

2018 Winnipeg Mayoral Forum Candidate Question

3. Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy Needed

The city's urban forest canopy, comprised of trees located on private and public land, river corridors, parks, boulevards and natural areas is dwindling due to development, disease and climate change so what would you do to maintain the canopy and replenish and enhance trees removed by these factors?

If elected would you expedite the implementation of a Comprehensive Urban Forest Strategy that encompasses strategies for the entire tree canopy and what steps would you take?

Perspective:

The city's urban forest with about 8 million trees lacks an overall long range forest management plan and the tools to manage it, such as sufficient budget, tree by-law, complete asset inventory and system of accounting for the value of trees and the services they provide. Dutch elm disease has been destroying elm trees for decades and the emerging threat of the emerald ash borer is estimated to decimate the ash tree population within the next 10 years, two of many problems afflicting our trees. The city must recognize that caring for the entire urban forest infrastructure deserves the same attention as that given to its roads. A much needed recent infusion of over \$5M does not replace stable long term funding.

References:

Planting and maintenance of trees and other vegetation in parks and on boulevards are often considered a cost for the city because the positive benefits are not as clear-cut as dollars spent.
<http://urbanforestry.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2016/09/The-Social-and-Economic-Values-of-Canada's-Urban-Forests-A-National-Synthesis-2015.pdf>

The importance of a healthy and widespread urban tree canopy is to help mitigate the urban heat island (UHI) effect that is estimated to be exacerbated with increased warming due to climate change.

<http://prairieclimatecentre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/pcc-brief-climate-resilient-built-environment.pdf>

More elms marked for death now than have been in Winnipeg for 20 years
<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/dutch-elm-trees-city-of-winnipeg-1.4300963>

Emerald Ash Borer

<https://www.winnipeg.ca/PublicWorks/parksOpenSpace/UrbanForestry/EmeraldAsh.stm>

Increasing numbers of city trees are requiring removal; up to 8,500 last year from 3000 to 5000, low numbers of replacement trees being planted (2448 for 2017) and a pruning schedule of 4%

which is below the industry average of 14% and Edmonton's rate of 16%.

https://www.winnipeg.ca/cao/pdfs/CommunityTrendsandPerformanceReportVolume1_2019.pdf

Pruning tree-trimming budget threatens urban forest

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/pruning-tree-trimming-budget-threatens-urban-forest-city-councillor-says-437964403.html>

“Investing in urban ecosystems and green infrastructure can provide lower-cost solutions to multiple challenges when compared to traditional infrastructure solutions.”

<http://prairieclimatecentre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/pcc-brief-climate-resilient-city-urban-ecosystems.pdf>

Natural areas such as river corridors, urban woodlands, and forested parklands provide important habitat for a variety of animals including song birds. “Building a resilient city therefore requires: Ensuring a resilient supply of urban natural spaces to maintain and increase their quality, quantity, and diversity.”

<http://prairieclimatecentre.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/pcc-brief-climate-resilient-city-urban-ecosystems.pdf>

Other Cities:

Morden, Manitoba has a comprehensive tree inventory providing its city council with a cost-benefit ratio for decision-making regarding investments in long-term tree care and maintenance.

<https://www.manitobacooperator.ca/country-crossroads/tall-timber-rural-communities-rally-around-threatened-trees/>

Toronto’s Strategic Forest Management Plan describes its urban forest as a resource to be protected maintained and expanded. https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/8e0e-Strategic-Forest-Management-Plan-2012_22.pdf

Our BiodiverCity, Calgary's 10-year biodiversity strategic plan is based on principles for the protection, development and management of Calgary parks and ecosystems in support of biodiversity. <https://cbc.iclei.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Our-BiodiverCity.pdf>

This spring, Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson celebrated planting more than 100,000 trees.

On line tree database in Edmonton

https://www.edmonton.ca/residential_neighbourhoods/gardens_lawns_trees/yegtreemap.aspx

Why the ‘Greening’ of Vacant Land Is a Smart Long-Term Investment in Cities

<https://nextcity.org/features/view/why-the-greening-of-vacant-land-is-a-smart-long-term-investment-in-cities>