12. On July 17, 2002, Council adopted the Report entitled "Toward an Integrated Planning Model", as well as approved an increase in the annual departmental operating budgets of both the Planning, Property, and Development and the Community Services Departments in order to implement the recommendations as contained within the Report.

On June 20, 2002, the Downtown Initiatives Committee endorsed the "Getting Down to Business" Report.

In December of 2001, Council adopted Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision, which establishes a "Downtown First" policy in recognition that a healthy and vibrant downtown is key to the health and vibrancy of the City as a whole.

On September 4th, 2001, the Downtown Initiatives Committee endorsed the document entitled, "Strategy to Improve City Processes in Downtown".

**Downtown Initiatives Committee**

The Downtown Initiatives Committee was established during the summer of 2001. Comprised of some of the City's most senior politicians and administrators, the Committee has worked to hasten the pace of reform of the City's downtown review and approval mechanisms. The Committee considers, prioritizes, and directs strategic initiatives in order to achieve the stated goal of making the downtown the best place to invest and conduct business.

***"Strategy to Improve City Process in Downtown"***- The Downtown Initiatives Committee endorsed the Strategy in September of 2001. The Strategy has three major components:

- political leadership to address fundamental changes that are necessary;
- ·external communication to build community (stakeholder) support for those changes, and;
- ·internal communication to build commitment to generate process improvements.

Beginning in the fall of 2001, CentreVenture, supported by administrators within the CAO Secretariat as well as the Planning, Property, and Development Department, undertook an extensive internal and external consultation process in order to generate discussion regarding the rules, regulations, and processes that face the development industry within the downtown. This consultation process provided for an appropriate balance of perspective with regard to the development industry's expectations for speed and simplicity versus the administration's responsibility of safeguarding the public good and protecting investment.

**Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated September 18, 2002**

**The "Getting Down to Business" Report**- The Report summarizes the results of that stakeholder consultation process, identifies six (6) Strategies and nineteen (19) detailed Recommendations going forward for Council consideration. The Report also provides the policy foundation for this undertaking, as well as provides an historical perspective of previous downtown initiatives.

***How does this Report Compliment the Integrated Planning Model ?***

Approved by Council in July of 2002, the Integrated Planning Model addresses structural problems within the organization, redresses resource deficiencies, and responds to specific issues related to development and building approval processes. The Model provides for 3 major recommendations including:

- Strengthening of the planning function in order to coordinate overall city planning more effectively
- Enhancement of the role that Community Resource Coordinators play within neighbourhoods
- Improvements in the permits and inspections areas in order to provide faster response to development applications

In addition, the Director of Planning, Property, and Development will be responsible for the provision of broader long range planning and development leadership within the City. Among other things, the Model recommends the stronger integration of land use and transportation planning.

While the Integrated Planning Model addresses the planning, building permits, and inspections functions at the macro level, the "Getting Down to Business" Report makes more specific recommendations that would:

- Clarify the plan for the downtown;
- Make the rules (regulations and procedures) match the plan;
- Streamline the development application process;
- Build staff commitment;
- Provide the resources to deliver on expectations, and;
- Maintain communications (both internally and externally).

**Financial Implications** - Several of the recommendations contained within the "Getting Down to Business" Report having specifically to do with enhanced communications may have financial implications that are not known at this time. Further more detailed analysis and reporting is required. The administration will endeavor to contain these costs within existing budgets.

**Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated September 18, 2002**

Some of the recommendations require an assessment of the existing financial and staff resources within service areas, and may lead to a redistribution of these resources in order to better reflect Council's priorities. These areas include existing maintenance and capital program budgets, and may be the subject of future reports for the respective Standing Committees consideration.

Some of the recommendations represent significant improvements that may result in additional costs beyond existing budgets and will need to be considered further by Council. These recommendations include the development and implementation of Small Area (or Secondary) Plans, as well as the potential conversion of one way to two way streets within the downtown.

This Report, and its six (6) Strategies and nineteen (19) Recommendations, represents a portion of the work as endorsed by the Downtown Initiatives Committee as identified within its "Strategy to Improve City Processes in Downtown" Document. In order to ensure the effective implementation of these Strategies and Recommendations, the Downtown Initiatives Committee wish that the "Getting Down to Business" Report be considered and endorsed by City Council.

The Executive Policy Committee recommends:

I. That the report outlined as Attachment "A", entitled "Getting Down to Business", Final Draft, dated September 6, 2002, be adopted by Council, including the nineteen recommendations contained within it as summarized on Pages 4 through 6 of the Report.

II. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the foregoing.

Attachment "A" referred to in Clause 12 of the Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated September 18, 2002

Attachment "A"

# Getting Down to Business

The Downtown Initiatives Report on Consultation
September 6, 2002

FINAL DRAFT

CENTREVENTURE
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Winnipeg

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## Introduction: The Downtown Initiatives Strategy

For many years, the City of Winnipeg has been strongly committed to downtown revitalization. Recently, a Downtown Initiatives Committee has been struck, chaired by the Mayor, to help focus attention on a number of downtown initiatives. The Committee recognizes the need for a coordinated approach described in their action agenda as follows:

*Goal:*

*To create an environment for growth, wealth, and sustainability:*

? *To make the downtown the best place in the City to conduct business;*
? *To create a vibrant, healthy, attractive, and safe downtown while maintaining a sense of history and place.*

*Roles and Responsibilities:*

*a. Council must:*

? *Consider an expedited regulatory process*
? *Endorse streamlined decision-making*

*b. The administration must:*

? *Simplify downtown development review and approval systems and procedures*
? *Adopt a more integrated (planned/coordinated activities) approach*

*c. CentreVenture must:*

? *Ensure that the private sector has input and validates public sector initiatives*
? *Receive stakeholder input, facilitate consensus, and establish priorities*
? *Encourage private sector buy-in and investment*

In keeping with this goal, this report summarizes the result of consultations with a number of stakeholders from the community and from the civic administration. It contains 19 recommendations for Council consideration.

| GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS: Summary of Recommendations | | |
|---|---|---|
| No. | Recommendation | Responsibility |
| **Strategy 1: Clarify the plan for downtown** | | |
| 1.1 | Undertake a comprehensive public promotion of CentrePlan: Vision and Strategies and the Development Framework to ensure the plan is recognized, understood, and accepted by the development industry, business, and the professional community. | Manager of Downtown Improvement with the Manager of Public Affairs |
| 1.2 | Undertake the development of Small Area (or Secondary) Plans in key downtown locations such as Portage Avenue, the East Exchange District, the Civic Centre Precinct, Chinatown, etc. in order to provide greater clarity to the vision for downtown. | Manager of Planning and Land Use with direction provided by the Downtown Initiatives Committee |
| 1.3 | Adopt a comprehensive parking policy for the downtown that addresses the provision of both short-term and long-term parking and that clarifies the role of the civic parking authority subsequent to a review of options for alternative service delivery. | City Council |
| 1.4 | Undertake a review of the transportation network in the downtown, in particular the one-way street system, with an emphasis on balancing the needs of moving people and goods with the needs for integrating land use, urban design, and pedestrian comfort consistent with the vision of CentrePlan and the Development Framework. | Manager of Transportation |
| **Strategy 2: Make the rules match the plan** | | |
| 2.1 | Amend the Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-law (No. 4800) in order to make it simpler, clearer, and less prescriptive and to ensure that the objectives of CentrePlan and the Development Framework are captured, in particular, the need to promote mixed-use development (with a focus on housing) together with the concepts of clustering, compactness, and density. | Council subsequent to an administrative report from the Director of Planning, Property and Development |
| 2.2 | Prepare urban design principles and guidelines to compliment the zoning by-law ensuring that they clearly express, through illustrations, the intent of CentrePlan, the Development Framework, and the by-law, stressing the importance of respecting the neighbouring context. | Manager of Planning and Land Use |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Strategy 3: Streamline the development application process** | | |
| 3.1 | Establish a system for downtown development applications whereby a planner or application centre representative is assigned as the single point of contact for the applicant and is responsible for monitoring and expediting the application through all necessary approval processes. | Manager of Downtown Improvement together with the Manager of Planning and Land Use and the Manager of Development and Inspections |
| 3.2 | Establish a single decision-making authority for all downtown development applications, either through the creation of an independent planning commission or a specially designated standing committee of Council. | Council subsequent to an administrative report from the Director of Planning, Property and Development |
| 3.3 | Establish a peer review process for design review whereby the appropriateness of a development application is assessed by a team of design professionals working in an advisory capacity to the decision making body established through Recommendation 3.2. | Council subsequent to an administrative report from the Director of Planning, Property and Development |
| 3.4 | Implement a staged review process for building permits in order to allow the commencement of construction prior to the submission of fully completed construction drawings. | Manager of Development and Inspections |
| 3.5 | When processing development applications, assign the most senior staff to work with the major developers and on the more complex developments proposed for the downtown. | Manager of Development and Inspections and the Manager of Planning and Land Use |
| 3.6 | The City, together with the Development Industry, should prepare standards for the submission of development applications, as well as outline the responsibilities of the applicant and the City in the processing of development applications. | Manager of Downtown Improvement, together with the Manager of Planning and Land Use and the Manager of Development and Inspections. |
| **Strategy 4: Build staff commitment** | | |
| 4.1 | Provide orientation sessions whereby the intent of Plan Winnipeg, CentrePlan, the Development Framework, the Downtown Zoning By-law, and the design principles and guidelines are explained in detail to all front line staff involved in development review. | Manager of Downtown Improvement together with the Strategic Planning and Communication Coordinator. |
| 4.2 | Implement a regular customer service training program for all front line staff involved in development review. | Manager of Development and Inspections and Manager of Planning and Land Use together with the Strategic Planning and |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | Communication Coordinator. |
| **Strategy 5: Provide resources to deliver on expectations** | | |
| 5.1 | Review current practices and costs associated with the maintenance of public space in the downtown including streets, streetscapes, urban forest, and parks with the goal of identifying the means and methods for improving standards and supporting the goals of CentreVenture. | Director of Public Works |
| 5.2 | Review and prioritize future downtown capital projects ensuring alignment with CentrePlan and the Development Framework. | Council subsequent to a report from the Manager of Downtown Improvement |
| **Strategy 6: Communicate** | | |
| 6.1 | Clarify the steps required for all development approvals in the downtown and establish the means by which applicants can track the progress of their applications as they proceed through the system. | Manager of Development and Inspections working with the Manager of Property and Information Systems and the Strategic Planning and Communication Coordinator. |
| 6.2 | Establish a downtown page on the City of Winnipeg web site where all downtown related information can be accessed including CentrePlan, the Development Framework, the Downtown Zoning By-law, and other items listed above when completed. | Manager of Downtown Improvement working with the Manager of Property and Information Systems and the Manager of Public Affairs |
| 6.3 | Establish a communication program with the development industry and the professional community whereby their newsletters, web sites, and other communication vehicles are used to disseminate information on City policy as it relates to the downtown, in particular, on any changes to development plans, policies, regulations, and processes. | Manager of Downtown Improvement with the Strategic Planning and Communications Coordinator in consultation with CentreVenture. |

## A. Focusing on Downtown: An Historical Overview

Since the 1960s, there has been an ongoing focus on downtown revitalization. It began with a policy of urban renewal targeted toward North Main resulting in the rebuilding of City Hall and the construction of the Museum of Man and Nature, the Planetarium, and the Centennial Concert Hall, among others.

Following the adoption of the Metropolitan Development Plan of 1968 and the Downtown Winnipeg Plan of 1969, there was an emphasis on rebuilding the residential population and stimulating economic development in the downtown. This resulted in construction projects such as Place Louis Riel, Holiday Towers, and the Winnipeg Convention Centre through the 1970s.

The 1980s focused more broadly on the inner city, including the downtown and its surrounding neighbourhoods. Social, economic, and physical development were each viewed as components of a comprehensive approach to revitalization. Through two Core Area Initiative Agreements, each running for 5 years, the three levels of government combined resources to deliver projects such as Portage Place and the Forks among many other smaller initiatives.

The late 1980s and early 1990s saw an emphasis on policy development. The first step was the adoption of the Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-law in 1988. The new by-law introduced design review together with a flexible zoning system intended to facilitate downtown development. Shortly after that, an intensive review of Plan Winnipeg was undertaken leading to the adoption of Plan Winnipeg …toward 2010 in 1993. The Plan provided a strong policy foundation for the downtown that led to a secondary planning exercise focused solely on the downtown and resulted in the adoption of CentrePlan in 1994.

There are two components to CentrePlan, the Vision and Strategies document that provides long term direction for the downtown and the Action Plan that provides a two year agenda of initiatives to be undertaken not only by the City of Winnipeg but

by other stakeholders as well. The first Action Plan was developed for 1995-96. An update was developed for 1997-99.

Also at that time, in 1995, the Winnipeg Development Agreement once again applied the tri-level, five year funding model that proved successful with the Core Area Initiatives. This resulted in the implementation of several recommendations emerging from CentrePlan's Action Plans. One of those initiatives was to refine the CentrePlan vision. This resulted in the CentrePlan Development Framework, a physical model for downtown redevelopment that was endorsed by Council as a guide for development.

Following the civic election of 1998, Council once again identified downtown revitalization as a high priority. Soon afterwards, in 1999, City Council created CentreVenture, an arms-length development corporation with a mandate to facilitate downtown development in keeping with the CentrePlan Vision and Development Framework. Reinforcing that message, Council adopted Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision in December of 2001. The new Plan replaces the version of Plan Winnipeg adopted in 1993. Among other policy directives, Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision establishes a "Downtown First" policy in recognition that a healthy and vibrant downtown is key to the health and vibrancy of the city as a whole.

## B. The Policy Context for Downtown Revitalization

At present, the following documents provide the policy context for the downtown. Each of these has been adopted or endorsed by Council.

### *B.1. Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision (December 2001)*

Plan Winnipeg is the City of Winnipeg's premier planning document. It is citywide in scope and is intended to provide direction spanning a generation of time. Plan Winnipeg provides the foundation for all other plans, policies, programs, and initiatives developed by the City of Winnipeg.

With regard to the downtown, Plan Winnipeg states that: "Our reputation as a city rests largely with our downtown. The streets and buildings, the people, the businesses, the activities, merge to fashion the image that visitors take home with them. It also influences how Winnipeggers feel about their city. They want to see a revitalized downtown where people want to live, work, play, and invest. They want to feel a sense of civic pride, commitment, and ownership toward the downtown."

As shown in full in **Appendix A**, the Plan establishes a "Downtown First" policy with statements related to:

? The promotion of downtown development including implementing CentrePlan and supporting the efforts of CentreVenture;
? The encouragement of downtown living through revitalization programs, incentives, and supportive regulations;
? The promotion of a safe downtown including giving priority to the downtown for policing efforts and supporting the Downtown Watch;
? The promotion of excitement in the downtown through festivals and celebrations, and making the downtown the location of choice for arts and culture;
? The celebration of the downtown's special features and heritage including special attention to its character areas such as the Exchange District and the Forks;
? The encouragement of accessibility to and within the downtown including accommodating a variety of modes of transportation in an integrated fashion;
? The integration of rivers, parks, and green spaces including the provision of greater access to the rivers; and
? The promotion of high standards of urban design for both public sector and private sector projects including the integration of public art.

*B.2. CentrePlan Vision and Strategies (December 1994)*

CentrePlan Vision and Strategies is the City's downtown plan. The vision for the downtown is described as having five components:

? A vision of community and belonging with strategies related to promoting integration, providing safety and security, developing strong neighbourhoods, establishing self-reliance, and promoting social harmony.

A vision of prosperity and innovation with strategies related to offering economic opportunities and committing to economic sustainability.

? A vision of effectiveness and efficiency with strategies related to ensuring accessibility, integrating uses, and committing to excellence.
? A vision of soul and personality with strategies related to strengthening our heart, celebrating our special features, honouring our heritage and tradition, and projecting a vibrant character.
? A vision of direction and commitment with strategies related to creating a unified voice for downtown.

These five components are described in greater detail in **Appendix B** and are summarized in CentrePlan as follows: "In our vision of the future, the downtown, as the heart and pride of the city, encompasses all that is good about Winnipeg. It is a welcoming and caring place for all people, it provides an optimistic economic environment, it is an exciting, vibrant place that works well for everyone. Furthermore, the downtown community clearly understands and acts upon shared responsibilities."

The CentrePlan Vision and Strategies was prepared with a companion document called the Action Plan 1995-97 that identified 30 actions to be undertaken. A second Action Plan was adopted to span the period from 1997-99. Many of the actions identified in those plans were completed, others remain to be done or are in various stages of implementation.

*B.3. CentrePlan Development Framework (June 1999)*

The CentrePlan Development Framework provides a graphic representation of the physical development of the downtown in keeping with the concepts adopted in CentrePlan.

The Framework's principal recommendation is: "to plan, develop, operate, and manage the downtown as a single and special entity." The intent is to serve the needs of a diverse population, to evoke a sense of place, to reinvest in the

downtown's strengths, to designate downtown maintenance standards, and to promote and market the downtown.

The Framework also recognizes the need to:

? identify, define, enhance, and create unique and distinctive neighbourhoods, districts, and character areas;
? protect, preserve, and enhance four neighbourhoods for residential development (Central Park, South Broadway-Assiniboine, East and West Exchange District);
? link downtown neighbourhoods, districts, and character areas together with transportation systems, bicycle routes, a streetcar system, a boat/bus system, the Downtown Flyer, and quality pedestrian ways;
? preserve, protect, and enhance downtown's natural and built heritage;
? invest in the public realm; and
? support and encourage private sector investment.

*B.4. The Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-law (March 1988)*

The Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-law provides the regulatory means by which to guide development in the downtown. At the time that it was adopted, it was recognized as the most contemporary and progressive zoning by-law in Canada.

Instead of the more familiar zoning districts found in traditional by-laws, this by-law outlines six sets of regulations presented separately that state the requirements regarding residential use, non-residential use (including commercial, institutional, and industrial), bulk (including floor area, height, yards, and separation of buildings), parking and loading, signage, and urban design (including the approval of plans by the Downtown Design Board).

The six separate sets of regulations, when applied to a property, are intended to reflect the special considerations associated with various areas of the downtown. In doing so, the by-law was intended to reflect four main priorities:

? The need for a continued public and private partnership in the downtown economy;

? The need for a large residential population in the downtown;
? The need to protect the unique character of the downtown; and
? The need to encourage pedestrian movement throughout the downtown.

## C. The Drivers of Change

*C.1. CentreVenture Development Corporation (June 1999)*

The CentreVenture Development Corporation was created by City Council in June 1999 as an arms length corporation. CentreVenture is mandated to stimulate downtown revitalization by creating the climate for business and government to work together and by promoting the downtown to investors, businesses, and residents. The corporation is governed by an eight member volunteer board of directors and is managed through an executive of three.

To provide CentreVenture with the means by which to stimulate investment, Council provided seed funding of $3M that CentreVenture utilized to establish an urban bank. As well, downtown properties owned by the City were transferred to CentreVenture. These assets are used as leverage for investment, while the net proceeds from asset sales are used to augment the urban bank. As well, CentreVenture is charged with the joint responsibility, together with the civic administration, of implementing the City's Heritage Tax Credit program and its Capital Grants Initiatives.

While ongoing challenges remain, the model is proving successful. To date, seven properties have been sold generating a sale value of $1.4M while stimulating investment of $4.3M. Furthermore, there are currently approximately 50 projects underway in the downtown representing $85M of private sector investment. A priority for future development is the integration of affordable housing in the downtown.

*C.2. The Manager of Downtown Improvement*

Coincident with the creation of CentreVenture in June of 1999, Council approved the creation of a new position within the civic administration, the Manager of Downtown

Improvement. This position was intended to support the mandate of CentreVenture by:

? Providing a single point of accountability for getting things done;
? Coordinating the input of a team of senior level administrators to solve problems and respond to opportunities; and
? Undertaking key projects or programs identified in CentrePlan to complement the efforts of CentreVenture.

*C.3. Downtown Initiatives Committee*

Responding to the success of CentreVenture and input from downtown stakeholders, the Downtown Initiatives Committee was established during the summer of 2001 to hasten the pace of reform of the City' downtown review and approval mechanisms. Comprising both political and administrative representatives, the Committee considers, prioritizes, and directs strategic initiatives to achieve the stated goal of making the downtown the best place to invest and conduct business.

While CentreVenture works externally in the community with a mandate to stimulate private sector development in the downtown, the Downtown Initiatives Committee works internally within the political and administrative realms to ensure that the City's rules, regulations, and procedures for development do not inhibit those efforts. The Committee remains focused on the implementation of the CentrePlan Development Framework's main recommendation: "to plan, develop, operate, and manage the downtown as a single and special entity."

Under the direction of the Downtown Initiatives Committee, two significant internal reviews are now under way. The first is a review of the Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-law. A new by-law is being drafted with simplified zoning regulations that are more in keeping with the vision of CentrePlan. The second initiative is a review of the downtown development approval process. The intent of this review is to make the process more effective, understandable, focused, accountable, and timely.

As a result of the political leadership provided by this Committee, the City strengthened the role and mandate of CentreVenture in April of 2002 by:

? Approving an additional $7M in funding towards the Endowment Fund (Urban Development Bank);
? Renewing the Operational Funding Agreement for an additional four years;
? Allocating an additional $1.16M to support CentreVenture Heritage Incentives Programs; and
? Expanding the mandated area into areas with emerging development potential adjacent to the Red River Downtown Campus and the north end of Waterfront Drive.

## D. The Downtown Initiatives Strategy

*D.1. Overview*

The Downtown Initiatives Strategy was developed to deliver on Council's commitment to make the downtown the best place in Winnipeg within which to invest and conduct business. In recognition that there is a different role to be played by each of the groups responsible for driving change in the downtown, the strategy has three components:

? political leadership to address fundamental changes;
? external communication to build community support; and
? internal communication to generate process improvements.

In response to the first item, political leadership, the Downtown Initiatives Committee will provide the leadership necessary to drive those changes that require Council approval. As mentioned above, there are, at present, two main initiatives under its charge: the redrafting of the zoning by-law and the review of development approval processes.

The consultative process that is the subject of this report was established to address the other two components of the strategy, external and internal communications. Here, key stakeholders were consulted in order to identify issues that need to be

addressed and to build support around solutions. As part of the strategy, CentreVenture assumed responsibility for establishing and maintaining an effective dialogue with the various community groups while the Manager of Downtown Improvement assumed responsibility for building similar support within the administration.

*D.2. The Consultation Process and Format*

The consultation process was established to generate discussion regarding the rules, regulations, and processes that face the development industry in the downtown in order to identify issues, formulate strategies, and to establish priorities. By simultaneously consulting with external organizations as well as with internal City of Winnipeg staff, a balanced perspective could be gained.

As shown in **Appendix C**, participants were given a short presentation that summarized downtown revitalization efforts over the past two decades, provided an overview of the current state of affairs, and outlined the challenge of balancing the expectations of the development industry for speed and simplicity with the responsibilities of the civic administration of safeguarding the public good and protecting investment.

Participants were then led through a facilitated discussion wherein they were asked to identify issues of particular concern to them and to offer strategies for addressing those issues. In most cases, participants were asked, as well, to identify the single most important thing that the civic administration could do to demonstrate commitment to positive improvement. The results of each workshop were summarized and returned to the group for validation. Each workshop ran from one and a half to two hours in length.

# E. Summary of Workshops

*E.1. List of Participants*

The table below identifies the various groups and organizations that were consulted as part of this process and the number of attendees at the workshop. It differentiates between those groups or organizations within the community (ie. external) from those that are part of the civic administration (ie. internal). The full record of meeting notes is available in **Appendix D**.

| W/S | Date | Participating Group | Ext. | Int. | Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Jan 31 | Urban Development Institute | Y | | 12 |
| 2. | Feb 7 | Senior Management Team | | Y | 15 |
| 3. | Feb 18 | Planning & Land Use Division | | Y | 8 |
| 4. | Feb 19 | Winnipeg Real Estate Board | Y | | 13 |
| 5. | Feb 26 | Development & Inspections Division | | Y | 6 |
| 6. | Mar 13 | Downtown Winnipeg BIZ | Y | | 5 |
| 7. | Mar 14 | Civic Accommodations, Real Estate, Support Services, and Property & Information Systems Divisions | | Y | 11 |
| 8. | Apr 3 | Manitoba Association of Architects, Association of Professional Engineers of Manitoba | Y | | 7 |
| 9. | Apr 5 | Winnipeg Construction Association | Y | | 3 |

*E.2. What We Heard from External Organizations*

Issues:

? The vision for downtown is unclear and not current. There is no communication around what the City expects.
? The rules and regulations don't match the vision. Creativity is stifled; sometimes it's easier to do nothing.
? There is inconsistency in the way that rules and regulations are interpreted. Different staff will apply the rules differently. Design review, in particular is too subjective.
? Processes are unclear, not mapped out. There is confusion about roles and responsibilities and there is no clear point of entry into the system.
? Approval processes are lengthy and costly. Time delays can make or break the viability of a project.
? The number of committees that get involved in various aspects of a project is unnecessary and over-complicates things.
? The corporate culture and overall attitude within the administration is negative. The first reaction to a proposal is "no".
? The investment climate makes development very tenuous: slow growth results in low margins.
? Action is needed, not more consultation.

Proposals:

? Provide guidelines for interpreting adopted plans and policies.
? Define investment opportunities within the vision and plan for downtown. Create small area plans (eg. Chinatown) that define both public and private sector responsibilities.
? Build flexibility into the zoning by-law, allowing room for interpretation of the intent, illustrate with examples.
? Provide design guidelines or eliminate design review. If design review is necessary, focus on urban design review not architectural design review.
? Encourage mixed land use liberally, with residential allowed throughout the downtown.

- Put into place experienced file managers with responsibility to act as project expeditors.
- Establish time limits for permit turnaround.
- Ensure the right people are in the right jobs, those with a can-do attitude.
- Provide service training for front line staff.
- Provide incentives for good performance.
- Explain expectations to staff regarding what it means to establish downtown as a priority for development.
- Provide tax incentives for downtown development generally, not just for heritage.
- Establish a preferential tax rate in the downtown.
- Create more parking downtown by decide what buildings to save and letting others be demolished.
- Provide support for the creation of affordable housing.
- Delegate approval decisions to front line staff.
- Pay committee members and establish performance expectations (eg. Historical Winnipeg Advisory Committee).
- Establish court of appeal using a mix of high-level public and private sector stakeholders.
- Establish a senior management interdepartmental panel to provide policy direction.
- Use the City web site to communicate plans and policies and to process applications. Also, communicate through the various associations.

*E.3. What We Heard from the Administration*

Issues:

- The design/build method of development requires that decisions be made with incomplete information.
- There is a significant amount of work being undertaken without permits but there would be political fallout if they were shut down.
- The quality of the information provided by the developer is often poor and information is incomplete.

- There are legitimate competing objectives to be met, conflict of policies, with no clear process for balancing priorities.
- Need an holistic look at all regulations.
- The roles and responsibilities between the political and administrative functions is often unclear and confusing.
- There is no clear accountability for the downtown.
- The design review process is too subjective.
- Some changes that are supported by the City require provincial approval such as the "Richardson" report on life safety standards (building code equivalencies for heritage buildings).
- Complex projects require comprehensive (political/administrative) approach yet there is no mechanism by which to do so.
- Applicants change their projects mid-stream (erode the original vision) and expect immediate response/approval.

Proposals:

- Implement staged review by assessing the appropriateness of the function, the appropriateness of the fit within the urban context, and the appropriateness of the building form.
- Communicate expectations to development industry including the vision and long term goals for the downtown; the levels of service and value of services provided by the City; and the processes that must be followed for development and building approvals.
- Establish a downtown version of the "Administrative Coordinating Group" with decision-making authority. (A cross-functional team that, collectively, can define the City's requirements for any development application.)
- Establish clear, consistent and fair processes.
- Once processes and expectations are in order, apply stricter enforcement for work without permit.
- Separate development approval from building approval.
- Establish a cross functional downtown team (planning, zoning, plan examination, inspections) with a file manager as single point of contact.
- Review all approval processes and eliminate or consolidate where possible.

? Grant exclusive interest on a property to allow a developer to shape a project over a fixed period of time.
? Establish a mechanism to negotiate acceptable solutions "on the fly" between the developer and different authorities.
? Develop a downtown database where property related information can be shared with the development industry.

## F. Strategies and Recommendations

The following synthesizes the ideas expressed by participants in the workshops into seven broad strategies, each accompanied by several specific recommendations, eighteen in all. The six strategies include:

? Clarifying the plan for downtown
? Ensuring that the rules match the plan
? Streamlining development approval processes
? Building staff commitment
? Providing resources to deliver on expectations
? Communicating

### STRATEGY 1: CLARIFY THE PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN

***Recommendation 1.1:*** *CentrePlan*

Undertake a comprehensive public promotion of CentrePlan: Vision and Strategies and the Development Framework to ensure the plan is recognized, understood, and accepted by the development industry, business, and the professional community.

**Responsibility:** Manager of Downtown Improvement with the Manager of Public Affairs

*Why do this?*

The industry will tell you that there is no vision for the downtown. Yet, a downtown plan has been in place for years. Clearly, it is not well known in the development community that CentrePlan even exists. There is very little understanding of the

vision and strategic direction that it articulates for the downtown. Those familiar with the plan, particularly CentreVenture and the civic administration who work with the plan, feel that the plan remains relevant and effective. They suggest that the plan does not need to be reviewed at this point. It does, however, need to be more broadly understood. A promotional campaign is in order.

*What needs to happen?*

A promotional campaign should be developed to explain CentrePlan and the Development Framework within the context of overall City policy including Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision and Council priorities. Materials summarizing the plans should be developed and distributed broadly and posted electronically. As well, a series of workshops should be held with the various professional associations and organizations representing the development and construction industry.

***Recommendation 1.2:*** *Small Area (or Secondary) Plans*

Undertake the development of Small Area (or Secondary) Plans in key downtown locations such as Portage Avenue, the East Exchange District, the Civic Centre Precinct, Chinatown, etc. in order to provide greater clarity to the vision for downtown.

**Responsibility:** Manager of Planning and Land Use with direction provided by the Downtown Initiatives Committee

*Why do this?*

CentrePlan and its Development Framework provide the overall plan for the downtown but do so at a fairly macro level. Further detail would assist in articulating specific goals and opportunities that may assist in stimulating development activity in key areas of the downtown. A Small Area or a Secondary Plan would serve to clarify expectations on the part of the City, while providing a framework and an action plan within which the City and the development community can operate. More are needed.

Small Area Plans would be endorsed in principle by Council to serve as a guiding document while Secondary Plans would require a By-law of Council.

*What needs to happen?*

The Downtown Initiatives Committee should identify priority precincts and should determine the parameters for these plans that would then be pursued by the Planning and Land Use Division. Resources will need to be targeted for this purpose. While partnering with stakeholders wherever feasible, Design Competitions, Design Charrettes, Consultant Studies, and multi-disciplinary in-house planning studies are some of the methods for pursuing such plans.

***Recommendation 1.3*** *Parking Study*

Adopt a comprehensive parking policy for the downtown that addresses the provision of both short-term and long-term parking and that clarifies the role of the civic parking authority subsequent to a review of options for alternative service delivery.

**Responsibility:** City Council

*Why do this?*

Current City policy gives incomplete or mixed messages about the future expansion of the supply of off-street parking in the downtown. On the one hand, the City's goals for downtown revitalization and economic development suggest that the City should be looking at ways in which infrastructure, such as off-street parking, can help leverage new investment. On the other hand, City policies on transit, reduction of single occupant vehicle use, sustainable development, and environmental quality imply that the City should be limiting the growth of parking supply in the downtown. A consistent policy needs to be developed. Furthermore, the City currently operates a number of parking facilities and its goals in this regard are unclear. The City's role as a parking provider needs to be clarified.

*What needs to happen?*

A parking study has recently been undertaken that brings forward a series of recommendations regarding downtown parking. This report needs to be reviewed and decisions need to be made regarding its recommended policies. Furthermore, the civic parking authority should be assessed in terms of options for alternative service delivery.

***Recommendation 1.4:*** *Transportation Review*

Undertake a review of the transportation network in the downtown, in particular the one-way street system, with an emphasis on balancing the needs of moving people and goods with the needs for integrating land use, urban design, and pedestrian comfort consistent with the vision of CentrePlan and the Development Framework.

**Responsibility:** Manager of Transportation

*Why do this?*

The City's goals for downtown revitalization need to be supported not only by the land use policies expressed in its plans and by-laws but also by the transportation policies governing the downtown. In particular, the current system of one-way streets has been identified as problematic in that it can be inconsistent with the goals of creating a pedestrian friendly downtown environment and stimulating economic development.

*What needs to happen?*

A study should be undertaken to review the one-way system of streets in the downtown. Each one-way street should be assessed in order to identify candidates for conversion from one-way to two-way based on downtown revitalization potential from a commercial, residential, and/or urban design perspective; while balancing these criteria against an analysis of traffic and pedestrian counts, transit routes, parking lot access, loading areas, etc.

## STRATEGY 2: ENSURE THAT THE RULES MATCH THE PLAN

***Recommendation 2.1:*** *By-law Review*

Amend the Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-law (No. 4800) in order to make it simpler, clearer, and less prescriptive and to ensure that the objectives of CentrePlan and the Development Framework are captured, in particular, the need to promote mixed-use development (with a focus on housing) together with the concepts of clustering, compactness, and density.

**Responsibility:** Council subsequent to an administrative report from the Director of Planning, Property and Development

*Why do this?*

Zoning by-laws provide the regulatory means by which to implement land use plans. It is critical, therefore, that the plan and by-law be consistent with one another. The Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-law was adopted in 1988. In the intervening years, Plan Winnipeg has been twice re-adopted (1993 and 2001) and CentrePlan was endorsed (1994) along with its development framework (1999). The by-law has not been amended to reflect these changes in policy. In the recent past, development applications have been received that appear to be consistent with the plans but have proven to be inconsistent with the by-law. Clearly, the by-law needs to be aligned with adopted plans.

*What needs to happen?*

A process to review the Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-law has already been launched under the Downtown Initiatives Committee. Key considerations in this review include:

? the need to encourage residential development throughout the downtown;
? the need to accommodate mixed use development and compact form;
? the need to better define design expectations;
? the need to accommodate an integrated transportation system; and
? the need to encourage innovative initiatives.

In reviewing the by-law, it would be consistent with political direction if it were to become less prescriptive, based more on principles and objectives than on strict standards. Once the review is complete, the revised by-law will have to be formally adopted through the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Executive Policy Committee, and Council.

***Recommendation 2.2:*** *Design Guidelines*

Prepare urban design principles and guidelines to compliment the zoning by-law ensuring that they clearly express, through illustrations, the intent of CentrePlan, the

Development Framework, and the by-law, stressing the importance of respecting the neighbouring context.

**Responsibility:** Manager of Planning and Land Use

*Why do this?*

When the Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-law was adopted in 1988, design review became mandatory for all development applications in the downtown. It was always intended that design guidelines be developed to provide some direction to the development industry to assist them through this process. Except for those covering the Exchange District, guidelines have never been produced. There are mixed feelings in the community as to the merits of design review, but there is agreement that if design review is to continue, accompanying guidelines must be developed. The administration is proceeding with the preparation of design principles to describe general intent, followed by the preparation of more specific design guidelines where necessary.

*What needs to happen?*

Draft principles and guidelines should be prepared by the administration and should form the basis for a series of consultative sessions with the industry. The principles should describe the intent of design review in all areas of the downtown, allowing room for interpretation and without stifling innovation and creativity. The guidelines would be more detailed and would apply to situations or geographic areas where greater clarity is required. Once consensus is reached through the consultation process, the principles and guidelines should be formalized for use in the design review process. Design principles and guidelines are administrative in nature and therefore need not be adopted politically.

## STRATEGY 3: STREAMLINE THE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION PROCESS

***Recommendation 3.1:*** *Application Expediters*

Establish a system for downtown development applications whereby a planner or application centre representative is assigned as the single point of contact for the

applicant and is responsible for monitoring and expediting the application through all necessary approval processes.

**Responsibility:** Manager of Downtown Improvement together with the Manager of Planning and Land Use and the Manager of Development and Inspections

*Why do this?*

The development industry insists that time is the most critical factor they face. While they may not be enamored with the number of approvals and permits needed for certain complex projects, they expect at a minimum to have their applications processed as expeditiously as possible. At present, that does not always occur because each time a new approval is needed the file gets passed on to another individual, with no one monitoring the entire series of processes from beginning to end. This proposal would provide for a single point of contact for development applications whereby one staff person would monitor and expedite the processing of all necessary permits associated with a particular project. This should result in quicker turnaround times and increased customer satisfaction.

*What needs to happen?*

The planners assigned to handle development applications in the downtown should do so adopting a file management concept. Alternatively, the planners should establish, in partnership with the Zoning and Permits Branch, a system by which the customer service representatives assume that role. Through informal dialogue with the development industry, it is clear that this recommendation needs to be treated with urgency. It should be given highest attention.

***Recommendation 3.2:*** *Decision-making Authority*

Establish a single decision-making authority for all downtown development applications, either through the creation of an independent planning commission or a specially designated standing committee of Council.

**Responsibility:** Council subsequent to an administrative report from the Director of Planning, Property and Development

*Why do this?*

At present, a single development project in the downtown may require a series of decisions involving a community committee, 1 or 2 standing committees, the Board of Adjustment, Executive Policy Committee, and City Council, as well as specialty committees such as the Downtown Design Board, the Historic Winnipeg Advisory Committee, and the Historical Buildings Committee, not to mention the various avenues for appeal. Not only is this time-consuming, but decisions made by one body often conflict with those made by another. Developers can spend well over a year getting the necessary approvals in place. This can jeopardize the economic viability of development projects. It's true that each of the approval processes serves an important function. Through them, Council is able to assess public interest, ensuring that public safety and convenience is maintained and that public and private investment is safeguarded. However, the manner in which these objectives are met can be simplified. Some jurisdictions have established planning commissions for this purpose with members appointed from the community at large.

*What needs to happen?*

An exploration of this concept is already under way. The City and the Province are currently discussing possible changes to the City of Winnipeg Act that would allow for the establishment of a planning commission. Pending the outcome of the City of Winnipeg Act review, Council should establish a downtown planning commission with authority to address all development related decisions. Should the City of Winnipeg Act review not allow for the creation of a planning commission, Council should establish a single political committee, a downtown development committee, with as much consolidated decision-making authority as the Act allows in order to address zoning approval, design review, approaches, encroachments, etc. with administrative reports coordinated and submitted by the Director of PP&D.

***Recommendation 3.3:*** *Design Review*

Establish a peer review process for design review whereby the appropriateness of a development application is assessed by a team of design professionals working in an advisory capacity to the decision making body established through Recommendation 3.2.

**Responsibility:** Council subsequent to an administrative report from the Director of Planning, Property and Development

*Why do this?*

One of the prime concerns about design review in the development community is the subjective nature of the process. Design guidelines will help alleviate some of the concerns, however, the review process itself should be revised to bring greater fairness into the system. It must be recognized that design review is not the means by which great design is achieved. That can only be realized through the commitment of the client and the skill of the designer. Rather, the purpose of urban design review is to ensure that the context within which the project is situated is respected. This needs to be judged fairly and many suggest that a peer review process is the most appropriate solution.

*What needs to happen?*

An administrative report should be prepared that outlines the role of this advisory committee and provides terms of reference for its operations. The members of the advisory committee will need to be appointed by Council. Then, the urban design position formerly assigned to the role of design review should be reassigned to support the role of the advisory committee. Its first function should be to oversee the preparation of the design guidelines mentioned in Recommendation 2.2.

***Recommendation 3.4:*** *Staged Review*

Implement a staged review process for building permits in order to allow the commencement of construction prior to the submission of fully completed construction drawings.

**Responsibility:** Manager of Development and Inspections

*Why do this?*

The industry tells us that no one builds on speculation anymore. Each project is built for a specific client and is usually driven by very tight timelines. With low profit margins, any delay can jeopardize the viability of a project. Construction often needs to begin before the full construction drawings are completed. Providing permits

incrementally can assist the industry. Administratively, staged permitting has been available for years. Permits can be provided for demolition, excavation, foundation, superstructure, and finishing. The challenge today is that work underway in each of these stages tends to incorporate changes on the fly to accommodate the needs of clients, without obtaining the corresponding changes to permits. Furthermore, the work tends to flow from one stage to the next regardless of whether the next stage permit has been obtained. These concerns need to be addressed, but some form of agreement for staged approval should be implemented to ensure that the permitting process is in step with the needs of the industry.

*What needs to happen?*

An agreement needs to be reached with the development and construction industry with regard to the issuance of permits. Staged permitting is available, however, it is incumbent on the industry to provide the necessary drawings in advance of the next stage of construction, allowing a reasonable time for permit issuance. The administration needs to commit to specific turnaround times once all information is submitted.

***Recommendation 3.5:*** *Major Developers and Complex Projects*

When processing development applications, assign the most senior staff to work with the major developers and on the more complex developments proposed for the downtown.

**Responsibility:** Manager of Development and Inspections and the Manager of Planning and Land Use

*Why do this?*

There are varying degrees of complexity to development applications in the downtown and varying levels of sophistication on the part of the applicant. At times, the application is simple, say for signage, and it may represent the applicant's only exposure to the approval process for many years. On the other hand, there are a handful of developers that regularly do business in the downtown and generally deal with complex projects. It makes sense that the more senior staff within the

administration be assigned to work with these major developers and on the more complex developments.

*What needs to happen?*
The Managers in these two functional areas should assign responsibilities within their areas in accordance with this principle.

***Recommendation 3.6:*** *Development Application Standards and Responsibilities*
The City, together with the Development Industry, should prepare standards for the submission of Development Applications, as well as outline the responsibilities of the Applicant as well as the City in the processing of Development Applications.
**Responsibility:** Manager of Downtown Improvement together with the Manager of Planning and Land Use and the Manager of Development and Inspections.

*Why do this?*
Unsophisticated Developers often do not provide enough information in their original submission in order that the City may process their development application in a timely way. As a result, zoning and approval processes may not be immediately recognized and approvals may be delayed as a result. City staff should not need to chase developers to provide the critical information for their application.

On the other hand, when the developer provides the necessary information for their development application, City staff should be able to clearly articulate the required approval process and timelines. Ideally, there should be a mutual knowledge and appreciation of both the applicant's and the City staff's roles and responsibilities in the processing and approval of development applications.

*What needs to happen?*
The City should review best practices from other jurisdictions and clearly articulate the expectations and information necessary for development applications. Information Checklists and examples could be provided. The Development Industry should then be given an opportunity to review and comment on the minimum submission requirements prior to their formal implementation.

In addition, the City and the Development Industry must together clarify and document the essential roles and responsibilities of both the applicant and City staff. The City should then work towards formalizing timeframe expectations for the review and approval of development applications.

**STRATEGY 4: BUILD STAFF COMMITMENT**

***Recommendation 4.1:*** *Staff Orientation*

Provide orientation sessions whereby the intent of Plan Winnipeg, CentrePlan, the Development Framework, the Downtown Zoning By-law, and the design principles and guidelines are explained in detail to all front line staff involved in development review.

**Responsibility:** Manager of Downtown Improvement together with the Strategic Planning and Communication Coordinator.

*Why do this?*

The plans and policies governing the downtown are subject to interpretation so it is important to develop a common understanding of their intent. The industry tells us that there is inconsistency in the way that plans and regulations are interpreted. The administration recognizes that little information is shared when new plans or regulations are adopted. It is fundamental to the provision of development approval services that all staff are on the same page and deliver consistent messages to the industry.

*What needs to happen?*

An orientation system of this nature needs to be formalized in the administration. Materials need to be prepared and sessions need to be planned (perhaps through Corporate Education). These sessions should be made mandatory for all new front line staff involved in development applications and should be encouraged as annual refreshers for all existing front line staff (mandatory when there are changes to the plans or by-law).

***Recommendation 4.2:*** *Customer Service Training*

Implement a regular customer service training program for all front line staff involved in development review.

**Responsibility:** Manager of Development and Inspections and Manager of Planning and Land Use together with the Strategic Planning and Communication Coordinator.

*Why do this?*

The development approval process is in place to protect the public interest and staff recognize that as their primary responsibility. However, staff must recognize as well that there is a customer service perspective to their work. In this relationship, it is important that customers are treated fairly and with respect. This is not to say that customers are badly treated today, rather, it is to reinforce the objective of seeking continuous improvement in customer service.

*What needs to happen?*

The Zoning and Permits Branch has taken the step of appointing a Supervisor of Customer Relations. This provides an in-house resource that can assist in generating a series of training programs not only to the front line staff in that Branch but to other staff in the Planning and Land Use and Development and Inspections Divisions. Alternatively, assistance can be sought through Corporate Education, where appropriate training programs can be established within the slate of programs offered by them.

## STRATEGY 5: PROVIDE RESOURCES TO DELIVER ON EXPECTATIONS

***Recommendation 5.1:*** *Maintenance Standards*

Review current practices and costs associated with the maintenance of public space in the downtown including streets, streetscapes, urban forest, and parks with the goal of identifying the means and methods for improving standards and supporting the goals of CentreVenture.

**Responsibility:** Director of Public Works

*Why do this?*

In recognition that the image people hold for Winnipeg is directly related to the image they hold for the downtown, the downtown has repeatedly been identified as the highest priority for civic investment. Public investment in the downtown is also seen as a means of stimulating private sector investment. Most recently, Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision commits to a "downtown first" policy. Taking action to implement this policy requires a re-evaluation of existing practices and a good place to start is addressing maintenance standards in the downtown. The objective should be to reflect exemplary standards of urban design and maintenance in the downtown.

*What needs to happen?*

The Public Works Department should undertake a review of all maintenance standards and budgets to ensure that the downtown is recognized as a priority and that the efforts of CentreVenture are supported.

***Recommendation 5.2:*** *Capital Projects*

Review and prioritize future downtown capital projects ensuring alignment with CentrePlan and the Development Framework.

**Responsibility:** Council subsequent to a report from the Manager of Downtown Improvement

*Why do this?*

Momentum is building in the downtown. Not only has there been significant public sector investment recently in projects such as Provencher Bridge, Main Street reconstruction, and Waterfront Drive, there has been considerable private sector investment as well in projects such as Mountain Equipment Co-op, Hampton Inn and Suites, and True North. To ensure that progress continues, it is important that future public works investment is optimized. Capital projects should build toward the vision identified in CentrePlan and the Development Framework and stimulate complementary investment on the part of the private sector. With resources being limited, priorities should be established.

*What needs to happen?*

An administrative report should be prepared that reviews the projects identified in the five-year capital budget, prioritizing them in terms of timing and financing to ensure that the goals of CentreVenture are supported.

## STRATEGY 6: COMMUNICATE

***Recommendation 6.1:*** *Track Processes*

Clarify the steps required for all development approvals in the downtown and establish the means by which applicants can track the progress of their applications as they proceed through the system.

**Responsibility:** Manager of Development and Inspections working with the Manager of Property and Information Systems and the Strategic Planning and Communications Coordinator.

*Why do this?*

Developing property in the downtown is complicated business. It is not unusual for an individual project to require half a dozen or more approvals. These processes should be made clearer by documenting the steps involved and a system should be developed whereby applicants can track their applications as they are proceeding through the various stages of approval. Staff will be in a better position to assist applicants in developing a critical path that minimizes the total amount of time required to pursue all the necessary approvals. Applicants will better understand what's required of them, within what timeframes, and when to expect that decisions will be made.

*What needs to happen?*

Some work in this area has already been undertaken. The Development and Inspections Division will need to prepare a proposal explaining how such a system can be implemented and at what cost. Assistance can be sought from the Property and Information Systems Division.

***Recommendation 6.2:*** *Web Site*

Establish a downtown page on the City of Winnipeg web site where all downtown related information can be accessed including CentrePlan, the Development Framework, the Downtown Zoning By-law, and other items listed above when completed.

**Responsibility:** Manager of Downtown Improvement working with the Manager of Property and Information Systems and the Manager of Public Affairs

*Why do this?*

More and more business is carried out over the internet. In particular, the internet is often the mode of choice for individuals undertaking research. In keeping with that trend, the City of Winnipeg's web site makes available a vast amount of information that is accessible to all. But it is not grouped in a way that focuses on the downtown. It would be a relatively simple matter to establish a downtown portal on the City's web site where all downtown-related information could be accessed, including the plans, policies, processes, and by-laws as well as socio-economic and characterization information.

*What needs to happen?*

The City's web site undergoes constant review and adjustment. The Manager of Downtown Improvement should work with the Manager of Property and Information Systems and the Manager of Public Affairs to pursue this initiative as a priority.

***Recommendation 6.3:*** *Industry Communication*

Establish a communication program with the development industry and the professional community whereby their newsletters, web sites, and other communication vehicles are used to disseminate information on City policy as it relates to the downtown, in particular, on any changes to development plans, policies, regulations, and processes.

**Responsibility:** Manager of Downtown Improvement with the Strategic Planning and Communication Coordinator in consultation with CentreVenture.

*Why do this?*

Most business and professional organizations maintain direct contact with their members through various means. This should be viewed as an untapped resource. In dialogue with theses organizations it is clear that one of the greatest frustrations is the real or perceived lack of communication between parties. This is one way of making progress in this area by taking advantage of a resource with relatively little effort required on the part of the civic administration.

*What needs to happen?*

A small internal network should be established of organizations willing to accommodate within their communication devices information on City programs, policies, and services related to doing business in the downtown. A commitment should be made to provide that information to the industry on a regular (say quarterly) basis.

## Appendix A: *Downtown First Policy*

The following has been extracted from *"Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision"* (adopted by Council in December 2001), page 12 to 14.

**1A-01 Promote Downtown Development**

The City shall promote downtown development to stimulate revitalization and capitalize on existing infrastructure by:

i) implementing a visionary downtown plan (CentrePlan) through an action-oriented development corporation (CentreVenture) to provide clear direction, coordination of planning and implementation, and strong leadership for the downtown;
ii) encouraging the retention, recruitment, development, and incubation of unique and important businesses in the downtown, with particular emphasis on the creation of a downtown digital economy;
iii) encouraging and supporting the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings and the location of government offices and staff in the downtown;
iv) ensuring its zoning and building by-laws and its administrative procedures support the concepts of mixed land use and compact urban form in the downtown; and
v) considering the effects on the downtown in the evaluation of new developments, commercial/retail policies, staff and budget resource allocations, and transportation priorities.

**1A-02 Encourage Downtown Living**

The City shall encourage downtown living in existing downtown residential neighbourhoods and elsewhere in the downtown by:

i) supporting, through neighbourhood development programs, the stability of existing downtown neighbourhoods;
ii) providing incentives such as heritage tax credit programs, building code equivalences for heritage buildings, and mixed-use zoning that encourage the provision of housing including warehouse conversions and new construction throughout the downtown;
iii) encouraging mixed-use residential development that integrates retail, service businesses, and institutions needed by downtown residents; and
iv) supporting the creation of a pedestrian-friendly downtown environment.

**1A-03 Promote a Safe Downtown**

The City shall promote a safe downtown by:

iv) encouraging more pedestrian activity on downtown streets through support for mixed land use developments and pedestrian-focused transportation planning;
v) encouraging compliance with design principles that promote safety and security in all public and private development projects;

iii) supporting community-based safety initiatives such as the Downtown Watch and other efforts that build strategic and cooperative relationships with neighbourhood groups and business associations; and
vi) maintaining a street level police presence in the downtown and giving priority to the downtown for police efforts, including graffiti control.

**1A-04 Promote the Excitement of Downtown**

The City shall promote the excitement of downtown as a destination for residents and visitors alike by:
i) working in cooperation with other agencies such as Tourism Winnipeg to provide comprehensive information to Winnipeggers and tourists regarding the many unique and interesting opportunities which the downtown provides;
ii) supporting and encouraging affordable activities in the downtown that foster a spirit of celebration and festivity and that promote the participation of all residents and visitors; and
iii) acting to ensure the downtown is the location of choice for major arts, culture, and entertainment amenities.

**1A-05 Celebrate the Downtown's Special Features and Heritage**

The City shall celebrate the downtown's special features and heritage by:
i) promoting the uniqueness of its character areas such as Chinatown, Broadway, and the central business district of Portage and Main;
ii) enhancing the value of the Exchange District as a National Historic Site by encouraging the development of a mixed-use cultural district;
iii) recognizing and supporting the rich and unique Aboriginal cultural presence in and around the Neeginan Development and supporting the revitalization of Main Street; and
iv) promoting the Forks as a premiere attraction and gathering place for residents and visitors.

**1A-06 Encourage Accessibility to and Within the Downtown**

The City shall encourage accessibility to and within the downtown by:
i) supporting universal access and proper maintenance of outdoor routes and indoor public walkways for people of all ages and abilities;
ii) linking adjacent neighbourhoods to the downtown with attractive transportation routes and access points with an emphasis on pedestrian connections;
iii) using streets and sidewalks, river corridors, pathways, and green spaces as an interconnected network to integrate the downtown and connect it with the whole city;
iv) supporting cycling and other alternative modes of transportation to and within the downtown;
v) supporting public transit to move people to and within the downtown, including the

implementation of measures that reduce travel times between suburban areas and the city centre, the upgrading of waiting areas at major transit stops, and the operation of a downtown shuttle service;

vi) maintaining with operational, custodial, and security services a weather-protected pedestrian walkway system linked to public transit;

vii) supporting the provision of short-term downtown parking, both on-street and off-street, to promote convenient access to downtown businesses; and

viii) managing the provision of long-term parking in the downtown in a way which encourages the use of alternative modes of transportation and the reduction of automobile congestion.

**1A-07 Integrate Rivers, Parks, and Green Spaces in the Downtown**

The City shall integrate rivers, parks, and green spaces in the downtown by:

i) enhancing year-round access to the Riverwalk system and to the rivers themselves through the provision of boat launches, docks, the winter Rivertrail system, and other conveniences;

ii) protecting, preserving, and enhancing the natural amenities and linking them where feasible; and

iii) encouraging the private sector to incorporate open space, landscaping, and pedestrian amenities into development projects in the downtown.

**1A-08 Promote High Standards of Urban Design in the Downtown**

The City shall promote high standards of urban design in the downtown by:

i) ensuring that all projects for which it is responsible reflect exemplary urban design and maintenance;

ii) encouraging private developments to meet similar high standards of design and maintenance; and

iii) encouraging the integration of public art and aesthetics into the downtown landscape.

## Appendix B: *The CentrePlan Vision*

The following has been extracted from *"CentrePlan: Working Together for Winnipeg's Downtown"* (Vision and Strategies, 1994), pages 7 and 8.

**The Vision for Downtown**

In our vision of the future, the downtown, as the heart and pride of the city, encompasses all that is good about Winnipeg. It is a welcoming and caring place for all people, it provides an optimistic economic environment, it is an exciting, vibrant place that works well for everyone. Furthermore, the downtown community clearly understands and acts upon shared responsibilities.

*A Vision of Community and Belonging*

In our vision of the future, the downtown exhibits a strong sense of community and belonging. People are safe, secure, and welcome. The downtown prides itself in the strength of its neighborhoods providing them with stability and opportunities for personal enrichment. Strong networks are in place to facilitate interaction and support among citizens, the business community, and local government. The downtown is a compassionate, caring, humane place characterized by tolerance and social harmony. People are valued, included, accepted, and treated with dignity. The downtown welcomes new Canadians. It is proud of its ethnic diversity. It respects and honours its aboriginal ancestry recognizing their pivotal role in the success of the downtown. The downtown is a place for everyone, where opportunities are shared equally.

*A Vision of Prosperity and Innovation*

In our vision of the future, the downtown is characterized by prosperity and a spirit of innovation. It offers a range of opportunities for commerce, culture, and living all integrated to form a rich and diverse environment. It is the centre of employment, new technology, life-long learning, and education. New ideas are continuously explored and developed in a manner that is interlocked with the environment, the economy, and the social fabric—sustainability. The downtown offers optimism for future generations.

*A Vision of Effectiveness and Efficiency*

In our vision of the future, the downtown is a model of effectiveness and efficiency. It provides appropriate services to residents, workers, and visitors, and provides them in a way that demonstrates a commitment to excellence. All downtown uses are well integrated to create a very livable, comfortable, clean, and aesthetically-pleasing environment. The downtown is very accessible from all parts of the city and provides good orientation and convenient linkages to activity centres within its boundaries. The downtown works well for everyone.

*A Vision of Soul and Personality*

In our vision of the future, the downtown has a soul and personality all its own, one that is vibrant and energetic, yet warm and caring. It reflects Winnipeg’s status as a capital city and the heart of government, law, and commerce for the province. The downtown embraces its unique landmarks—Portage and Main, the Forks, the Golden Boy, the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. It exhibits pride in its special qualities—the clean air, the trees,

the climate. It cherishes its ethnic and cultural diversity and its reputation of friendliness. It honours its heritage and tradition and builds upon them as a legacy and inspiration for future generations. The downtown encompasses all that is good about Winnipeg.

*A Vision of Direction and Commitment*

In our vision of the future, clear direction and commitment cultivate ongoing development of the downtown as a vibrant, welcome, and secure place where people want to be and stay. Direction is made clear through the pursuit of a defined purpose agreed upon collectively by the community. Leaders work to realize the direction and express commitment through consistent and coordinated action. Building upon past experiences, cooperation through partnerships is an operating principle. Resources are sufficient and expended wisely to obtain maximum benefit. The entire downtown community understands and acts upon its shared responsibilities.

## Appendix C: *Presentation to Workshop Participants*

# Downtown Initiatives

## WORKSHOP

## Setting the stage...

- Core Area Initiatives, 1981-92
  - Portage Place
  - The Forks
- Downtown Winnipeg Zoning By-law, 1988
  - Design review
  - Zoning flexibility
- Economic Development Task Force, 1989-90
  - Downtown priority
- Plan Winnipeg …toward 2010, 1991-93
  - Inner city revitalization
  - Downtown renewal
- CentrePlan, 1993-94
  - Downtown Watch
  - Downtown Flyer
  - Free parking on Saturdays
- Winnipeg Development Agreement, 1995
  - $ 4 m downtown program
  - Portage Avenue Streetscape
  - Portage Avenue investment fund
- CentrePlan Development Framework, 1999
- CentreVenture Development Corporation, 1999
  - Urban bank
  - Facilitation

# Riding the wave…

*Public Works*

- Main Norwood Bridge
- York Underpass
- Provencher Bridge and Pedestrian Bridge
- Main Street reconstruction
- Waterfront Drive

*Development*

- CanWest Global Park
- A&B Sound
- Red River College
- Hampton Inn and Suites
- Wellington West
- Arts Exchange
- Mountain Equipment Co-op
- True North
- and many more….

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# Moving ahead…

CHALLENGE: Keep the momentum going !

•Private sector ------- investment

•Public sector ------- climate for investment

- ➢Infrastructure
- ➢Incentives
- ➢Rules, regulations, process

(zoning by-laws, building codes, approval processes)

Goal:
•Responsive
•Market driven
•Streamlined

Balance:
•Protect public good
•Ensure safety
•Safeguard investment

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**Note:** *The following two slides were added midway through the process based on information obtained through the first few workshops.*

## Issues (external)...

- inconsistency in interpreting rules and regulations
- confusion of roles and responsibilities
- rules and regulations don't match the vision
- the vision is unclear and not current
- approval processes are lengthy and costly
- complexity of approval bodies
- corporate culture and attitude is negative

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## Issues (internal)...

- design-build methodology
- work without permit
- incomplete applications, missing information
- higher expectations for approvals
- competing policy objectives
- projects get changed midstream

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# Progress...

- by-law review (DWZB 4800)
- downtown development review committee
- integrated planning model
- downtown parking study
- merger of HWAC and HBC (for design review)
- downtown design guidelines

## Appendix D: *Notes From the Workshops*

**Workshop 1**
*Urban Development Institute, January 31, 2002*

ISSUES:
- ? Process is confusing, not clear, rules not known, not straightforward, not time-sensitive. Costs of confusion doubles development costs and the time required to get approvals.
- ? There is a lack of consistency in interpretation of policies depending on who you deal with and when you apply.
- ? The City needs to put the right people in the right places.
- ? No clear point of entry into the system.
- ? Urban design guidelines need to be written and clear.
- ? There are too many committees making the process too lengthy, ad hoc, and time-consuming. Time costs inflate project costs, inhibit innovation, and affect the confidence in the system.
- ? No map clearly outlines processes, including identifying the role of CentreVenture.
- ? There is a lack of overall strategy for development. Or, if there is a plan, it's not well known. Opportunity is not defined which increases risk.
- ? Rules and regulations contradict and impede building the vision of CentrePlan and the Development Framework—there is a disconnect between the vision and the regulations.
- ? Area Structure or Secondary Plans need to be created to better define opportunity.
- ? Creativity is stifled because some projects don't fit the rule book.
- ? Many jurisdictions allow developers to earn a higher return on investment than is realized in Winnipeg especially for residential projects. The processes that support investment is critical. In many cities friction normally exists between the development community and administrators, but in Winnipeg the friction slows things down or can even stop development. "Lubrication" is required.
- ? City processes should become customer friendly, should facilitate development, creativity and open dialogue. The application processes should be equal, fair and transparent.

PROPOSALS:
- ? Make sure the rules support the vision. Develop the Plan first and write the zoning by-law to support it.
- ? Clearly define investment opportunities within the vision and plans and provide guarantees.
- ? Describe intent of By-Law with illustrations or examples. This allows politicians to examine intent and ensure it is current. This also allows planners to understand intent of By-law and apply accordingly. It gives developers the ability to interpret intent and understand what the City wants.
- ? City should be responsible for infrastructure such as safety and parking that support development--especially critical within the Exchange
- ? Private Sector needs to be involved in the writing of the new zoning by-law.
- ? Senior management must "buy in" and demonstrate to administration that the City is indeed open for business.
- ? Authority should be delegated to the line staff who are dealing with the proposals.
- ? If the plan is done and is right, you don't need conditional uses.
- ? The City should look at assigning an advocate to a project in order to walk it through the system.

? The City should look at assigning an advocate to a project in order to walk it through the system.
? A possible improvement to the system may be the creation of an administrative coordinating group.
? Examine the possibility of establishing a high level inter-departmental / multi-disciplinary Planning Committee required to vet significant projects.
? Consider creating a forum of 10 people comprised of private sector, politicians, administration and very senior staff who could act as a ”court of appeal” for review of decisions.
? Since decisions need to be timely, the City requires paid Committee members, not volunteers.
? Study other city models.

SUMMARY:
? Inconsistency in interpreting the rules and regulations
? Confusion of roles and responsibilities (1 vote)
? Rules and regulations don’t match the vision
? The vision is unclear and not current (3 votes)
? Approval processes are lengthy and costly (1 vote)
? Complexity of approval bodies
? Need right people with positive attitude (3 votes)

**Workshop 2**
*Senior Management Team, February 7, 2002*

ISSUES:
? Need to balance or differentiate between legitimate competing objectives (e.g. heritage conservation and new development).
? Need to take a holistic view of administrative and political systems and regulatory framework.
? Need to clarify the political/administrative interface (e.g. roles and responsibilities).

PRIORITY STRATEGY (Quick Hit):
? Adopt a file manager/application expeditor system in dealing with development applications (single point of contact).

**Workshop 3**
*Planning & Land Use Division, February 18, 2002*

GOAL:
? clear, consistent, fair process

ISSUES:
? Many people have a piece of a decision. No one feels that they're in charge, not the politicians, not administration.
? The urban vision should be one of higher quality.
? An application should clearly articulate city's requirements.
? Policy should clearly define: appropriate form, function, fit.
? There is a lack of trust between users, administrators, and politicians.
? Information provided by developers is often incomplete.
? Subjectivity of design review.

PROPOSALS:
? Establish applications expeditors (single point of contact).
? Form a downtown “ACG” (Administrative Coordinating Group) with decision-making authority.
? Create a new downtown review committee merging a number of existing separate bodies.
? Clearly articulate what design review is intended to cover.
? Education needed along with better communication including intensive internal consultation to update the development framework outlining roles of CentreVenture, Tourism Winnipeg, EDW, etc.
? Develop staged review: function, fit, form

WORK CURRENTLY UNDER WAY:
? By-law review- draft by end of spring
? Downtown development review committee- draft by end of spring
? Integrated planning model
? Downtown parking study- report to ASD (Alternative Service Delivery) committee mid April
? Merger of HWAC (Historic Winnipeg Advisory Committee) & HBC (Historical Buildings Committee) for design review only
? Design guidelines- “key considerations” first
? File manager
? Communicate vision, long term goals

**Workshop 4**
**Winnipeg Real Estate Board, February 19, 2002**

ISSUES:
? One mile of Portage & Main gives people their impression of the city. It’s not a good one.
? With some momentum underway, the window of opportunity is now.
? Our city is a system. Downtown is the heart but you also need healthy legs & arms.
? Revitalizing a building costs very close to the cost of new construction in concrete with underground parking. You can build new faster. You need to have systemic supports in place that make it easier for downtown to compete with green field construction.
? Open the entire system to change.
? Rules are old and inconsistently applied.
? There seems to be no sense of ownership in administration.
? Time is money.
? One-stop shop was a disaster.
? Rent controls are an issue. They negatively impact new construction and re-investment.
? Where are the building code equivalencies the city is working on?
? Administration (and therefore the process) goes on holidays for the summer—you can loose 6 months on a project . Developer looses money and city looses 6 months of increased tax revenue.
? Property search takes 3 weeks.
? Action is needed, not more consultation. These ideas and concerns have been raised many times in the past.

PROPOSALS:

- The system needs responsive, knowledgeable people in place who can answer questions.
- Administrators need to buy into a positive attitude.
- There is a need to create a role of advocate or expeditor for development applications (all projects not just the large complex ones).
- City could provide incentives for staff with measurable tasks. You can't improve what you don't measure. It would pay for itself by bringing project along faster. i.e. building permits issues, time period between application & issuance.
- There is software available that can be interactive, on-line allowing developer and staff to track an application.
- Study other cities: i.e. cost-free approach in Austin, Texas: developer gets a tax holiday for part of their investment in a derelict building.
- Ensure transparency and consistency for all in the Downtown Heritage Tax Credit and code equivalencies.
- Provide development tax credits, not just for heritage.
- Look at other communities like Montreal for equivalency codes.
- Montreal has a policy for permits within 6 weeks or the application gets red flagged and escalated.
- There is definitely a market for downtown living. Housing must be part of the overall plan of infrastructure investment because the economics by themselves don't work. Rents must be affordable.
- Parking is a huge problem. Lots of parking, but not where it's needed.
- Educate the decision makers, both political and administrative.
- Decide what buildings are worth saving, let the others go.
- Encourage mixed land use zoning throughout the downtown.
- Establish time limits for turning around development applications.

Workshop 5

*Development & Inspections Division, February 26, 2002*

ISSUES:

- The Zoning By-Law is static. Council develops new policies that conflict with By-Law. Zoning has continuously requested re-design of By-Law.
- The By-Law was passed in 1988. Little development has happened over the years, so problems with the by-law have not been evident.
- Montreal and Vancouver don't need provincial approval to change building code by-law. Winnipeg has to have provincial approval.
- City of Winnipeg has fastest, most efficient processing systems in the country for residential and is in the top 4 in commercial applications.
- Design/build process is difficult to approve because they don't have all the necessary information up front. They often receive drawings when the building is already up.
- There needs to be clear delineation between the design/heritage process and building permit process.
- Inspection's biggest problem is the "work without permit". It forces an eventual issuance of permits. This puts Inspection in a position of having to use "elastic discretion". Should be shutting down jobs but that becomes politically sensitive. This practice is high risk, potential liabilities.
- Administration is forced into position of doing things that puts other steps or divisions in jeopardy.

? AMANDA will allow inspectors to see from their desktop. They'll no longer be able to "look the other way".
? Workload management includes serving those who complain loudest.
? The stumbling block to housing downtown is not zoning, but building code equivalencies.
? Richardson Report has provided guidelines, but it's limited in scope (strictly fire safety, not barrier-free). Phase II is supposed to look at commercial use of heritage buildings. Requires approval by the Province.
? How do you address barrier-free requirements in heritage buildings?
? Political interference makes it hard to apply the rules.
? Staged permits can reduce time delays but that does not work in the downtown where most projects are alterations.

PROPOSALS:
? Better communication of rules and expectations, both in-house and with users. Work with the industry on this (currently being done).
? There should be a strong commitment to enforcement. Decrease in day-to-day supervision has let enforcement lapse. The same inspector inspects and enforces and then has to deal with the same developers on the next job. Perhaps a separate enforcement branch as a solution.
? Appoint an advocate with responsibility for monitoring each application. Establish single point of contact.
? Need to separate development approval from building permit. Establish consecutive processes instead of concurrent ones.
? Proper computer software will give guaranteed turnaround.
? If you reallocate people as file managers, don't leave the system short of resources.
? Consider a Downtown Team that looks at all aspects of a project and has authority to approve. They require technical knowledge of each discipline and authority to liaise with other departments and branches (such as Public Works). Can include planning, zoning, plan examination, and inspections.
? Work with the design community to establish standards for submissions.

**Workshop 6**
*Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, March 13, 2002*

ISSUES:
? City Hall sends mixed messages. Political will and administrative will often differ.
? Commercial projects are quite different from residential and should be given priority.
? The Downtown By-Law doesn't work for a slow growth city, especially the requirement for design review.
? Make it easier to develop downtown than to put up "stucco boxes on the prairie" outside city limits. Often easier to do nothing than try to do something.
? There are systemic imbalances—acres of parking on Kenaston supported by taxes paid downtown.
? Rent control is one of the biggest challenges to residential development downtown; provincial policies out of step with municipal objectives.
? Inspectors are not given incentive to help or advise on projects.
? Front line city departments are not user friendly.
? There are no written guidelines for development.

PROPOSALS:
? Develop clear, written guidelines that can be used as a tool for development.

? Guidelines should be simple and allow creativity in development or eliminate altogether.
? Let business have more say in development, because it is their money on the line.
? Guidelines for new development should be different than for improvements to older properties.
? Introduce more liberal land use policy; allow residential anywhere in the downtown.
? The system goes easier on those who let their building fall down than on those who invest and preserve.
? City departments should provide more advice, more collaboration on projects.
? Frontline administrators with strong interpersonal skills would improve the system; provide service training for front line staff; provide incentives for performance.
? Appointing a file manager to manage and communicate on projects would help.
? City and province should approach and support downtown development together.
? The BIZ could sit in an advisory role to assist in the development process.

**Workshop 7**

*Civic Accommodations, Real Estate, Support Services, and Property & Information Systems Divisions, March 14, 2002*

ISSUES:
? Conflicting policy in Plan Winnipeg, how to determine what's more important.
? Proponents often make approval processes difficult because they change the project in mid-stream (sometimes "sell" their vision to get initial support, then erode the vision over time).
? Complex projects need to be dealt with comprehensively (politically and administratively).

PROPOSALS:
? Review approval processes- are they all necessary?
? Grant "exclusive interest" on a property to a developer to allow time for exploratory research, project development.
? Establish single point of contact for development applications.
? File manager needs to be a project leader that brings all necessary authorities to the table with the developer to negotiate an acceptable solution.
? Downtown research/reference base can be enhanced through inter-jurisdictional partnerships for the sharing of information (but who takes the lead, under what authority?)
? Delegate political approvals to administration where possible.
? Map out process (like Arts Exchange) with developer at the outset.
? Customer service training for front line staff.
? Internal Communication re: importance of downtown.

**Workshop 8**

*Manitoba Association of Architects and Association of Professional Engineers of Manitoba, April 3, 2002*

ISSUES:
? 90% of US cities are adopting sequential permit system to accommodate fast track construction; it's the new reality that needs to be accommodated
? Projects do change while underway and the system has to allow for those changes to happen responsively

? There is no written policy framework, it's been subjective. No written policy for signage, Design Board guidelines, or Rivers and Streams Permitting which is the worst of all. Staff don't communicate expectations.
? One-stop shop doesn't work.
? Recently, the process is slower, more regulatory as it seems administration has suffered from exodus of experienced people.
? There is concern about code equivalencies for heritage buildings. Local consultants tend to hire Toronto code consultants in order to get approvals.
? Plan Examination has a 3-month backlog and each phase of project is approved by a different examiner resulting in slower approvals and different interpretations.
? Communication among civic departments and disciplines is weak and issues that affect a project don't get brought to the consultants until the end.
? There can be conflicting opinions within any one department or between departments.
? Administration and design controls provide a "check and balance" and are a good buffer for consultants and their clients.
? Design controls raise level of lower quality work, but can inhibit excellence.
? Political influences can change a project, even when it conforms with guidelines.
? The draft proposed application fee document is huge and cumbersome. MAA will be responding to it as an association.

PROPOSALS:
? Critical to have Urban Design Guidelines with written objectives. I.e. setbacks, entrance requirements, pedestrian level, sustainability of urban environment. We should not have Architectural Design Guidelines.
? Introduce Development Permit process separate from Building Permit process with guaranteed turnaround times for Building Permit once Development Permit is obtained.
? Formalize a staged approval process with approvals at preliminary, final design, start of construction, and during construction stages.
? Save time and money by working with 1 examiner throughout project.
? A useful tool for front line administrators and consultants is being able to "kick the problem upstairs" for resolution, but this needs to happen in a timely fashion.
? Look at other cities' process and adopt good procedures.
? Assign a file manager to coordinate and be responsible.
? Decisions shouldn't be political, because it's not their area of expertise.
? Use the internet as a tool for making key information accessible. I.e. zoning by-law, development application, checklist for building permit submissions, map of approval process, should all be online
? Provide information or estimates on the cost of the permit process to a specific project so there are no surprises and developer can factor costs into project.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:
Q. Has Downtown Design Review Board done any good?
A. We think the Downtown Design Review Board has been a good measure, but it needs to provide written guidelines.
Q. How do we increase residential downtown? What are the inhibitors?
A. It's too easy to get to the suburbs. Lowest housing costs in country. Change attitude, perception of downtown i.e. safety
Q. Should residential be allowed at The Forks?
A. Yes, it should be allowed wherever it happens organically.

**Workshop 9**
*Winnipeg Construction Association, April 5, 2002*

ISSUES:
? The downtown development process has broken down. One-stop shop does not work.
? Staff seem unclear of the rules.
? Our business is time and money and the more time a job takes, the more it costs. Margins are tight and the environment is extremely competitive.
? There is no respect for city process because of lack of urgency/timeliness. The process is not timely, so builders are going ahead without permits. It's cheaper for clients to pay 2x permit fee in fines, than to wait on 6 week turnaround time.
? City of Winnipeg is much slower than other Manitoba jurisdictions.
? There is no face-to-face contact with administrators, so information and applications fall into a wasteland.
? Builder applies for permits, but administration calls consultants to ask questions or obtain more information. Questions should go to applicant.
? Bottleneck is in plan examination, either because of manpower shortage or lack of experience.
? Huge reluctance for building owners to renovate because it means their whole building is now subject to current codes and standards, not just the renovation or addition.
? Less than 50% of private sector jobs have completed drawings up front. Not the same issue with public tender work. Public tender work is fully drawn and stamped up front.
? The draft proposed application fee document is huge, cumbersome and will potentially add to costs. May require a separate estimator just to figure out fee costs.
? Civic Departments have been consulting with us and are attempting to make changes, but they are constrained.

PROPOSALS:
? Make the downtown development process simple. It's complex and people are choosing not to work downtown because of it.
? Allow administration to work collaboratively.
? Sequential permitting is a reality.
? All administrative correspondence should be with applicant, not their consultants.
? Correspondence could be verbal or by e-mail. Mailed letter correspondence adds unnecessary delay to the communication.
? Applications that don't respond to administration in a timely fashion should "loose their place in the queue".
? Do triage of applications immediately on intake to assess how best to handle.
? Give administrators counter zoning clearance authority for "easy calls". With zoning and plan ex rep at the counter, simple applications can handled on the fly.
? If drawings are stamped by a professional, they shouldn't be require a lengthy approval process. Administration can ensure "Certificates of Authorization" are current and approve drawings.
? Look at projects based on complexity and possibly timelines. Complex projects that are stamped by professional, allow administration to focus on specific aspects as opposed to the whole project. I.e. access and separation requirements that effect life safety

- ? Encourage staged permits with a specific schedule for complex jobs. Possible staging could be: foundation, superstructure, etc. It would be the builder's liability if there are changes later in project.
- ? Charge more for permits if it means adding staff and guaranteeing improved turn around times.
- ? For renovation or addition work, focus on the project. Opening existing building to current codes adds thousands of dollars of work and may stop a project from happening.
- ? Put building permit fees on occupancy permit as it shifts liability back to applicant. Unpaid fees could be put on tax bill.
- ? Building inspectors are often not timely. Provide them with building schedule so they can be effective. They can still perform surprise inspections at random.
- ? Communicate and educate users of the requirements. Many builders don't know them and even their consultants seem unclear at times.

Attachment "B" referred to in Clause 12 of the Report of the Executive Policy Committee dated September 18, 2002

## Financial Impact Statement

**Date:** September 6, 2002.

**Project Name:**
"Getting Down to Business" Report

**First Year of Program** 2002

| | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Capital** | | | | | |
| Capital Expenditures Required | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Less: Existing Budgeted Costs | - | - | - | - | - |
| Additional Capital Budget Required | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| **Funding Sources:** | | | | | |
| Debt - Internal | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Debt - External | - | - | - | - | - |
| Grants (Enter Description Here) | - | - | - | - | - |
| Reserves, Equity, Surplus | - | - | - | - | - |
| Other - Enter Description Here | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total Funding | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Total Additional Capital Budget Required | $ - | | | | |
| Total Additional Debt Required | $ - | | | | |
| **Current Expenditures/Revenues** | | | | | |
| Direct Costs | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Less: Incremental Revenue/Recovery | - | - | - | - | - |
| Net Cost/(Benefit) | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |
| Less: Existing Budget Amounts | - | - | - | - | - |
| Net Budget Adjustment Required | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - | $ - |

**Additional Comments:**
Since cost estimates have not been made with respect to the implementation of the report's recommendations, a financial impact assessment cannot be completed.

Gord Courage, Manager
Support Services Division