

Parker Lands are a vibrant part of Manitoba's Metis history

Up until the late 1950s, the land between present-day Grant Avenue and McGillivray Boulevard, just west of Pembina Highway, supported a vibrant Metis community known as Rooster Town and its "suburb" called Tin Town. The homes in this area were old boxcars and corrugated tin-covered shanties scattered among the aspen bush, tall-grass prairie, and wetlands. What it lacked in city services, it made up in community spirit. By 1959, the city drove out the residents and destroyed the shanty communities. The University of Winnipeg and the Louis Riel Institute of the Manitoba Metis Federation are actively collecting stories about this part of Winnipeg's forgotten past. The Parker lands represent the last remnant of the natural landscape that supported this unique community.

City Council Meeting (Wednesday, March 20, 2013) - If City Council pushes forward with its agenda to have the Parker lands developed as a part of the rapid transit route, it will destroy the last physical vestiges of this part of Metis history and the unique opportunity to establish a city park that pays tribute to Metis culture, history, and lifestyle. In light of the recent Supreme Court decision, it would be short-sighted for City Council to approve the Parker route as the only option for the rapid transit line (and 3500 property-tax generating townhouses) without consultation with the Metis community and other local residents on the future of the Parker lands.

<http://readreidread.wordpress.com/2011/01/18/rooster-town-hidden-winnipeg-history/>

<https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/index/uw-news-action/story.896/title.-remembering-rooster-town-public-help-wanted>

<http://uniter.ca/view/8330/>

<http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/07242>

Additional context attached below.

Additional context:

In 2009, Winnipeg City Council swapped the city-owned Parker lands to a developer through an agreement that included the option to purchase back part of the land for rapid transit. Council now argues that the rapid transit must follow this route because it will stimulate the development of these lands. If Council accepts the recommendation from EPC to sink all of its planning time and dollars into the Parker route, it would effectively eliminate any further consideration of a rapid transit route along Pembina Highway. There is insufficient information at this time (environmental impact analysis, consultation with the community, etc.) for the City to pursue a single option as though the development of the Parker lands is a foregone conclusion. Or perhaps the City chooses to believe it is the only option.

2000 – The City identified the Parker Lands as high quality ecologically sensitive lands in Plan Winnipeg – but no steps were taken to protect it even though it was owned by the city

2001 – The city removed Policy Plate D (a map showing the locations of ecologically-sensitive lands) from Plan Winnipeg 2020 arguing that “the City has little means or authority to protect, preserve, or acquire these lands.”

2001 – The Province directed the City to include a policy plate with accompanying text that designates natural areas that are environmentally-sensitive or significant, and to complete a sensitive lands plan by December

2003 (later extended to 2005)

February 2007 – Council approved an Ecologically Significant Natural Lands Strategy – without a map/policy plate

July 2009 – Despite its identification as high quality (City-owned) ecologically-sensitive land since 2000, Council swapped the City-owned Parker lands (that it had both the means and ability to protect) to a developer without any public consultation. Council specified that a “developer-led” secondary plan must be developed for the site and that a front-end consultation with the public be conducted

March 19, 2013 – To date, no secondary plan or comprehensive “front-end” consultation has been conducted regarding the future development of the Parker lands. The city is on the brink of pursuing the Parker route as the only possible route for the next leg of Bus Rapid Transit – a plan whose ridership and viability is tied to the conversion of the Parker lands to new housing. If the City does not keep the Pembina Highway options on the table for more detailed study, the City itself will be the key proponent for the destruction of these ecologically and historically significant lands – without consultation.