

2018 Winnipeg Mayoral Forum Candidate Question

2. Underfunded Parks and Urban Forestry Budget

Actual budget dollars for Parks and Urban Forestry have effectively been reduced over the last decade despite a dedicated 4.8% of home owners' property tax revenue allocated in the budget which should have grown in step with increases in Winnipeg's number of homes and property assessments. Would you restore those actual dollars back into parks, and if so, what steps would you take to ensure this will be done?

Perspective:

The parks and urban forestry budget has remained relatively flat for the past ten years and yet 4.8% of the homeowner's tax bill is allocated to parks and green space. The city has seen an on-going increase in both housing development and property tax revenue but the parks budget has stayed flat. The city is collecting more tax revenue for parks but it is not going to parks.

References:

Annual Community and Trends Performance Report – PDF page 194 - 'Basket of Tax Supported Services' list what on average each homeowner pays for services.

4.8% of the homeowner's tax bill is allocated to parks and urban forestry.

https://winnipeg.ca/cao/pdfs/CommunityTrendsandPerformanceReportVolume1_2018.pdf

City of Winnipeg Operating Budget Volume 2

<https://www.winnipeg.ca/finance/files/2018AdoptedOperatingBudgetVolume2.pdf>

Excluding the waterway acquisition along the Seine River, the last time Winnipeg bought land for parks may have been the Bois-des-Esprits in 2002, when the city contributed \$1.6 million.

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/our-communities/lance/correspondent/Habitat-conservation-is-a-shared-responsibility-485171611.html>

One of every 10 Winnipeg parks in poor or very poor condition: More than \$53 million required to upgrade system of 1,200 neighbourhood, community, regional spaces

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/one-of-every-10-winnipeg-parks-in-poor-or-very-poor-condition-report-419644583.html>

Parks left out in the cold Department squeezed by green space that's expanding and a budget that's not <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/parks-left-out-in-the-cold-404701296.html> ”

“Winnipeg's city parks division expects to spend another year struggling without an increase to its operating budget.” “The spending handcuffs placed on the parks division is startling. “

Facing a \$1B infrastructure deficit, recreation and parks officials seek input from public

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/parks-recreation-strategies-winnipeg-1.4707301>

“The ratio of Dutch elm diseased trees removed compared to those planted was 2,205 to 754; only one of every three trees removed is replaced.”

https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Manitoba_Pubs/2008/2Visions_2Cities_Public_Services_For_Public_Good.pdf