

Trees Please Winnipeg

Investing in Trees for a Healthy, Thriving City

Growing Our Tree Canopy – Our Challenge!

City Aims to Grow Canopy to 24%

In 2023, Winnipeg City Council adopted a new Urban Forestry Strategy that promises our canopy will cover 24% of our city by 2065. (Our canopy coverage was 17% in 2018). To help achieve this goal, the City is working on a consolidated public tree bylaw. But there is no plan to create bylaws to protect private trees.

Canopy at Risk

- The vast majority of Winnipeg's 3 million trees and riverbank forests are located on private land with no rules for their protection.
- Winnipeg risks losing almost 50% of our trees in the next four decades to pests and disease. Development means even more stress and lost trees. Trees need protection.

Climate Change – Winnipeggers Care!

- Most Winnipeggers are concerned about climate change (77%) and almost half say this impacts their physical or mental health.
- Two thirds of Winnipeggers are concerned that climate change is or will impact green spaces and trees.
- People also worry about extreme heat, and sewer and storm damage.
- 43% say preserving our green spaces should be one of the top three priorities for the city's climate change initiatives.*
- From 1976-2005, we averaged 14 days over 30 C. From 2051-2080 the projected number of days over 30 C will range from 27 to 52 hot days per year!**

*Probe Research, City of Winnipeg, released April 2025.

**Climate Atlas of Canada

We Are Making Progress: Investing in Trees

Mayor Scott Gillingham and all City Councillors signed the **Trees Please Pledge in 2022**, making solid progress.

In 2020, the replanting rate for public trees was just 20% and now it has jumped to 100%, meaning that for every public tree that's removed, a new one is planted. Pruning public trees has also improved substantially.

We need our elected officials to build on this momentum – and protect private trees too.

How You Can Help

- Trees Count- talk to your neighbours about how trees help – see talking points below.
- Promote the **2026 Trees Please Pledge!** Help elect a council that takes action to meet our 24% canopy cover goals!
- Wear a **Save the Shade T-shirt** this summer to spark conversation! Order by May 15th



Trees Count: Talking Points on the Value of Trees

Trees Mitigate Climate Change

We need to protect our large, healthy trees because our trees protect us in return.

- **Cool the air:** A well-treed neighbourhood provides shade and can be four degrees cooler than a neighbourhood without trees.
- **Absorb rainwater:** Trees reduce the stress on our sewers and pipes by absorbing rainwater.
- **Store carbon:** A large, healthy tree can store approximately 65 times more carbon and remove 15 times more air pollution than a small tree.
- **Increase asphalt life:** Shade from trees can double the life of an asphalt road.

Healthy Trees, Healthy Life

Urban trees help us live healthier, happier lives:

- **Remove pollutants from the air** - Urban forestry improves air quality by directly removing pollutants and ozone, reducing local air pollution by 7% to 24%. (Ren, 2022).

- **Improve mental well-being** - Trees can lead to improved mental health. This outcome is supported by fewer suicide attempts (Lee, 2023), and a decrease in depression (Dhal, 2025). Higher levels of tree canopy are associated with a lower risk of dementia (Thomas Astell-Burta, 2020).
- **Improve physical health** - The majority of Canadian adults (82.5%) do not meet physical activity guidelines and are sedentary for much of the day (Statistics Canada, 2020). People walk more in areas with mature trees and obesity rates are lower. Adults with Type 2 diabetes who perceive their neighbourhoods as more walkable, including treed streets, accumulate more daily steps. (Hajna, 2016).
- **Reduce environmental noise** - Noise pollution is recognized by the World Health Organization as the second most significant environmental stressor after air pollution. Trees absorb, reflect and refract noise levels. (Ramyar et al., 2020). Trees play an important role in absorbing traffic noise (Zhao, 2021).

How We Protect Our Trees in Cities Across Canada but not in Winnipeg - not yet!

Winnipeg is falling behind in protecting our urban canopy on private property. City Council was expected to review what could go into a new bylaw to protect trees on private property in June 2025. That has been delayed.

Other Cities have bylaws to protect trees on private property: ***

- **Burnaby** (pop 250,000) - bylaw passed in 2014 - permit required
- **Mississauga** (pop 718,000) - bylaw passed in 2022 - permit required/fines
- **Ottawa** (pop 1,000,000) - bylaw passed in 2021 - permit required/fines
- **Surrey** (pop 568,000) - bylaw passed in 2006 - permit required/fines
- **Brampton** (pop 656,000) - bylaw passed in 2012 - permit required/fines
- **Toronto** (pop 2,800,000) and many other Ontario municipalities have a private tree bylaw with permits required/fines.
- **Vancouver** (pop 662,000) bylaw passed in 1994, updated in 2014 - permit required, fines

***Trees Winnipeg commissioned report: *Private Tree Bylaws and Urban Forest Strategies in Jurisdictions Across Canada 2024*

Trees Please Winnipeg is a coalition of volunteer resident groups lobbying all levels of government to make long-term, sustainable infrastructure investments in the maintenance, diversification and expansion of our urban forests. www.treespleasewinnipeg.com

Preamble

Winnipeg's Urban Forest Strategy, approved by City Council in 2023, has achieved significant success. In partnership with community groups, tree planting has increased to over 6,400 annually, nearly matching the 6,508 trees removed in 2024. The goal is to expand our tree canopy from 17% to 24% by 2065 through targeted, equity-based planting and enhanced care.

The 2026 Trees Please Pledge

If I am elected, I pledge to take the following actions to protect and maintain Winnipeg's urban forest:

1. **Maintain:** Maintain and enhance the Winnipeg Urban Forestry budget so the department can achieve the 24% canopy target by protecting, maintaining and replacing trees.
2. **Protect:** Require tree protection best practices be incorporated into all construction projects in the city.
3. **Enact:** Enact bylaws as recommended by Urban Forestry to control removal and severe pruning of all trees in the City over 15 cm in trunk diameter.



Signed _____ Date _____