

## OURS-Winnipeg Presentation to Executive Policy Committee Special Meeting May 13, 2021

### Re: OurWinnipeg 2045 and Complete Communities 2.0

An opportunity for Winnipeg for its 25 year vision is to protect and enhance greenspace and place it at the heart of urban planning. For now the City is below average in the amount of city land that is park and natural areas compared to other Canadian cities. The draft Planning Documents OurWinnipeg 2045 and Complete Communities 2.0 set the stage for further reduction while the population is forecast to grow.

This presentation will focus on three greenspace topics.

#### **1. The Major Open Space Chapter is not acceptable and the development options must be removed.**

Placing development plans in a chapter that highlights large parks, golf lands and nature lands sets a tone that greenspace is open for development whether that is that intent or not. A development plan is for development.

This 25 year vision will result in a net loss of parkland. A secondary plan is put forward as a tool for protection for parkland where only SOME of the land may be protected. The protection focuses on the natural areas and valued lands, not all, indicating only parts of the parkland are valued and will be preserved.

Frankly it is an embarrassment that the best solution to be found for protecting greenspace is a development plan. It is really more of a defense than a forward thinking approach.

The exemption for small space development does not meet the goal of the chapter to preserve and protect. It is simply development on greenspace. It is a precedent setting, ad hoc, exemption.

Goal 1 in the MOS chapter is *preserve and protect* parkland. Goal 2 has a *secondary plan*. This counterintuitive combination leaves the reader questioning what is this chapter is really about. The language further obscures the intent with indirect words and phrases

Development options should never have been included in a chapter about greenspace and described as a higher level of review. Stand-alone statements about a “higher level of review” for Major Open Spaces are repeated in the Parks and Recreation Chapter and the draft Parks Strategy. They should be removed as well.

There has been a chronic lack of investment and planning for greenspace that needs to be fixed. The draft Parks Strategy replaces a 40 year old plan. The **supporting plans in the MOS chapter** listed below are still in the public consultation phase, unfunded or out of date and so the benefit of their guidance is less helpful or not available.

- Parks Strategy - Draft
- Recreation Strategy - Draft
- Tree Bylaw - Draft
- Environmentally Significant Natural Land Strategy - Outdated
- Climate Action Plan - Missing the Adaption and Resilience half of the plan

This document proposes a development plan and exemption options to protect public greenspace but has not proposed creating new supporting plans for greenspace or indicators to monitor and measure progress.

High level language and policies must be strengthened throughout the planning documents to counter the requests to develop on public Major Open Space Lands.

There are major gaps that need to be addressed in these documents

### **Requests**

1. Remove development options from the Major Open Space chapter and accompanying reference in Parks and Recreation Chapter
2. Plans be adopted in a timely manner including Master Plan for Greenspace, Biodiversity Plan, and Green Corridor Plan.
3. Indicators to monitor progress be added to OurWinnipeg 2045. At present there are no greenspace Indicators

### **2. Policy to enable development of golf lands must be removed**

Winnipeg needs to increase its greenspace beyond 6%. Golf lands are part of our public greenspace strategically placed throughout the city mostly along river corridors and are zoned parkland. By adding them to the parkland total it can be raised to 7%.

Golf courses are used for recreation year round both formally and informally. They are used as passive parks for x-country skiing and winter walking and provide important wildlife habitat. Golf courses along Archibald provide greenery to all walkers and cyclists who use this route.

Cities are investing in the ecological benefits of their golf course lands; Calgary, for example, has six Audubon certified golf courses. A second Winnipeg golf course is in the process of obtaining its certification. Clear Lake Golf Course in Manitoba has a clause in its 25-year contract requiring it to be operated organically.

Edmonton counts its golf courses as part of the North Saskatchewan River Valley and Ravine System. The Vancouver Golf Strategy considers golf courses as green spaces in urban areas that have positive effects on biodiversity conservation and ecosystem service provision.

Instead of a report to repurpose golf courses with residential development Winnipeg should first have an understanding of how these spaces contribute to biodiversity, climate change resilience, mental and physical health and access to nature for a growing population. The perspective of golf lands as solely a seasonal business entity is missing the big picture.

Golf Course Budget - The Golf Services Special Operating Agency budget surpluses began trending up well before COVID. Rounds are up as well. Since the golf courses were allowed to invest in themselves with earnings from a \$1/round fee, they have been able to invest in much needed maintenance,

increasing their appeal. They have always been accessible and relatively affordable. Shorter golf courses are oriented to seniors, beginners and families. Larger golf courses attract more experienced players.

| <b>Budget Surplus for Golf Services Special Operating Agency</b> |           |           |            |            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| *2017 A                                                          | **2018 A  | ***2019 A | ****2020 A | ****2021 F |
| \$251,000                                                        | \$548,000 | \$682,000 | \$785,096  | \$963,257  |
| <b>Rounds (Business Plans 2020 and 2021)</b>                     |           |           |            |            |
| 68,851                                                           | 70,136    | 74,613    | 104,243    |            |
| *2019 Adopted 2019 Budget 2-103                                  |           |           |            |            |
| ** Preliminary 2020 Budget 2-109                                 |           |           |            |            |
| *** Preliminary 2021 Budget 2-109                                |           |           |            |            |
| **** Preliminary 2021 Budget Appendices Appendix 1 3-19          |           |           |            | A Adopted  |
| **** Preliminary 2021 Budget Appendices Appendix 1 3-19          |           |           |            | F Forecast |

Golf course lands continue to be targeted for development. The balance between development and greenspace is being tipped away from greenspace to development when it comes to golf lands.

- The Major Open Space Chapter defines major open spaces as spaces as larger than 100 acres except for public golf lands where all are included.
- The Chapter lays the foundation for re-purposing up to 30% of golf lands including residential housing. Even affordable housing is development on greenspace.
- The draft Parks Strategy excludes Public golf lands from the calculation of access to nature. Private golf courses are contributors.
- Windsor Park Nordic Centre is not identified as an amenity on the City's recreation map because it is located on a golf course.
- Selling parkland assets to pay for infrastructure deficit as the transformative fund proposed would be a regrettable loss.

### **3. Add back the ecological component to the Development Agreement Parameters**

Most parkland and natural areas are acquired by the City through the land dedication process. This can involve river corridors, ecologically significant natural lands, habitat and connecting corridors that extend beyond a development project and that are important to the city as a whole.

The process of establishing guidelines for future parkland must be broader than that provided by development industry stakeholders as is currently proposed.

DAP is an action item for Complete Communities 2.0 p. 32.

Request two amendments to the DAP action item.

1. Add back the direction from the previous Complete Communities 2011 to include the ecological components that were removed in CC 2.0

*“Update the Development Agreement Parameters to reflect innovation in in development practices as they pertain to parks, such as watershed management, ecologically significant natural lands, and active and passive parks spaces”*

2. Add stakeholders to the Development Agreement Parameters Action Item beyond the Development industry stakeholders to allow an ecological perspective for acquiring parkland.

Complete Communities 2.0 p.32.

#### **Development Agreement Parameters**

3.2 Establish guidelines in the form of Development Agreement Parameters to outline the fair and equitable sharing of costs for servicing, subdivision, and development of land.

3.2.1 Address infrastructure and servicing elements that fall outside the limits of a proposed subdivision or development proposal that are triggered by the proposed development.

3.2.2 Outline the conditions to be included in development agreements.

3.2.3 **(A)** Update and amend the Development Agreement Parameters in collaboration with the development industry stakeholders.

3.2.4 Base updates to the Development Agreement Parameters on the principles identified in Goal 1.

#### Summary of Requests

1. Remove development options from the Major Open Space chapter and accompanying reference in Parks and Recreation Chapter

2. Plans to protect and plan for greenspace be adopted in a timely manner including

- Master Plan for Greenspace
- Biodiversity Plan
- Green Corridor Plan

3. Add indicators for greenspace and parks to OurWinnipeg 2045 Priorities Action Plan. At present there are no greenspace indicators in city planning documents.

4. Development Agreement Parameters

- Add back the direction from the previous Complete Communities 2011 to include the ecological components that were removed in CC 2.0  
*“Update the Development Agreement Parameters to reflect innovation in in development practices as they pertain to parks, such as watershed management, ecologically significant natural lands, and active and passive parks spaces”*
- Add stakeholders to the DAP update beyond the Development industry stakeholders to allow an ecological perspective for acquiring parkland.