

Minutes – Council – July 16, 2026

Minute No. 431

Report – Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment – July 2, 2026

Item No. 6 Establishing Policies for the Protection of Waterways

COUNCIL DECISION:

Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment and adopted the following:

1. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back in 180 days on the following:
 - A. A cross-jurisdictional analyses of best practices in other Canadian municipalities, including Edmonton and Calgary, with respect to:
 - i. Riparian protection
 - ii. Ecological reserves
 - iii. Public access
 - iv. Habitat conservation, and
 - v. Riverbank management
 - B. The feasibility of establishing a minimum 90-foot (27.4 metre) ecological setback from waterways for new development and redevelopment projects, except where site-specific circumstances warrant alternative treatment, based on a review of existing riverbank, shoreline, and waterway setback requirements throughout the city.
 - C. The environmental, financial, legal, and planning implications associated with implementing enhanced waterway setback requirements, including impacts on flood protection, erosion control, biodiversity, climate adaptation, and long-term maintenance costs.
2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Eadie,

That the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment be adopted by consent.

Carried

Councillors Mayes and Orlikow were absent from the vote on the above motion.

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On July 7, 2026, the Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment and submitted the matter to Council.

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On July 2, 2026, the Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment concurred in the Council Motion of June 25, 2026, and submitted the matter to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

The following persons submitted communications in support of the matter:

Debbie Vokey, Chair, Glenwood
Neighbourhood Association
Denis DePape
Michele Kading
Shelley Sweeney
Lloyd Johnson, Chair, Little Mountain Park
Conservancy Group Inc.
Julien Nayet-Pelletier
Nicole Desautels
Stacy Gosman
Diane Bousquet, Warming Souls With Soup

Richard Remnant, Secretary, Save Our
Seine River Environment Inc.
Katharina Stieffenhofer, Growing Local
Productions
Bev Pike, Coordinator, South Osborne
Residents Group Inc.
Cat M Gauthier
Jean Altemeyer
Dave Green, OURS-Winnipeg and Trees
Please Winnipeg

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION:

On June 25, 2026, Council ruled automatic referral of the following motion to the Standing Policy Committee on Water, Waste and Environment:

Moved by Councillor Gilroy,
Seconded by Councillor Mayes,

WHEREAS Winnipeg's rivers, creeks, and waterways are among the city's most important natural assets, providing ecological, recreational, cultural, and environmental benefits for residents and future generations;

WHEREAS healthy riparian corridors help improve water quality, reduce erosion, mitigate flooding, support biodiversity, and provide critical habitat for wildlife;

WHEREAS the City's waterways are increasingly under pressure from urban development, infrastructure expansion, and encroachment along riverbanks and shorelines;

WHEREAS municipalities such as Edmonton and Calgary have adopted stronger policies and setbacks to preserve natural river corridors, protect ecological function, and ensure public enjoyment of waterways;

WHEREAS Winnipeg's planning and development policies have historically focused primarily on development and engineering considerations, while ecological protection and long-term environmental stewardship have often received less emphasis;

WHEREAS the protection of waterways requires a balanced approach that prioritizes environmental sustainability, public access, climate resilience, and the preservation of natural landscapes;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Public Service be directed to report back in 180 days on the following:

1. An cross-jurisdictional analyses of best practices in other Canadian municipalities, including Edmonton and Calgary, with respect to:

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DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COUNCIL DECISION (continued):

- A. Riparian protection
 - B. Ecological reserves
 - C. Public access
 - D. Habitat conservation, and
 - E. Riverbank management
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- 2. The feasibility of establishing a minimum 90-foot (27.4 metre) ecological setback from waterways for new development and redevelopment projects, except where site-specific circumstances warrant alternative treatment, based on a review of existing riverbank, shoreline, and waterway setback requirements throughout the city,
 - 3. The environmental, financial, legal, and planning implications associated with implementing enhanced waterway setback requirements, including impacts on flood protection, erosion control, biodiversity, climate adaptation, and long-term maintenance costs.