

OURS-Winnipeg

Greenspace Topics - January 2021

Development on MOS will reduce Winnipeg's Greenspace and Tree Canopy

- 6% of Winnipeg's total city area is public park land, compared to average of Canadian cities at 9%. (2020 Park People Report)
- Golf course lands (1% of total city area) could increase total area to 7%
- Public Major Open Space makes up over 3% of city's public park land and development on it will

Winnipeg needs more natural area

- **Winnipeg is below average in the amount of natural area it has in its parkland compared to other Canadian cities**
- Winnipeg has 36% natural area within its parks - below average compared to the average for other Canadian cities at 44%
- Toronto - 46%, Montreal - 39%, Calgary - 55%, Vancouver - 38%, Quebec City - 62%
- In Winnipeg's ESNL (Ecologically Significant Natural Areas) are easier to delist greenspace than list

Public Greenspace/Private Development

- City plans enable conversion of publicly owned greenspace to private development and do not provide sufficient protection and planning. Cities need to preserve public spaces for the benefit of its residents. They belong to us.

Climate Change, Urban Heat Islands, Cool Spaces

- Winnipeg is third highest among Major Canadian cities forecast to experience higher summer temperatures.
- Planning for a hotter future requires greenspace planning
- Research has shown that large green spaces provide the greatest cooling benefits for hot summer days and river corridors provide cooling refuge for people and wildlife.
- Planting trees and other vegetation mitigates the Urban Heat Island Effect by lowering surface and air temperatures.
- Trees along river corridors protect the health of the river providing cooling shade, filtering water and moderating stormwater surges.

Public Health Benefits

- The Government of Canada has identified extreme heat as a significant public health issue in Canada.
- In addition to reducing temperatures, the presence of green spaces such as parks, trees, and natural vegetation and water features has been linked to a number of additional health benefits.
- Numerous studies link greenspace to better mental and physical health, overall well-being and a longer life, cardiac and blood pressure benefits.

Children and Nature

- **Particularly important for children to be exposed to nature**
- Encyclopedia of Early Childhood development <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/outdoor-play/introduction>
- Outdoor Play <http://www.child-encyclopedia.com/outdoor-play/according-experts>

More Greenspace Required not Less

- Winnipeg 's growing population and denser neighbourhoods will need more greenspace
- **Our existing parks will to a great extent become the “backyards” and “front yards” of residents in denser neighbourhoods.** Dr. Cecil Konijnendijk Urban Forest Resources U. of B. C

Urban Parks are Essential Infrastructure

- Urban parks are not luxuries, they are part of the basic physical structure of cities
- As cities grow and densify, mayors, planners and civic leaders are looking at parks to help them address pressing urban infrastructure challenges from storm water management and flood prevention to reducing public health costs to economic revitalization and job growth
- Municipal budgets for greenspace must go up. They are a small share of the budget compared to the benefits provided

Winnipeg does not have a Biodiversity Plan

- Biodiversity is essential to the health and livability of cities and cities have an important role to play in protecting and enhancing biodiversity

- Large and interconnected spaces are crucial to the conservation of biodiversity
- Winnipeg has 36% natural areas in public parks, compared to average for Canadian cities at 44%.
- Should meet or exceed national and global targets for natural area protection
- Federal target to protect natural terrestrial areas is 25% by 2025 and 30% by 2030
- Having a Biodiversity Plan like Victoria, Vancouver, [Toronto](#), Montreal, [Calgary](#) and Edmonton should be a priority Implementation item in the Plan

Waterways Need Protection

- River corridors and their water need protection. They are a precious resource for a River City
- Four rivers and three creeks connect with surrounding municipalities
- Trees along river corridors protect the health of the river providing cooling shade, filtering water and moderating stormwater surges.
- In the current Plan, riverbanks are associated with development, NOT clean water, recreation, ecology, natural areas or habitat
- Require policy to include riparian areas and their water as natural assets and ecosystems and provide for their protection
- Studies have shown that a much wider buffer along waterways than currently exists is required for ecosystem protection. Improve health of riparian areas and their water by adopting the Provincial Planning Regulations that require at least a 30-meter buffer for development along riverbanks.
- Based on existing development within the urban Seine River watershed, it is likely that impervious surfaces already surpass the 30 per cent threshold. The river shows signs of degradation, low water table, and drying up.
- Edmonton has a report called Wildlife Passage Engineering Design Guidelines for river corridors that Winnipeg could adopt.