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Chair and Members
Executive Policy Committee
The City of Winnipeg
510 Main Street
Winnipeg MB

Re: Executive Policy Committee – 9:00 a.m. Wednesday, April 16, 2014

Report #1	Encouraging Higher Density in Existing Communities
Report #2.	City of Winnipeg's Compliance with French Language Services Obligations (2011/2012 /2013)
Report #5.	Amendment to the Complete Communities Direction Strategy By-law No. 68/2010 – Residential Subdivision without a Full Range of Municipal Services

I am appearing this morning as a private citizen, to speak briefly about my concerns regarding certain aspects of the above EPC agenda items:

Report #1 Encouraging Higher Density in Existing Communities

I wish to oppose the recommendation of the Acting Interim Chief Administrative Officer, that this report simply be "received as information," – which in this context would mean that this report and the issue would just be discarded in the circular file.

Last December, the Executive Policy Committee **directed** the Winnipeg Public Service:

(1) to identify areas within existing communities that require infrastructure improvements in order to accommodate additional growth for higher densities of residential development, and
(2) to prepare an Implementation Strategy with clear timelines and targeted deliverables on how to address the infrastructure deficiency in these older existing neighbourhoods.

EPC further resolved that this effort be considered a priority project, and that the Service report back within 120 days.

This initiative probably made a lot of sense to anyone concerned about the undesirable effects and far-reaching costs of continuing suburban and exurban sprawl. All citizens of Winnipeg should be concerned.

Well, we have now received a report within 126 days of December 11, 2013, but it certainly does not contain the "Implementation Strategy with clear timelines and deliverables" which the Winnipeg Public Service was directed to prepare, as a priority.

The author states that since Council has adopted the Transportation Master Plan, there is no need for further study, and apparently no need to identify the specific deficiencies which will have to be addressed if particular older communities are going to be able to accommodate higher density residential development.

As for the deficiencies in the water, waste water and land drainage capacities of these particular older communities, this "report" states only that it will take significant study to determine them. The Urban Planning Division says it is offering to work on the issue with the Water and Waste Division, "**if** Executive Policy Committee and Council wish that this be pursued further," in the absence of a specific development application.

But in fact the civic administration has recommended today that no further work be done on this issue. If EPC just receives this report as information, as recommended, nothing further will be done.

I think that the intent of EPC was clear in December, when it directed the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a detailed Implementation Strategy for taking a proactive approach to facilitating more dense residential development in Winnipeg's older existing neighbourhoods. As a "**priority project**."

I am afraid I view this non-answer as another case of administrative stonewalling.

During the past four months, the staff should have identified the specific areas in older existing neighbourhoods where it would be desirable to increase density, they should have identified any additional staff and consulting resources which may have been required to prepare the servicing reports EPC was asking for, and they should have got on with job, so that today EPC might be able to look at implementation options for decision.

During the eight years I taught the graduating class in City Planning at the University of Manitoba, we worked on developing the skills and knowledge required to identify options, measure the full costs and benefits into the future, tell the truth, and enable those responsible to make the best possible decisions today.

I believe that the City's planners can do much better than what we see in this report this morning. Why didn't they do what they were asked?

I suggest that EPC reject the recommendation of the Interim Acting Chief Administrative Officer. Instead, EPC should state clearly that EPC is indeed directing that this matter be pursued further, and that EPC requires that the proposed Implementation Strategy be presented to EPC in four weeks, without further delay.

Report #2. City of Winnipeg's Compliance with French Language Services Obligations (2011/2012 /2013)

First of all, on behalf of my Francophone bilingual children and grandchildren, I would like to express my appreciation for the production of this report on the City's Compliance with the French Language Services Obligations, which should have been approved by Council and presented to the Minister by April 30th of 2012, 2013, and 2014.

I see that this three-year report has been prepared by the Interim French Language Services Coordinator. Why is this an "Interim" appointment to the position? Will a permanent appointment be confirmed soon?

In any event, I believe this Report provides details of an impressive effort by the City of Winnipeg to fulfill the French language services promises made when we amalgamated the City of St. Boniface with the 12 other Unicity municipalities in 1972. Service commitments have been extended since then, to include the whole of the Riel Community, including St. Boniface, St. Vital and St. Norbert Wards.

It should not be necessary to pass a Council resolution, but I certainly agree that the Councillor responsible for French Language Services, Councillor Mayes, should work with the Coordinator and all parties involved to review By-law 8154/2002 and recommend necessary updates to reflect the changing organization of City services, and new requirements for service in French.

On the last point, I would ask Councillors to recognize that Manitoba is an officially bilingual province, Canada is an officially bilingual country, and an increasing number of new immigrants are coming to us from Francophone countries around the world. The new immigrants do not all settle in the historic Francophone districts of Winnipeg, and therefore may require services in French in other parts of the City – especially downtown.

Report #5. Amendment to the Complete Communities Direction Strategy By-law No. 68/2010 – Residential Subdivision without a Full Range of Municipal Services

If I understand this report correctly, the Urban Planning Division has attempted to uphold the City's long-standing policy that residential infill developments will not be approved unless the lots have a full range of municipal services.

Because the Council has occasionally made exceptions to the rule, the Division is now seeking to clarify the policy and define those situations in which an exception may be made.

The Division undertook a study to identify the number of infill lots which could be subdivided from residential parcels with less than a full range of municipal services. In the whole City, the Division identified only three residential areas:

Area 1 (Knowles Avenue, Bonner Avenue and McIvor Avenue)	33 lots
Area 2 (Ravelstone Ave. West, Almey Avenue and Callsbeck Ave.)	31 lots
Area 3 (Charleswood)	48 lots
	112 lots

The lots in Area 1 lack urban standard roads and have open ditches for drainage.

The lots in Area 2 lack urban standard roads, and most are "flag" lots, meaning that the new building sites will be land-locked except for a long narrow access road to the public street (creating a flag-shaped parcel).

The lots in Area 3 (Charleswood) lack urban standard roads and have open ditches for drainage.

The Urban Planning Division states that residential subdivisions are now being allowed in Charleswood, because "requiring a full range of municipal services was unrealistic as it would be far too costly to ever complete."

I am not sure why that is the case. If Charleswood was a new subdivision, it would have a full range of municipal services now. The City is having to separate the original combined sewers in the Inner City, so why not upgrade the existing Charleswood services over time?

While I am well aware of the history of rural standard residential development in Charleswood, I seriously question whether we should be adding to the traffic and storm drainage load on these substandard services now, particularly to create what I should think would be considered substandard "flag" lots.

I think the more appropriate conclusion to draw is that the City should reaffirm and uphold its policy on page 30 of OurWinnipeg, to allow the intensification of land uses **only when a full range of municipal services is provided**.

If EPC and Council still wish to amend the Complete Communities By-law to permit some substandard residential infill subdivisions, then I suggest the exceptions should apply only to one or more of the identified three Areas, specifically, and we should not rely on the general wording of the proposed By-law, which may be stretched and bent to open up other sites in the future.

The City of Winnipeg has created some very impressive plans and policies. Unfortunately, sometimes Council seems all too willing to make decisions which run counter to those plans and policies, and citizens' expectations.

Thank you,



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River Heights-Fort Garry