

The Candidate Trees Please Pledge – A Strategy for Meetings

Step 1: Review Trees Please materials & data

- Trees Please Candidate Pledge can be found here: <https://treespleasewinnipeg.com/2022/05/volunteers-needed-for-the-saveourcanopy-municipal-election-campaign/>
- PowerPoint Presentation (Available at <https://treespleasewinnipeg.com/trees-please-pledge-election-toolkit/>)
- Tree loss in your Ward/Neighbourhood at: <https://treespleasewinnipeg.com/treedata/> and scroll down to Tree Loss By Ward, click on your ward and print off the profile to take with you.
- Budget data (below)
- Benefits of trees at <https://treespleasewinnipeg.com/benefits-of-urban-trees/>
- Trees Please “trees as infrastructure” mandate at <https://treespleasewinnipeg.com/trees-as-infrastructure/>

Questions? If you have any questions, please email treespleasecoalition@gmail.com, or reach out by social media.

Step 2: Contact candidates to set up a meeting between June 30 & Sept 20

Council candidates can declare as early as June 30th and as late as September 20th so keep an eye on the candidate list for each ward and update your information as it becomes available. You can find it here: <https://winnipeg.ca/clerks/election/election-2022/Candidates/>

The aim of meeting with candidates is to get to know them, hear their take on the importance of the urban forest as essential city infrastructure, and encourage them to endorse the Trees Please pledge and incorporate it into their platform. Our aim is to keep the tone as friendly and open as possible and come armed with the information that will help to convince them to sign the pledge.

Step 3: Getting candidates on side

Tell them your story: A personal story can be incredibly powerful. Your observations about what’s been happening to the public trees in your ward are important. Councillors are often unaware of how development and construction is impacting the public trees in their ward so if you have stories about that, please share them.

Show Them Their Ward Tree Profiles: Many candidates may not be fully aware of the composition of the canopy in the ward, how many public trees have been lost and how many trees are at risk. The profiles provide a snapshot of tree loss between 2015 and 2021, as well as information on the composition of the ward's canopy.

To see the kind of information provided, see the ward profiles at <https://treespleasewinnipeg.com/treedata/>. As you will see, tree loss in the ward over five years exceeds 1000 trees but the largest portion of the ward canopy is green ash, which means that a large number of ward trees are at risk and may be lost in the future to the emerald ash borer or cottony psyllid. Candidates need to know that!

Have Budget Numbers Ready: Councillors, especially incumbents, will inevitably equivocate on the costs associated with the Trees Please ask and it's always good to come armed with numbers.

- Costing out a 2 to 1 planting ratio is difficult, but you can assure them that it is doable given that the **city can cost share with other federal programs** like 2 billion trees.
- We have costed out the price tag for a seven-year pruning cycle for public trees with the help of UFD and it is estimated at **\$5 million a year**.

Ask them to enact City bylaws that protect and preserve our mature trees The third ask is about the political will to pass bylaws that protect and preserve our mature trees. The argument for protecting them is simple: mature trees provide more services than newly planted trees and save the city a lot of money. A single mature tree over the course of a fifty-year lifespan saves the city as much as \$57,000.00 in the services it provides. See <https://forestry.usu.edu/trees-cities-towns/urban-forestry/what-is-a-tree-worth>

****Share the Trees Please PowerPoint presentation with the candidate if you think it helps!****

Step 4: Invite The Candidate to Take the Trees Please Pledge

If the candidate agrees to "Take the Pledge", ask them to:

- a) include the Trees Please Pledge in their platform and campaign materials,
- b) agree to allow Trees Please to include their name and Ward in our website where we are listing which candidates are taking the pledge.
- c) option for volunteers who wish: take a photo with the volunteer (ideally with trees in shot!) to use in Trees Please Instagram, Twitter and Facebook pages. (Understand the candidate may also want to use the photo of the volunteer with them in their campaign materials.)

Step 5: Report Back

Please send us email updates on the candidates you've met with and their response to the pledge – plus photos if available! Send updates to treespleascoalition@gmail.com