

Loney to Create Winnipeg Tree Trust

Ground-breaking Agency to Reverse Decline of Urban Forest

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Winnipeg, MANITOBA – It's time to think differently about trees in Winnipeg and realize they are as important as pipes and pavement, Mayoral candidate Shaun Loney said today as he shared his newest campaign plank.

Loney stood on what used to be a well-treed block in Winnipeg and said he will work with Winnipeggers to establish the **Winnipeg Tree Trust**, an independent entity that would work closely with the City to reverse the decline of Winnipeg's urban forest.

Loney noted that trees add value to property by increasing curb appeal. They shade and cool homes in the summer, reducing the need for air conditioning. Trees absorb run-off rainwater, putting less strain on our too-often overwhelmed sewer system that regularly dumps raw sewage into the rivers. Trees stabilise riverbanks and reduce riverbank erosion. And trees absorb carbon to help us meet our climate change targets.

"Trees are an integral part of our infrastructure and need to be treated as such," said Loney, who is a trained economist and internationally recognized social entrepreneur.

As evidence that citizens have noticed that their green infrastructure is broken, Loney pointed to Trees Please Winnipeg which connects with over [30 groups](#) in the City that lobby to protect and enhance our canopy.

Lisa Forbes, long time tree advocate, said. "This innovative approach uses trees and landscaping as natural infrastructure to manage both climate change and stormwater run-off, while employing people with barriers to getting jobs. Multiple wins!"

Alison Norberg who lives on Home Street said, "I am deeply concerned that so many stately elm trees on my street, planted more than 100 years ago, are now just stumps. And sadly, there have been none replaced in over three years."

Loney said the **Winnipeg Tree Trust** would enhance and support existing efforts noting he wants to bolster the work of organisations such as Trees Winnipeg and Aurora Farms

The **Winnipeg Tree Trust** would be independent but with a productive relationship with the City not unlike the Assiniboine Park Conservancy that now runs, operates and has substantially enhanced Assiniboine Park.

The **Winnipeg Tree Trust** would enable new sources of revenue by allowing partners to value what trees do, specifically by:

- Engaging foundations and philanthropists;
- Accessing federal dollars;
- Offering certified carbon offsets for citizens, governments and businesses; and
- Leveraging the \$100 million plus green infrastructure component of Council's Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Master Plan

As is done with the Minneapolis Tree Trust, there will be a mandate to hire people with barriers to employment, particularly women who are currently receiving services from the city's women's centres. This would include installing aspects of Loney's [green infrastructure plan](#) previously announced on May 30th designed to reduce the amount of sewage dumped into Winnipeg's waterways.

Loney also added that he fully endorses the [Winnipeg Trees Please Pledge](#) to plant two public trees for every one removed, to prune at industry standards and to protect trees on construction sites.

For More Information:

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QUOTES:

“There are over 30,000 children living in poverty in Winnipeg and that more than half of all children in female single-parent families live in poverty. For many of these women, a meaningful, good paying job will lift them out.”

Shaun Loney

“These jobs will be important to help offer opportunities to the women in our community.” **Elder Mae Louise Campbell, Clan Mothers Healing Lodge**

“Our company would be keen to offset our carbon emissions based on local carbon sequestration right here in Winnipeg. We're excited to leverage training and jobs for women as well.”

Jen Peters of Emerge Knowledge

Calls for Justice #4.4 – Final Report on the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls

“We call upon all governments to provide supports and resources for educational, training, and employment opportunities for all Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people...”

Background: Winnipeg's Iconic Urban Forest in Crisis

One of Winnipeg's best physical assets is its urban forest. At 17 percent, Winnipeg's tree canopy cover is substantially higher than other Canadian Prairie cities such as Edmonton (10%), Saskatoon, (9%) and Calgary (8%). However:

- In 2019, a record number of trees with Dutch elm disease were identified with 9,500 marked for removal. Disease and insects also caused the need to remove as many as 1,500 ash trees.
- From 2013 to 2019, approximately 30,000 street and park trees were removed, and only 15,500 were replaced.- a deficit that is growing by an average of 2,000 trees per year.
- Percentage of trees pruned annually (target 14%) has fallen from 8 percent in 2013 to 3 percent in 2019.
- The City has launched the One Million Tree Challenge (MTC) in 2021 but fewer than 30,000 trees have been planted to date. Trees Winnipeg is leading the challenge but due to lack of revenue, they have only two full time employees.
- From 2016 to 2021, the City's Urban Forestry Budget fluctuated within a narrow range – from \$11.2-million to \$12.1-million. The operating budget for 2022 saw a modest \$2-million increase but still insufficient to capture the financial benefits of trees.
- Individuals, community groups, and other organizations who want to help beautify public property and add to the city's urban forest have been frustrated by civic red tape and burdensome requirements.
- The carbon stored in Winnipeg's urban forest is over 509,000 tonnes valued at almost \$40-million. Failure to expand our canopy is a failure to capture this opportunity.
- The estimated value of trees on public and private land in Winnipeg is more than \$3 billion. Studies confirm that the loss of mature trees in existing neighbourhoods can have a significant negative impact of property values. Failure to maintain and grow our canopy will result in a missed opportunity.
- The Government of Canada is investing \$200 million to support projects that use natural or hybrid approaches to protect the natural environment, support healthy and resilient communities, and contribute to economic growth.

References and Information Sources.

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3. [Green Infrastructure: Overview](#)
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4. [Winnipeg Without Poverty – Calling on the City to Lead.](#)
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5. [Economics of Urban Forestry](#).
Arbor Day Foundation, accessed May 19, 2022.
6. [Trees Winnipeg](#), (*One Million Tree Challenge and ReLeaf Tree Planting Program*),
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7. [Tree Please Winnipeg](#), accessed May 19, 2022.