

## 2018 Winnipeg Municipal Election Candidate Question

### ***5. Green Space and Natural Areas Benefit Healthy Living and Climate Change Mitigation***

- A. Would you support having health and climate change considerations as part of a standard practice in local development and planning decisions for green space, and if so, what steps would you take to ensure this is done?**
- B. Calgary and Edmonton commissioned a research series “Building a Climate-Resilient City” by the Prairie Climate Centre. The nine reports outline steps that cities can take to engage in climate risk management in a range of areas, including urban ecosystems. Would you support similar evidence-based research on climate change mitigation for Winnipeg?**

#### **Perspective:**

Green space is acknowledged for the benefits it provides for health, liveability, and climate change mitigation. Canada’s public health experts are promoting the value of natural areas within cities for both mental and physical health. Locally, the WRHA has declared support for equitable access to parks for our well-being.

Many of the most economical solutions for mitigating climate change can be found in how we manage our green space.

#### **References:**

The Prairie Climate Centre at U of W has identified urban ecosystems and green infrastructure as providing human health benefits and critical environmental, social and economic services and protection against climate change.

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

The Prairie Climate Centre states “Investing in urban ecosystems and green infrastructure can provide lower-cost solutions to multiple challenges when compared to traditional infrastructure solutions”. All nine papers in the Building a Climate-Resilient City series mention green infrastructure solutions.

<http://prairieclimatecentre.ca/publications/>

“The WRHA recognizes that natural environments sustain life. Our health stands to improve when land use decisions enhance the ability of natural environments to mitigate negative health impacts associated with development.”

<http://www.wrha.mb.ca/community/publichealth/files/HBEPPositionStatementFINALOct312017.pdf>

The Chief Public Health Officer’s Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2017 - Designing Healthy Living <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/chief-public-health-officer-reports-state-public-health-canada/2017-designing-healthy-living.html>

The British Columbia Centre for Disease Control designed a Healthy Build Environment Linkages Toolkit (updated 2018) to assist in making links between design, planning, and health for development in local planning authorities. The five main categories within the toolkit which are associated with positive health impacts include Neighbourhood Design, Housing, Food Systems, Transportation Networks, and of course Natural Environments.

[http://www.bccdc.ca/pop-public-health/Documents/HBE\\_linkages\\_toolkit\\_2018.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/pop-public-health/Documents/HBE_linkages_toolkit_2018.pdf)

Research has been plentiful in demonstrating the value to human health and well-being from trees, parks and natural areas. Theresa Tam, Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, chose for her 2017 Report the theme “Designing Healthy Living”, because of the “tremendous potential that changing our built environment has for helping Canadians live healthier lives”.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/chief-public-health-officer-reports-state-public-health-canada/2017-designing-healthy-living.html>

The 2017 report “Urban Greenness and Mortality in Canada's Largest Cities”, studied close to 1.3 million people, and found that being around trees and other vegetation reduced the risk of dying from several common causes of death by eight to twelve per cent.

The report also found that affluent populations have greater exposure to greenness and increased benefits to their health, compared with those in less-affluent groups. The findings support the importance of having policies related to creating greener and healthier cities for health benefits and their contribution to social equity. Winnipeg is conspicuous for its absence in the examples of Canadian cities that have included green environments as integral parts of city enhancement.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2542519617301183>

The case for building \$1,500 parks: A groundbreaking new study shows that access to “greened” vacant lots reduced feelings of worthlessness and depression, especially in low-resource neighborhoods.

[www.fastcompany.com/90206556/the-case-for-building-1500-parks](http://www.fastcompany.com/90206556/the-case-for-building-1500-parks)

A study of Canada's 30 largest cities, including Winnipeg, shows living near water is good for our health. This demonstrates how important it is to look after rivers and their riparian areas.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/living-water-reduced-risk-dying-unb-study-1.4763647>

Living in a greener neighbourhood could lower risk of early death: study. Not just parks but also street side trees, lawns and driving by parks such as golf courses could have health benefits, study suggests

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/green-spaces-lower-mortality-1.3150812?platform=hootsuite>

Cities Should Think About Trees as Public Health Infrastructure

Planting trees is an incredibly cheap and simple way to improve the well-being of people in a city. A novel idea: Public health institutions should be financing urban greenery to support well-being and air quality. <https://www.fastcompany.com/40474204/cities-should-think-about-trees-as-public-health-infrastructure>