiw

OURS-Winnipeg

In opposition to the Delay of Motions 2 and 3 to defer the adoption of the Parkland Acquisition Fund to the 2027-2028 Strategic Priority Actions Plan process when it can be approved now as per Public Service Recommendation.

We urge City Council to support the establishment of a dedicated Parkland Acquisition Fund without delay, as recommended by the Public Service, and by allocating 10% of the Land Dedication Reserve Fund. This recommendation is not a new initiative. It is a necessary implementation measure for Council's own Greenspace and Natural Corridors Plan and Biodiversity Policy, approved in 2021 to address a long-standing gap in Winnipeg's parks planning. The Plan, developed in collaboration with Indigenous organizations, is intended to protect urban forests, waterways, natural areas, and achieve the acquisition of an additional 1,000 acres of parkland.

Consequences of failing to establish this fund without delay:

- Jeopardizing implementation of the Greenspace and Natural Corridors Plan after years of planning, technical work, and community engagement.
- Losing opportunities to secure federal and provincial cost-shared funding through programs such as Nature Smart Climate Solutions and the National Urban Park initiative.
- Being unable to act quickly when donated or low-cost land becomes available, resulting in the permanent loss of opportunities to expand Winnipeg's natural areas and park system.

These are not hypothetical concerns. Once land is developed, those opportunities are gone forever.

We are troubled by the decisions made at the July 7, Executive Policy Committee meeting.

The Public Service recommended establishing a Land Acquisition Fund using 10% of the Land Dedication Reserve Fund. This recommendation is consistent with the purpose of the fund, which exists to support parkland acquisition and other eligible park-related purposes. Rather than approving the recommendation, EPC deferred it for future consideration.

At that same meeting, EPC considered two separate agenda items requesting funding from the Land Dedication Reserve Fund. In both reports, the Public Service concluded that the applications clearly **did not** meet the Land Dedication Reserve Fund criteria and were **ineligible** for funding.

Despite that report, EPC overruled the Public Service and approved both applications, authorizing a total of \$150,000.

This raises an important question of priorities.

A proposal that met the purpose of the Land Dedication Reserve Fund, advanced Council's adopted Greenspace Plan, and would position Winnipeg to leverage outside funding was delayed.

Meanwhile, two proposals that the Public Service determined did not meet the fund's eligibility criteria were approved.

Council has already recognized the importance of protecting biodiversity, strengthening climate resilience, advancing reconciliation through collaboration with Indigenous partners, and expanding Winnipeg's park system. Those commitments require more than policy statements—they require implementation and funding.

Every delay in establishing the Land Acquisition Fund increases the risk that valuable land acquisition opportunities will be lost. The City may be unable to accept donated land, acquire strategically important properties, or leverage senior government funding when opportunities arise. These are losses that cannot easily be recovered.

Recent decisions by Council have not demonstrated a commitment to protect the natural environment such as having to restore the urban canopy budget, endlessly delaying the tree bylaw and now deferring the Land Acquisition Fund to an uncertain future.

Council now has an opportunity to demonstrate that its commitments are backed by action.

We respectfully ask Council to approve the Public Service recommendation to establish a dedicated Land Acquisition Fund without delay and provide the financial foundation necessary to implement the Greenspace and Natural Corridors Plan. Doing so will protect opportunities that, once lost, cannot be replaced, and will ensure that Council's commitments to future generations are reflected in its funding decisions as well as its policy decisions.

Thank you for your consideration.

9. Land Dedication Reserve Fund – Treaty One Development Corporation – Naawi-Oodena Twin Arena Study,

- Evaluation \$95,000

10. Land Dedication Reserve Fund - Marymound Inc. - Leacock Estate Roof Repairs/Replacement,

- Evaluation \$55,000