
Embrace the Spirit
Winnipeg
Civic Environmental Committee
Annual Report
2002

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Message from Councillor Gord Steeves

This past year as Chair the Civic Environment Committee has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my political career. I have had the opportunity to work closely with a group of passionate and dedicated volunteers and staff who have served this committee to the utmost of their considerable abilities.

It has been a fascinating journey, as this committee moved from creation to a respected place in the civic administration at the City of Winnipeg. It is, of course, never easy to find a place to fit into the structure of a large organization but with the help of administration from all departments, we have not only been welcomed into their planning, but all departments continue to participate in our operation and provide crucial advice on a variety of issues. I am grateful for that support and look forward to the strengthening of that relationship.

I have learned throughout the course of the past year that the issue of sustainability in government is loaded with mystery and some long held beliefs that need re-thinking. It has become clear to me that sustainability for a city is not only attainable, but actually a vital component of the healthy growth of any city. The idea that sustainability might run contrary to the responsible running of government is a myth that is rapidly fading under the light of new programming that is being implemented in our city structure. These new initiatives not only highlight Winnipeg as a progressive and attractive place to live and do business, but also are proving to have immediate and long-term economic benefits for our city.

The challenges remain however and we now know that true sustainability is a way of thinking that not only has to be embraced by our civic organization but by our political leadership and citizenry as well. I believe that it is the job and responsibility of this committee to lead that process of change by highlighting the many things the city is already doing with respect to sustainability and to challenge all of us to move onto greater and greater achievements.

I look forward to the upcoming year and the possibilities that lay ahead. We will be asking council to accept and adopt our sustainability strategy as a guide for the development of our city. The strategy will be all encompassing, optimistic and will act as an enabling document for all civic departments to achieve their goals in a sustainable way.

We hope to undertake a substantial public consultation process early in 2003 and submit our Strategy to Council for their approval so that we can then begin the task of developing action plans for implementation. With continued support of the Mayor, City Council, the administration, and our extremely strong committee I know Winnipeg has a sustainable future.

Sincerely, Gord Steeves (Chair)

Introduction



Mandate

On December 19, 2001, Council approved the establishment of a Civic Environmental Committee to provide advice and report on environmental and sustainable development issues to City Council. The committee's mandate is to:

1. promote actions within the City of Winnipeg based on responsible environmental decision making and sustainable development (i.e., programs, services and actions that simultaneously achieve environmental protection, economic vitality and social well-being);
2. coordinate public input into decisions that affect the environment by acting as the City's key forum bringing together key environmental stakeholders;
3. review and strengthen current civic policies where necessary, develop and propose new policies in areas where none currently exist, and make recommendations to Council and the administration;
4. provide advice and guidance to Council on issues that affect the environment;
5. advise on the City's strategic and sectoral planning so that environmental sustainability becomes a key integrating tool in planning processes by identifying emerging issues and providing advice on appropriate actions;
6. facilitate education and awareness and promote an ethic of responsible environmental decision-making and sustainability within all City of Winnipeg institutions; and
7. monitor the City's progress in achieving its environmental targets and to issue an annual "State of the Environment and Sustainability Report".

Environmental Agenda

As one of its first mandated tasks by Council, the Civic Environmental Committee was directed to develop a comprehensive strategic environmental agenda that identifies key environmental issues and an action plan that identifies key priorities for implementation. The committee has been working with the administration to develop the strategy and expects to begin public consultations early in 2003. It is expected that once the strategy has been finalized and priorities for 2003 have been identified, the CEC will begin to focus on advancing those priorities.



Committee Membership

The original membership structure approved by Council for the CEC included:

1. one City Councillor;
2. the CAO/ or designate; and
3. representatives of the environmental, health, social and economic development communities nominated by the public.

Nominations were solicited from the public and reviewed by the Executive Policy Committee. The Executive Policy Committee submitted recommendations for both a Committee Chair and members to Council for approval. The approved members of the original Civic Environmental Committee included:

Gord Steeves (chair)
Rodney McDonald
Ken Klassen
Ken MacKinnon
Michele Kading
Doug Johnson
Toby Maloney
Terri Willard
Kelly Kuryk

In October of 2002 committee member Kelly-Anne Kuryk stepped down due to relocation to another community. In November 2002, Council expanded the Committee structure and appointed Councillor Mark Lubosch and Councillor Harvey Smith to the CEC. In January 2003, Mr. Bob Foster was appointed by Council to replace the vacant citizen position left by Kelly-Anne Kuryk.

Working Groups

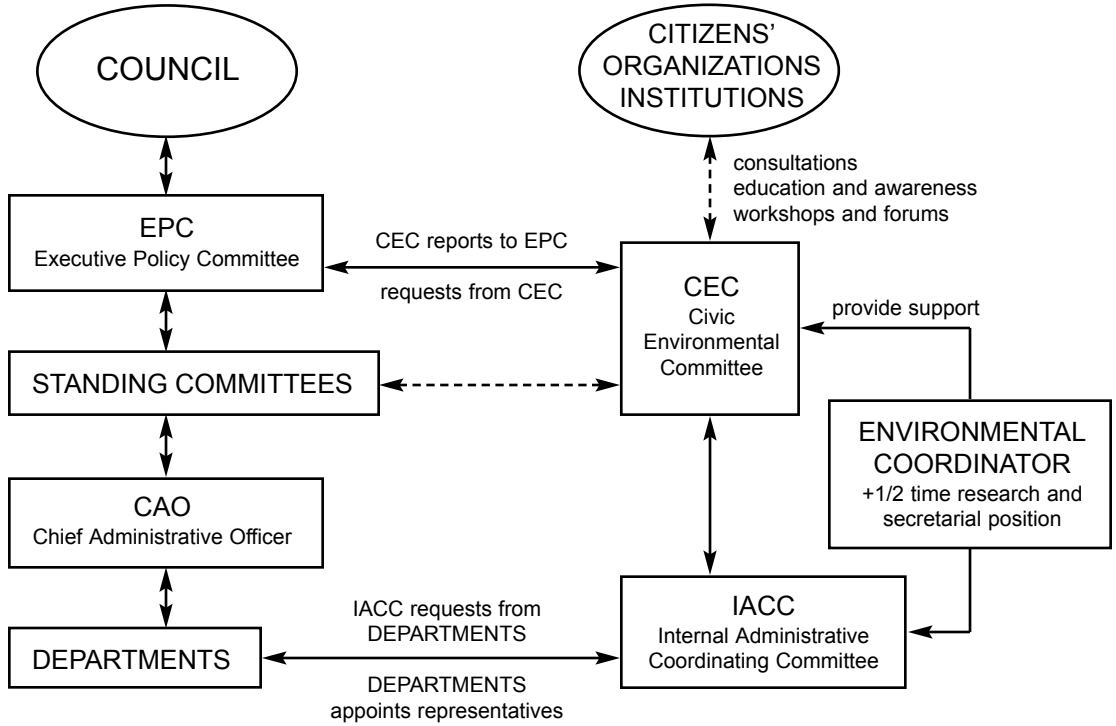
Another power of the CEC is the ability to establish working groups to investigate issue specific initiatives or to manage more complex and strategic activities. The CEC established two working groups in 2002. Firstly, the CEC established a communications working group to assist in developing a communications protocol on key initiatives. Secondly, the CEC established a working group to guide the development of the detailed environmental strategy. Both of these working groups will continue in 2003. Thirdly, It is also expected that the CEC will initiate the establishment of a working group on waste minimization. The former Waste Minimization Advisory Committee was dissolved in 2002 so that waste issues could be addressed under the new CEC.

Committee Structure

The committee reports to Council, through the Executive Policy Committee and, where appropriate, through other Standing Committees. This reporting structure most appropriately addresses the need to coordinate many complex and crosscutting environmental issues across council committees and individual administrative departments.

In response to the creation of the CEC, the City established an Internal Administrative Coordinating Committee (IACC). The Role of IACC is to provide support to the Civic Environmental Committee. This support includes:

1. responding to information requests from the CEC related to environmental issues or trends;
2. providing expert analysis and advising on proposed reports and recommendations to the CEC;
3. acting as a coordinating body to assist in the implementation of new environmental policies and programs approved by Council;
4. coordinating communications among departments; and
5. potentially acting as a key advocate for environmental goals and objectives once the long-term strategy is adopted.





Initiatives, Activities and Expenditures

A key aspect of the CEC's mandate is to engage citizens, Council and the administration on environmental issues and to promote solutions that result in improved environmental quality and long-term sustainability. The CEC undertook, supported and participated in many environmentally related events, activities and initiatives in 2002. While these activities are described in the 'Projects' and 'Events' sections of this report, information about past and future activities can be found on the CEC web site at www.winnipegcec.org.

The CEC budget for 2002 was $69,000. This annual budget was supplemented by a $59,356 Commitment Reserve Fund containing unexpended monies carried over from 2001 for use in 2002. The following were the expenditures of the CEC in 2002:

Projects	37,941.07
Support Staff	23,000.00
Events	17,192.63
Miscellaneous	2,902.54
Total	$ 81,036.24

2002 City of Winnipeg Environmental Initiatives

During the 2002 year the committee has worked with departments on a number of issues and have observed the progress of other initiatives indirectly. The committee considers it necessary to comment on the overall activity from the City and to commend Departments for their efforts to implement programs that address environmental issues in a responsible and financially sustainable manner. Specifically the committee would like to express its support for and encouragement of the continuation of these new initiatives:

1. Employer Sponsored Eco-pass Program
2. Curb-side Composting Pilot Project
3. Composter Giveaway
4. Apartment Recycling Program
5. Methane Capture Study at Brady Landfill
6. Power Smart Program for Civic Building Retrofits
7. Federation of Canadian Municipalities Feasibility Studies
8. Weed Control Advisory Committee Report

The committee would like to express its encouragement for similar initiatives in the future. The committee views the initiatives above as good examples of integrating successful service delivery with the objective of improving environmental quality in a sustainable and responsible manner.

Projects



Best Practices Research

In 2002, the CEC commissioned Emerge Knowledge Design Inc. to conduct a study of innovative environmental programs that have achieved exceptional levels of success. The primary goal of the scan was not to describe how the programs currently work but rather to identify the key factors that enabled these communities to get beyond the inevitable barriers to change and successfully implement innovative environmental programs.

One clear conclusion from this research was that municipalities throughout North America are placing greater emphasis on managing environmental issues. Many have established offices of the environment to coordinate municipal responsibilities and are developing proactive solutions instead of managing in a manner that is reactive. Such an approach has also led to the advancement of sustainable financing models including the use of such tools as polluter pay pricing such as gas taxes, garbage fees and consumption levies. In addition, environmental initiatives are being sustained through the use of budget tools that include revolving funds financed through savings gained as a result of innovative environmental initiatives. The observed result of such programs is a contribution toward more sustainable budgets for participating cities.

The information provided in the best practice report will be useful for the CEC in particular and the city government in general as the process of developing and implementing environmental programming accelerates at the City of Winnipeg.

Corporate Scan of Environmental Programming

The committee undertook a study to try and understand how the environment and sustainability were being addressed by City departments. Departments were asked to identify any environmental programs, activities or services for which they were responsible in relation to current policy as outlined in Plan Winnipeg Vision 2020. This exercise was a valuable informational tool that will assist in identifying priorities and gaps as part of the development of a comprehensive, long-term environmental strategy.

Environmental Issues Research

The CEC also commissioned Emerge Knowledge Design Inc. to develop a report on a variety of current environmental issues in Winnipeg. In conjunction with the City Environment Coordinator and the contractor, members of the CEC developed the list of environmental issues for which summaries are provided. The information included in these summaries was intended to provide readers with a basic introduction to the selected issues. The summaries provide a general overview of the environmental issue, a discussion of some problems related to the topic and a short list of resources where further information can be found. 'Fast Facts', which provide details of some of the local aspects of the issue, are also included for the topics where this information was available. In essence the summaries provide contextual information that can be used as background material to support future work on these issues by the CEC and the City of Winnipeg.

Citizen Survey on Environmental Issues

In November 2002 the CEC commissioned Western Opinion Research Inc. to conduct a survey of the Winnipeg general population to determine attitudes toward the environment in general and several environmental issues in particular. The survey provided statistically reliable information to support the development of the environmental strategy and is helping to uncover any gaps in the strategy in relation to city policy.

The data gathered from this research study answered the following questions:

1. How much does or doesn't the public know about environmental issues in Winnipeg?
2. How much does the public care about environmental problems in Winnipeg?
3. How much is the public willing to participate in environmental initiatives in Winnipeg?

The results of the survey provided EPC and Council with useful information regarding citizens' views on environmental issues and provided them with clear policy options for addressing current and future issues.



Web Site

In 2002 the CEC commissioned Planisphere Communications to develop an independent web site. Launched in October, 2002, the web site provides citizens with a point of access to the CEC's activities. Information about the mandate of the CEC is provided along with all agendas and dispositions of CEC meetings. The web site provides the CEC with an opportunity to engage citizens and to receive input on key environmental issues and future activities, including public consultation regarding the environmental strategy. The site can be viewed at www.winnipegcec.org



Comprehensive Environmental Strategy

As an initial task, the Civic Environmental Committee was charged with developing a comprehensive strategic environmental agenda that identifies key issues and an action plan that identifies key priorities for implementation. The development of this strategy and action plan is based on the Mayor's Environmental Agenda released in 2001 which was itself a starting point for discussions among the CEC, administration, City Council and the community. The CEC expects to consult with the public on its environmental strategy in early 2003.

Report Information System Enhancements

The committee worked with the Environmental Coordinator to develop broad guidelines regarding the City's formal report writing system. Intended to help identify the potential environmental implications of a proposed program or activity, these guidelines include implications with respect to green house gas emissions, regulatory requirements under environmental legislation, opportunities for energy efficiency and waste minimization initiatives. These guidelines were established as a tool to inform decision making of environmental implications and to encourage more sustainable solutions.

Draft Environmental Procurement Policy

In anticipation of the requirements under the Sustainable Development Act for municipalities to adopt sustainable development procurement guidelines and financial management guidelines, the committee worked with the Materials Management Division to develop a draft set of eco-procurement guidelines for Council. The Province recently began the process of consulting with municipalities to develop a regulation under the act on broad guidelines. In response, a working group was established to provide input. This working group will review these guidelines and make any necessary changes. The CEC will ensure that its draft procurement policy is consistent with the Provincial regulation before submitting the policy to EPC for review. The Province expects to have its regulation in place by July 2003, at which time municipalities will be required to adopt guidelines based on the regulation.

Events



Environmental Ideas Fair with Winnipeg Youth

The CEC hosted an ideas fair at City Hall in April 2002. The event involved presentations from students on key environmental issues and suggested solutions. Student presentations were made on urban transit, waste minimization, alternative fuel vehicles and urban land use development. The committee discussed making this an annual event.

National Odyssey Day

On April 11, 2002 the Winnipeg Chapter of the Red River Valley Clean Cities coalition hosted an alternative fuel vehicle information workshop. Though this event was held throughout the United States, Winnipeg was the only Canadian city to participate. The CEC received a certificate of appreciation from the event's organizer, the United States Department of Energy.

Going Green Conference

On June 3, 2002 the CEC participated in the "Going Green Conference". The theme of the conference was to promote environmentally responsible purchasing. The City's Environmental Coordinator gave a presentation on the CEC and future initiatives which was well received by the audience of over 300 people. The CEC also provided funding for this event to promote city initiatives such as its membership in the Red River Valley Clean Cities Coalition.

Green Rooftop Workshop

On October 29th, a major workshop on green rooftop technology was hosted by the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources and Green Roofs for Healthy Cities. The CEC contributed to the sponsorship of this event. The Chair of the CEC provided a keynote address on City of Winnipeg and CEC initiatives including Kyoto and climate change.

A Climate of Change Workshop

On December 14, 2002, the CEC hosted a public workshop on the implications of the Kyoto Protocol on Winnipeg. Guest speakers Ralph Torrie and Virgina Wittrock provided participants with timely information on the Federal adoption of the Kyoto Protocol and how cities might be able to address climate change impacts. Almost 300 people attended the workshop which provided citizens with information on Kyoto and what cities and people can do to meet targets. In conjunction with Climate Change Connection, the CEC produced a Climate Champion Pledge that was circulated to the workshop participants. This pledge offers instruction on how to reduce personal greenhouse gas emissions and invites a personal commitment to help halt climate change. The Climate Champion Pledge is now also available to visitors of the CEC web site for download as a single page (see Appendix).

Delegations to the CEC



The committee heard from a number of delegations in an attempt to become more informed on community environmental issues and on administrative roles and responsibilities as they relate to environmental services. The information provided assisted the committee in the development of the comprehensive environmental strategy and in their understanding of administrative activities. Delegations included:

February 11, 2002
Rick Penner, President, Emerge Knowledge Design Inc.
Re. proposal to conduct a Best Practices scan for the CEC

February 11, 2002
Sheldon McLeod, Principal, S.L. McLeod Consulting
Re. update on the Strategic Plan Working Group

March 11, 2002
John Sinclair, Chair, Waste Management Advisory Committee
Re. the role of the CEC and the Waste Minimization Committee

April 8, 2002
Jules Legal, Save Our Seine
Re. the Seine River tree stand near the Royalwood Subdivision

May 13, 2002
Randy Gadawski, City of Winnipeg Entomologist
Re. the City of Winnipeg mosquito control program

May 13, 2002
Harry Finnigan, Director, Planning, Property and Development
Re. the role and responsibilities of the department

July 8, 2002
Mike Mickerman, Principal, Tetres Consultants Inc. and Merrell-Ann Phare, Executive Director, Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources
Re. the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Green Rooftop Feasibility Study

August 12, 2002
Barry MacBride, Director, Water and Waste Department and
Nick Szoke, Senior Wastewater Facilities Planning Engineer, Water and Waste Department
Re. current City of Winnipeg Biosolid Management Program

September 9, 2002
Jim Thompson, Director, Public Works Department and Don Budinsky, Manager of Parks and Open Space, Public Works Department
Re. weed control standards and procedures

November 4, 2002
Harold Taylor, Red River Basin Commission
Re. the role and mandate of the Commission



Next Steps

The committee views this report to be one that is transitional. As the committee continues to develop its comprehensive long term strategy, future annual reports will become more of a "State of the Environment Report" that will describe progress made on priority areas identified in the strategy and the various action plans developed from the strategy. Such a format will allow Council and the public to understand what progress has been made on various environmental issues and will also allow for Winnipeg to review and revisit it's priorities over time as initiatives are undertaken. For example, action plans will require the identification of resources. It is hoped that the priorities in the strategy that are approved by Council for action will be aligned to the City's 3 year budget process so that resources as well as roles and responsibilities can be clearly set out to address community priorities. Winnipeggers will want to know if these action plans are resulting in sustainable solutions. By measuring the progress of the strategy, Winnipeg can ensure that a framework will be established to assist in this task. Reporting will also allow for Winnipeg to determine if other solutions, such as change in behaviour through policy direction, procedures or by-laws are having an influence on sustainability.

Other cities in Canada have undertaken the same approach and many of the large cities produce state of the environment reports including Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto, Hamilton and Regina These cities have all embraced the need to integrate environmental issues into their decision making process and have begun to develop sustainable solutions. Some cities, such as in Alberta, have gone so far as to access revenues such as gas taxes to assist in maintaining sustainable programs. Other cities have established revolving environmental funds which encourage sustainable initiatives that save money and improve the environment. Such approaches as tax shifting, incentive programs that promote sustainable activities and addressing the issue of perverse subsidization can all be measured and evaluated through a more comprehensive state of the environment report. As the issue of a "New Deal" for cities continues to receive debate and discussion, it will be important for that debate to include the need to address environmental and fiscal sustainability. Such an approach is critical to Winnipeg's competitiveness and long-term sustainable development.

The next steps for the committee will be to present its recommendations to Council on a comprehensive strategy that will have clear and specific goals, targets and priorities for approval. Once the strategy is approved, the committee can begin to redefine the format for the 2004 annual report so that it aligns with the priority targets and goals of Council.

Appendix

Climate Change Workshop

Workshop Invitation
Climate Champion Pledge (web site version)