

# Greenspace and the Urban Forest

Sustainable cities must prioritize environmental conservation and invest in increasing, protecting, and restoring greenspace and the urban forest. The on-going public health crisis confirms the value of large outdoor greenspaces that enable people to safely gather for recreation and leisure activities. Progress towards a Master Greenspace and Natural Corridors Plan (MGNCP) By-law has

been made since 2018, with transformative by-law amendments successfully passed in 2021, but work still needs to be done to ensure these policies are acted upon in a timely manner.

According to Winnipeg's State of the Urban Forest report, as of 2020, only 19 per cent of the trees removed in the City have been replaced.

## How should Winnipeg prioritize environmental conservation?

### The Alternative Municipal Budget proposes:

#### Master Greenspace and Natural Corridors Plan By-law

The MGNCP By-law will be an overarching by-law coordinating and overseeing matters pertaining to greenspace. The master plan must permeate into all corners of city decision making that impact greenspace, natural corridors, and biodiversity to achieve highest outcomes.

#### Biodiversity Policy

Winnipeg can fast track its plan by benefiting from the existing body of knowledge and best practices. Two Winnipeg based centres of environmental and climate research are the renowned IISD6 (International Institute of Sustainable Development) and the Prairie Climate Centre7. Winnipeg must collaborate with them and utilize their expertise.

#### Greenspace Acquisition

A high priority for the MGNCP is the protection and acquisition of existing greenspace. The purchase of an additional 1,000 acres of greenspace over the plan's 25-year duration must be budgeted with a plan to purchase at least 75 per cent of the land within the next five years. The Canadian Federation of Municipalities (CFM) provides a Green Municipal Fund dedicated to energy,

land use, transportation, waste, and water sustainability initiatives. Winnipeg must consult CFM's Green Municipal Fund to assist in reaching their green space expansion targets.

#### Ecological Planning

Dedicated Ecological Planners must be added to the City of Winnipeg Planning Department to plan for and fulfill the complex and specialized requirements of the MGNCP and Biodiversity Policy. A minimum of two new ecological planner positions are required to accommodate the additional workload.

#### Protecting the Urban Forest

A capital maintenance budget that allows pruning at a recommended seven-year cycle instead of the current 31-year cycle is essential for keeping mature trees healthy and resilient in the face of disease and extreme weather events. Urban Forestry's capital and operating budget must invest according to the value trees bring to cooling the City, protecting asphalt, sequestering carbon, and capturing rainwater run-off.

### Questions for your candidate:

- What will you do to continue building a Greenspace Master Plan?
- Do you support Trees Please Winnipeg's ask that for every tree taken down, two will be planted? If not, why not?
- Will you commit to creating two new ecological planner positions for the City?

**There are alternatives. Budgets are about choices.**  
See the Alternative Municipal Budget at [policyalternatives.ca](http://policyalternatives.ca)