Office of the Chief Administrative Officer • Bureau du directeur municipal

June 6, 2019

Ms. Jan Forster
Deputy Minister of Municipal Relations
Room 311 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg MB R3C 0V8

Dear Ms. Forster:

The City would have appreciated a greater level of collaboration on the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) planning, zoning and permitting review, and look forward to seeing our feedback incorporated into your final recommendations.

We agree improvements need to be made, and have been consistently striving to make our processes more efficient. Above all, our focus is on life-safety issues and ensuring that development occurs in a manner that is safe for everyone. We do not want to see any changes made that would compromise our ability to enforce safety requirements, and ensure full compliance with the Province of Manitoba's Building Code.

As part of your recommendations, we would like you to consider a number of requests that we have made of the Province over the past few years, which would provide greater clarity and would greatly improve process and efficiency.

1. Adopt the 2015 National Building Code in Manitoba so our building code standards are consistent with other jurisdictions across Canada. The adoption would also address the lack of clarity relating to a number of accessibility requirements that were introduced in 2012 as part of the Manitoba Building Code.
2. Develop modified building code requirements related to rooming houses as per the request of City Council in May 2018, to allow for more cost efficient conversion options for small scale multi-tenancy dwellings with four or fewer tenants.
3. Formally adopt the Richardson Report which relates to the adaptive reuse of older and heritage buildings, and give us more flexibility on enforcing safety requirements through the use of alternative solutions. We need building code amendments that will allow for more flexibility when applying code to existing buildings.
4. Amend *The City of Winnipeg Charter* to assist in expedition of development application processes related to unnecessary re-zone applications, as the Charter does not allow the City of Winnipeg to apply development agreements to building permits, as is the case in other jurisdictions such as British Columbia. The Charter does not allow development agreements to be a condition of a variance order or for the approval of a conditional use as is the case for every other jurisdiction that is governed by the Manitoba Planning Act.

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This makes it more difficult to pre-zone land in a manner that aligns with an approved secondary plan and with *OurWinnipeg*. Through pre-zoning land, we could eliminate some of the public hearing process for rezoning applications, which currently take approximately six months to a year to complete and substantially increases development timelines.

As mentioned earlier, we are always striving to improve process and to develop efficiencies so we can better serve our residents, business owners, and investors.

1. Over the past number of years we have worked diligently to implement the recommendations from the 2014 City of Winnipeg Real Estate Management Review.
2. We have established an **Industry Land Development Advisory Group**, with representatives from the Urban Development Institute of Manitoba, to facilitate dialogue between the City of Winnipeg and representatives from the development community on key issues regarding land development.
3. The City of Winnipeg has created the **Winnipeg Building Commission,** a group of independent builders, professionals, and code experts to review applications from permit holders (applicants, builders, building owners, etc.) who wish to challenge the City's interpretation or application of Codes.
4. The City tracks and reports its housing inspection appointment times which have consistently met industry expectations over the past year. Additionally, the City has provided evening and weekend inspection appointments for the convenience of homeowners.
5. The City continues to improve public notification of land development applications to ensure the process is as open and transparent as possible and that the public is better informed and participates in processes that shape the future of our communities.

The City of Winnipeg takes great pride in providing a large depth and breadth of public services for our residents, visitors, and businesses. Going forward, we look forward to working with the Province of Manitoba in a more collaborative manner.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if we can provide any further detail or context.

Sincerely,

Michael Ruta, FCA
Interim Chief Administrative Officer

c. Michael Jack, Chief Corporate Services Officer, City of Winnipeg
John Kiernan, Director, Planning, Property and Development, City of Winnipeg