

Question 4 – Greenspace and Natural areas benefit Public Health and contribute to Climate Change Adaption and Mitigation

Explain how you would address the public health and climate change issue facing Winnipeg?

BACKGROUND

- Protecting, improving and increasing green space can help address both major issues of climate change and public health.
- The Canadian prairies, including Winnipeg are experiencing more climatic events of heat waves, drought and flooding and these events are forecast to increase in severity. Health and climate change are increasingly addressed together, and this was this accelerated by the global pandemic.
- A special report from the Prairie Climate Centre ¹ states “the changing climate is having effects right here and now, impacting the everyday lives and health of Canadians”. Mental health, heat related illness, infectious diseases and reduced air quality are highlighted.
- The 2021 report of the Lancet Countdown “finds a world overwhelmed by an ongoing global health crisis, which has made little progress to protect its population from the simultaneously aggravated health impacts of climate change.” ²
- The health benefits of accessible greenspace and natural areas are well documented for their contribution to social and mental health, longer lives and lower blood pressure, improved cognition and development in children. Manitoba doctors are now able to write “nature prescriptions” for their patients to spend time in nature to improve their mental and physical health.³

¹ SPECIAL REPORT ON Connecting Climate Change and Health, Guidebook of health and climate change content on the Atlas of Canada <https://climateatlas.ca/topic/health>

² The 2021 report of the Lancet Countdown on health and climate change: code red for a healthy future p.35 [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)01787-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)01787-6/fulltext)

³ UM medical student promotes nature prescription program November 15, 2021 https://news.umanitoba.ca/um-medical-student-promotes-nature-prescription-program/?fbclid=IwAR3_-i24TMhGIwHGtRoxHwi9HIFaxeSdgo-mOhqt2ZWufJRsG78QeW8cytU