Speaking Notes for "Our Winnipeg" Public Hearing
Wednesday, July 14, 2010

The Our "Winnipeg" strategy consists of 4 parts . . . A Sustainable Winnipeg; Sustainable Transportation Plan; Sustainable Water & Waste and a part entitled Complete Communities.

Congratulations to the City of Winnipeg on the proposed "Our Winnipeg" plan. The process has been collaborative and engaging and establishes a great vision for our region.

We are pleased that the draft plan recognizes the need to continue working together as Capital Region municipalities towards a sustainable future. The document states that that "mutual success will come from thinking and acting as a region" – a view which is shared by the entire Capital Region as a sustainable, vibrant and growing area.

Giving consideration to the possible population growth of 83,000 over the next 10 years and 210,000 people over the next 22 years (from Our Winnipeg), cooperation throughout the region is imperative and essential to continued economic prosperity. Given to the knowledge that the Province grew by 16,500 people last year and most came to the planning on the part of the City of Winnipeg and the Capital Region around it.

Accommodating such population growth will require careful planning which prioritizes the efficient use and extension of services, protection of our natural environment, and our resources, but allow the continuation of our economic success for the city and the region.

It is encouraging to see Our Winnipeg highlighting these shared objectives.

Municipalities around the City, for example, are in the process of undertaking secondary planning initiatives to identify and rationalize future growth, how it can be sustainably, accommodated, and the how services can be provided economically to address environmental concerns, while building healthy communities.

By integrating transportation and infrastructure networks with land use, we will ensure future development is sustainable, moreover, beneficial to the entire region and not a burden on future generations.

Such planning efforts will allow future growth in the entire Region to be accommodating and the economy of the region to flourish as a united Capital Region continues to attract and retain a strong economic base with a elevated quality of life style.

Concerning the urban structure – we agree with the direction provided by Our Winnipeg. We see the region growing together as one, centered on Winnipeg, and in a manner, not simply guided by Municipal boundaries, but in way which makes economic and environmental sense in the provision of services, transportation and housing.

We support the need for the region to grow under a solid plan and also agree that there is a need to grow "out" to accommodate different forms of development and the scale of projected growth. In fact, we also plan to grow "up", promoting higher density development in support of infrastructure improvements and in a manner that supports public transit and development diversity in strategically located regional nodes. It is through this form of nodal development that growth and services can be clustered and encouraged, creating vibrant, planned centers yet outside of the City of Winnipeg but planned with consideration to the Region.

In doing so, we are planning in a manner consistent with the direction established in the "Complete Communities" section of Our Winnipeg. By promoting a mix of land uses, and focusing employment and services in regional nodes we will establish a framework for a region where public transportation/rapid transit and other alternatives to the automobile are the viable, preferred choice of Capital Region residents and where development can be adequately planned and serviced to address environmental concerns.

Once again, we would like to extend my congratulations to the City of Winnipeg, to its Mayor, its council and staff for a job well done. As the Capital Region we show our support for this plan.