

Winnipeg National Urban Park Opportunity

INTRODUCTION

The federal government has an initiative to establish National Urban Parks across Canada. The City of Winnipeg entered into an agreement with the federal government to establish a National Urban Park. The location has not yet been announced.

Since then, a committee has been formed to explore the opportunity that includes Treaty One, the Manitoba Metis Federation, Parks Canada, the Government of Manitoba, and the City of Winnipeg.

ASSINIBOINE FOREST AS A CANDIDATE

Assiniboine Forest, located near Naawi Oodena and nestled between River Heights and Tuxedo, is a location that we believe should be considered as part or all of Winnipeg's National Urban Park.

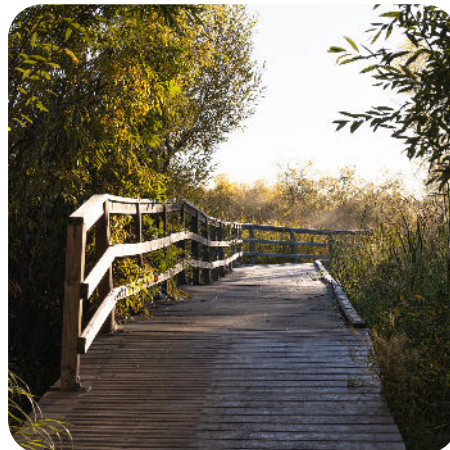
According to the Friends of Assiniboine Forest, Assiniboine Forest is the largest urban forest in Canada with 711 acres of aspen and oak forest, restored tall-grass prairie and wetlands. It is home to white-tailed deer, coyote, songbirds, nesting waterfowl, and 256 species of plants.

The forest is largely undeveloped, aside from 18 kilometres of multi-use trails designed to help visitors explore and appreciate its beauty.

ASSINIBOINE FOREST AT RISK

Some will say the forest is not a risk. That it would never be developed. However, a simple 2/3 city council vote is all it would take for the forest to be opened up to developers. We've seen similar beloved nature refuges reduced across the country. Large sections of Ottawa's Gatineau Park have been turned into housing developments, shopping centres and roads on multiple occasions over the years despite protests by local residents.

A National Urban Park could permanently protect the forest for future generations of people and wildlife.



Adjacent Lands Opportunity

A significant opportunity would be to explore whether adjacent natural lands (see map) to the south and along the Hart Trail could be acquired to expand the new park, thereby adding much-needed green space to the city.

The restoration of other adjacent, but developed, lands is also worth exploring. Federal funding could support the cost of converting agricultural land back to natural prairie, for example.

Federal Investment

A National Urban Park could bring significant federal investment to:

- Reduce the resources required from the city's budget to manage the forest.
- Better manage the forest, improve accessibility, and advance reconciliation.
- Create new jobs, including management and interpretive programs.
- Expand Winnipeg's tourist attractions and gain promotional support from Parks Canada

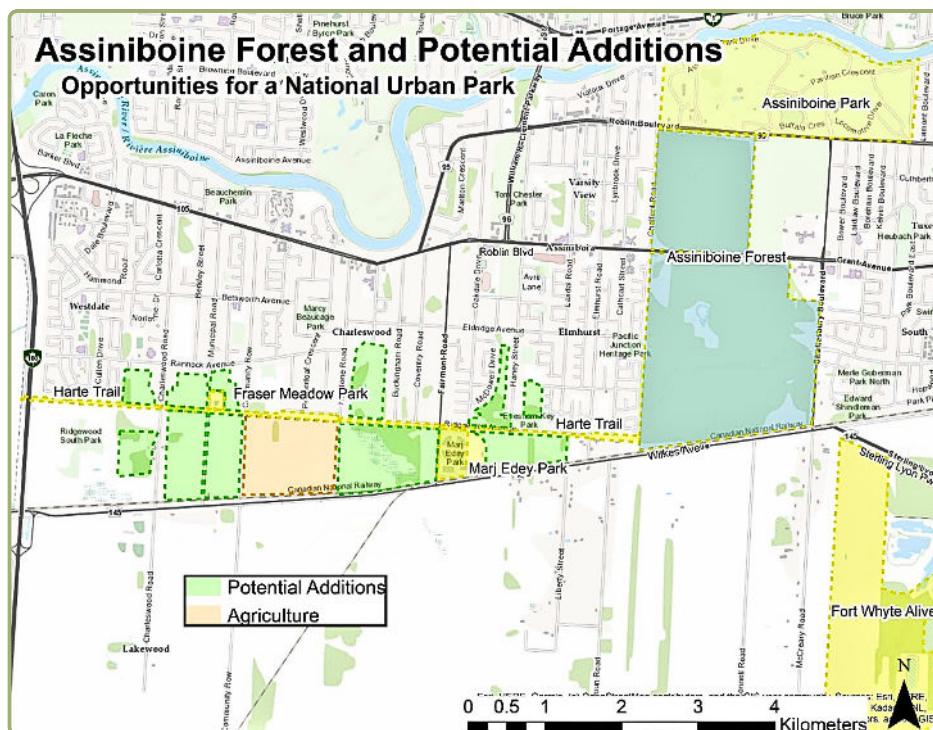
Reconciliation

Indigenous peoples have stewarded this territory for thousands of years. National Urban Parks must be designed, established, and managed in the spirit of reconciliation. At a minimum, this entails ensuring that Indigenous leadership and knowledge are actively and equitably sought in all stages of park development and administration.

The Forest's proximity to the Naawi Oodena provides an excellent opportunity for its future residents to utilize the area for cultural and recreational purposes and to take part in its stewardship. One possibility is a co-management model that includes the leadership of Treaty One and the Manitoba Metis Federation.

A Park for Everyone

Located along a major road and transit route, Assiniboine Forest and adjacent lands provide opportunities for all Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who live in and visit Winnipeg to experience the health and wellbeing benefits of spending time in nature.



For More Information:

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