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# Report of the Independent Fairness Commissioner

City of Winnipeg

Report on Compliance – Proposed acquisition of 425 Osborne Street

January 8, 2021

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**INDEPENDENT ASSURANCE REPORT ON COMPLIANCE WITH FRAMEWORK**
**City of Winnipeg**
**Proposed acquisition of 425 Osborne Street**

To: City Council

**Scope**

We have undertaken a reasonable assurance engagement of the proposed real estate transaction described in Section 1 of this report (the "Transaction") to determine whether the Transaction was undertaken by the City of Winnipeg's Planning, Property and Development Department ("PP&D") in compliance with version 1.06 of the framework referenced in Section 1 of this report (hereinafter referred to as the "Compliance Framework").

**Management's responsibility**

The Compliance Framework as well as compliance of the Transaction with the Compliance Framework are the responsibility of PP&D's Management. Management is also responsible for such internal controls as it determines necessary to enable City of Winnipeg's compliance with the specified requirements.

**Our responsibility**

Our responsibility is to express a reasonable assurance opinion on the City of Winnipeg's compliance based on the evidence we have obtained. We conducted our reasonable assurance engagement in accordance with Canadian Standard on Assurance Engagements 3531, Direct Engagements to Report on Compliance. This standard requires that we plan and perform this engagement to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the entity complied with the specified requirements, in all significant respects.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an engagement conducted in accordance with this standard will always detect a significant instance of non-compliance with specified requirements when it exists. Instances of non-compliance can arise from fraud or error and are considered significant if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the decisions of users of our report. A reasonable assurance compliance reporting engagement involves performing procedures to obtain evidence about the entity's compliance with the specified requirements. The nature, timing and extent of procedures selected depends on our professional judgment, including an assessment of the risks of significant non-compliance, whether due to fraud or error.

Our reasonable assurance engagement included examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting compliance with the applicable criteria of the Compliance Framework and included: 1) performing corroborative interviews with City of Winnipeg employees and representatives who were responsible for conducting the Transaction; 2) examining electronic documentation provided by City of Winnipeg employees; and 3) reperforming transaction specific calculations, where applicable. We performed our audit procedures based on discussions with PP&D Management and information available as at January 4, 2021. We believe the evidence we obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

**Other matters**

As outlined in the preceding paragraph, our stated procedures included examining electronic documentation provided by City of Winnipeg employees. Prior to the effects of COVID-19, management would have provided Deloitte with the complete physical transaction file for review of specific and applicable documentation supporting the applicable criteria. To address the physical distancing requirements associated with COVID-19, we were unable to gain access to the physical transaction file, and our audit procedures were revised to include:

- Requesting specific file documentation from Management to support the applicable criteria, which was subsequently provided to Deloitte in electronic form.
- Obtaining Management representation that all electronic information presented to Deloitte was prepared in the course of conducting the Transaction, and was complete, accurate and presented fairly in a manner that would not create judgements requiring interpretation that could result in a change in conclusion.

It should be noted that although we have received sufficient electronic documentation to support our opinion and the observations noted in Section 2 and Appendix 2 of this report, no additional observations can be provided in the context of this engagement, which may have been otherwise noted from obtaining access to the complete physical file.

**Our independence and quality control**

We have complied with the relevant rules of professional conduct/code of ethics applicable to the practice of public accounting and related to assurance engagements, issued by various professional accounting bodies, which are founded on fundamental principles of integrity, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality and professional behaviour. The firm applies Canadian Standard on Quality Control 1, Quality Control for Firms that Perform Audits and Reviews of Financial Statements, and Other Assurance Engagements and, accordingly, maintains a comprehensive system of quality control, including documented policies and procedures regarding compliance with ethical requirements, professional standards and applicable legal and regulatory requirements.

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**Opinion**

In our opinion, except for the compliance exceptions noted in Section 2, PP&D is in compliance, with the individual criteria of the Compliance Framework (version 1.06) for the Transaction noted above in all significant respects. We do not provide a legal opinion on City of Winnipeg's compliance with the specified requirements.

**Restriction on use**

This report was prepared for the City of Winnipeg and City Council for the purpose of City Council's ultimate determinations related to the above noted transaction, and although it may be made publicly available, readers are cautioned that this report is not suitable for any other purpose.

Deloitte LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants
Winnipeg, Manitoba
January 8, 2021

# Section 1 – Compliance Framework, the Transaction, and Management's responsibility

**Compliance Framework**
City Council ("Council") created the role of the Independent Fairness Commissioner ("IFC") for the purpose of ensuring that real estate transactions and management services ("Transactions") are performed in a fair, transparent and open manner. Under the direction of Council, the City Auditor has engaged Deloitte LLP ("Deloitte") to provide certain services as part of the IFC role through the performance of a reasonable assurance engagement (referred to as "compliance audit")_in accordance with the assurance standards of the Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada ("CPA Canada"). To ensure Council's objectives for the IFC are addressed, a Compliance Framework was developed under the oversight of PP&D (also referred to as "Management") through consideration of applicable City of Winnipeg by-laws, policies and procedures including PP&D's internal Real Estate Transaction Management Framework ("RETMF"). The Compliance Framework is to be used as the basis for the performance of compliance audits of selected Transactions, and can be subject to revision by PP&D based on evolving requirements. Further background information regarding the Compliance Framework is in Appendix 1.

**The Transaction**
The proposed transaction is the acquisition of property located at 425 Osborne, as identified on Misc. Plan 13452/5. The scope of the compliance audit includes only the compliance aspects of the Transaction outlined in the associated Administrative Report, and excludes any prior or ongoing Transaction related activities, where applicable. management represents that the complexity of this transaction has been deemed to be "low" for the purposes of this compliance audit.

**Management responsibility and assertion**
Transaction documentation has been prepared by PP&D based on information available at January 4, 2021. The Compliance Framework and applicable criteria is the responsibility of PP&D and has formed the basis of the compliance audit conducted by Deloitte on the Transaction. PP&D is responsible for ensuring the fairness, transparency, and openness of any proposed or completed transactions and the compliance of transactions with the Compliance Framework. Further, as discussed in Appendix 2 of this report, PP&D has made certain representations regarding the information provided to Deloitte to support the performance of the independent compliance audit. Deloitte's responsibility is to express an opinion on PP&D's compliance with the Compliance Framework based on the results of their independent audit procedures performed as outlined in Appendix 1 to the report.

Yours truly,



**Planning, Property and Development Department**
**City of Winnipeg**

# Section 2 – Exceptions noted and Management's unaudited response

**Exceptions noted**
The criteria within the Compliance Framework was subject to audit procedures performed by Deloitte for the purposes of determining compliance to support our independent auditors' report, as discussed in Appendix 2. Included in the table below is a summary of the exceptions noted in testing the compliance of the Transaction with the Compliance Framework, the associated criteria, and the unaudited responses to these exceptions prepared by Management. The City Auditor has requested responses from PP&D for each exception noted and provided the responses to Deloitte for inclusion in the report. Management's responses are unaudited, and have been included to provide commentary by the City of Winnipeg, to the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development ("SPCPDHDD") and/or Council.

A complete listing has been included in Appendix 2 of those criteria for which exceptions were noted, criteria that were deemed to not be subject to audit, and criteria deemed by Management to not be applicable to the Transaction.

| Summary of exceptions noted | Related criteria |
|---|---|
| The file documentation was not in compliance with certain aspects of the Compliance Framework, including:<br>• Although file documentation did include an engagement letter between the City of Winnipeg and the external appraiser, it was not in the format of the current template maintained by City legal Services and was not signed as required by Appendix D of the RETMF; and<br>• Management has represented that a review of the ESA's was completed by engineers from the Transit Department, Real Estate Department staff, and Legal Services, however, this review was not formally documented and included in the Transaction file documentation. Documentation is required to evidence compliance of the review of the ESA's by a qualified individual with experience in interpreting results and recommendations in the ESA. | 2.07, 7.04 |

| Unaudited Management response to exceptions noted |
|---|
| Management agrees with the findings of the IFC. The appraisal was obtained prior to the development of a standardized engagement contract, as approved by Legal Services. |

# Appendix 1 – Scope of services requested

**Introduction**
As outlined in Section 1 of the report, and to address Council's objectives for the IFC, a Compliance Framework was developed under the oversight of PP&D. The Compliance Framework development process also included assistance from Deloitte and the City Auditor in the form of consultation as to the sufficiency and appropriateness of the Compliance Framework for PP&D's ultimate determinations. The version of the Compliance Framework utilized for the purposes of this compliance audit is Version 1.06 dated November 4, 2020 as made available by Management. The Transaction is to be presented to the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development, Heritage and Downtown Development ("SPCPDHDD") and/or Council for approval. Council has adopted the Executive Policy Committee's recommendation that the compliance audit of Transactions will occur prior to presentation to SPCPDHDD and/or Council. Accordingly, Deloitte has been engaged to perform the compliance audit of Transactions while in progress, the results of which will be reported directly to SPCPDHDD through the City Auditor and Deloitte.

**Scope of services requested of Deloitte by the City of Winnipeg**
Deloitte has been engaged to perform an independent audit of the Transaction's compliance with the Compliance Framework noted above as follows:

a. Produce an independent auditor's report on whether the Transaction is in compliance with the relevant criteria outlined within the Compliance Framework;
b. Submit the results of the compliance audit and specific Auditor's Report to the City Auditor.
c. Report specific findings and compliance exceptions within the Auditor's Report based on the Compliance Framework where applicable.
d. Prior to performance of a specific compliance audit of a transaction,
    i. declare any conflict of interest in connection with the specific transaction; and
    ii. obtain management's representation of the complexity rating of the transaction, based on specific guidance retained by the City and in consultation with the Contract Administrator.
e. Attend the SPCPDHDD's regular meeting and/or any agreed upon special meetings in person where the independently prepared auditor's report will be tabled so as to answer questions regarding the report.

Deloitte's audit procedures to determine compliance with the stated criteria within the Compliance Framework included testing on a sample basis of the evidence supporting compliance with the applicable criteria of the Compliance Framework and included: 1) examining electronic documentation provided by City of Winnipeg employees; 2) reperforming transaction specific calculations, where applicable; and 3) performing corroborative interviews with City of Winnipeg employees and representatives who were responsible for carrying out the Transaction.

For criteria identified to not be in compliance and related exceptions noted, the report provides these findings and, where applicable, management comments related to the compliance exceptions. Any identified instances of non-compliance in relation to the Transaction are detailed in Appendix 2 of this report. Management's unaudited responses to the compliance exceptions, if any, would be included in Section 2 of the report. Responses regarding the cause of non-compliance, where provided in Section 2, are prepared by PP&D. For transactions where no compliance exceptions are noted, Section 2 is not applicable and would not be included with the report. Observations regarding the impact on the fairness, transparency, and openness of the Transaction, where provided, would be prepared by PP&D and/or the City Auditor.

As noted above, Council has adopted the Executive Policy Committee's recommendation that the compliance audit of Transactions will occur prior to presentation to SPCPDHDD and/or Council, which would include the required approvals based on delegations of authority in accordance with the RETMF and City by-laws, policies, and procedures. Accordingly, management has directed that these subsequent approvals, which are outlined in Criteria 4.01 of the Compliance Framework, are not subject to audit as at the time of issuance of this report, and are therefore out of scope for the report. Management remains ultimately responsible for ensuring that ultimate compliance of the Transaction with Criteria 4.01 based on RETMF requirements and City by-laws, policies, and procedures.

# Appendix 2 – Findings and compliance exceptions noted

**Background information provided by the Independent Auditor**

The Compliance Framework referenced in Appendix 1 above forms the basis of the criteria for Deloitte's independent audit of the Transaction. The Compliance Framework is presented in two components as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Objectives** | Summarized objectives of the IFC and RETMF as considered and defined in the applicable by-laws, policies, procedures, and the RETMF. |
| **Criteria** | Specific requirements that a real estate transaction is expected to comply with in order to be considered fair, transparent and open. Criteria were developed in consideration of specific statements or requirements within by-laws, policies, procedures, and the RETMF. Management's ultimate determination of applicable criteria is based on the nature of the transaction, property type, and transacting party. |

Our audit procedures to determine compliance with the stated Criteria within the Compliance Framework included testing on a sample basis of the evidence supporting compliance with the applicable Criteria of the Compliance Framework and included: 1) examining electronic documentation provided by City of Winnipeg employees; 2) reperforming transaction specific calculations, where applicable; and 3) performing corroborative interviews with City of Winnipeg employees and representatives who were responsible for carrying out the Transaction. We performed our procedures based on discussions with Management and information available as at January 4, 2021. Any compliance exceptions pertaining to individual Criteria noted by Deloitte during the performance of our audit procedures are identified below.

**Management's representations provided to the Independent Auditor**
As discussed in Section 1 of this report, Management has represented that to the best of their knowledge and belief, the following:

- All information presented to Deloitte has been presented fairly and accurately, and in a manner that would not create judgements requiring interpretation that could result in a change in conclusion as to the compliance of the Transaction with the Compliance Framework;
- All documents prepared and provided to Deloitte for review were prepared in the course of conducting the Transaction;
- Deloitte has been provided access to all relevant documents, and information pertinent to the specific documentation requests of Deloitte, as well as the City employees or representatives who possess information related to the Transaction, and within the stated period to meet the City's requirements to determine compliance;
- Criteria deemed as not applicable to the Transaction are identified in sub-section C of this appendix;
- Transaction compliance with the RETMF and applicable City by-laws, policies, and procedures, including but not limited to ultimate compliance with the Transaction approvals required under Criteria 4.01 of the Compliance Framework, remain the responsibility of Management; and
- The complexity rating of the transaction based on the review completed by PP&D is low.

**Findings and compliance exceptions noted**
The findings and compliance exceptions noted through the performance of Deloitte's audit procedures have been presented in the following categories:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **A.** | **Exceptions noted** | This table presented below, if applicable, outlines only those Criteria defined in the Compliance Framework that are applicable to the Transaction and for which we have noted exceptions in compliance. The exceptions have been organized in the table by the Objective reference number, and included in the second column are those Criteria where instances of non-compliance have been identified. The third column contains a description of the exception noted. |
| **B.** | **Criteria not subjected to audit** | This table presented below, if applicable, outlines those Criteria that could not be subjected to audit on the basis of Management's representation that the related activities have not been performed based on the rationale provided. |
| **C.** | **Criteria not applicable to the Transaction** | During the course of our test procedures performed, Management has represented and confirmed that the Criteria referenced in the table presented below are not applicable to the Transaction, and have therefore not been included in the scope of our audit. |

It should be noted that Criteria for which no compliance exceptions were noted are not included in the tables below. The Compliance Framework should be referenced for a complete listing and description of all applicable Criteria included within the Compliance Framework as at the date specified above.

## A. Exceptions noted

### 2. An appraisal of the property has been performed by a qualified individual, in an acceptable format, as needed

| | Criteria | Exceptions noted |
|---|---|---|
| **2.07** | If an external appraiser was used, the engagement to prepare an external appraisal report with respect to the property was documented through a signed written engagement letter using the most current template maintained by City Legal Services (as at the date of engagement). | Although file documentation did include an engagement letter between the City of Winnipeg and the external appraiser, it was not in the format of the current template maintained by City legal Services and was not signed as required by Appendix D of the RETMF. |

### 7. An Environmental Site Assessment ("ESA") was completed as required

| | Criteria | Exceptions noted |
|---|---|---|
| **7.04** | All ESAs have been reviewed by a qualified individual with experience in interpreting results and recommendations in the ESA, or has otherwise been reviewed or consulted with either a member of Public Works or a member of the Water and Waste Department's environmental protection program. Documentation evidencing this review has been retained within the file. | Management has represented that a review of the ESA's was completed by engineers from the Transit Department, Real Estate Department staff, and Legal Services, however, this review was not formally documented and included in the Transaction file documentation. Documentation is required to evidence compliance of the review of the ESA's by a qualified individual with experience in interpreting results and recommendations in the ESA. |

## B. Criteria not subjected to audit

### 10. Alternative properties and procurement methods were considered in selecting the property

| | Criteria | Representations or rationale provided |
|---|---|---|
| **10.01** | A search was undertaken to identify alternative property locations and purchase/lease opportunities available. In cases where multiple opportunities were identified by this search, a comparative analysis was undertaken to evaluate the most economical option. This analysis was reviewed and communicated with the requesting department. | The determination as to acquire the property was made during or prior to the capital budgeting process. As the property was already identified in the Capital Budget, we could not subject this criteria to audit. |

## C. Criteria not applicable to the Transaction

| Objective | | Criteria not applicable |
|---|---|---|
| 2. | An appraisal of the property has been performed by a qualified individual, in an acceptable format, as needed. | 2.03, 2.12, 2.15 |
| 3. | Consultation and communication with internal City stakeholders such as City departments, the Ward Councilor, and utility agencies has been solicited prior to the execution of the transaction. | 3.01, 3.02 |
| 5. | All land has either been declared surplus or is planned to be declared surplus concurrently with the approval of sale by the Chief Administrative Officer and/or Council, based on the applicable Delegation of Authority. | 5.01 |
| 6. | PP&D has been authorized to commence negotiations for the acquisition or disposal of land, and completed site inspections as appropriate. | 6.02, 6.03 |
| 7. | An Environmental Site Assessment ("ESA") was completed as required. | 7.05, 7.06 |
| 8. | A competitive procurement process was conducted when prescribed by the RETMF. | 8.02, 8.03, 8.04, 8.05 |
| 11. | Where land is to be expropriated, compliance with the Expropriation Act has been considered and verified by City Legal Services. | 11.01, 11.02, 11.03, 11.04, 11.05, 11.06, 11.07, 11.08 |
| 12. | Unsolicited offers for the purchase of City owned property have been pursued only when the conditions established by Council have been met. | 12.01 |
| 13. | Any offer for the purchase of City-owned property was only acted on by PP&D if it was provided in the form of a formal written offer. | 13.01 |
| 14. | Acquisitions of privately owned property containing dilapidated structures are accompanied by a program of rehabilitation, redevelopment, or improvement. | 14.01, 14.02 |
| 15. | Specific policies relating to transactions involving property under the purview of the Parks & Recreation division have been observed. | 15.01, 15.02 |
| 16. | Where land declared surplus had previously been transferred by a Developer to the City, that land has first been offered back to that Developer. | 16.01 |
| 17. | Other policies related to the general process for the sale of land have been adhered to. | 17.01, 17.02 |
| 18. | The policies pertaining to acquisitions and dispositions of specific types of property have been adhered to. | 18.01, 18.02, 18.03, 18.04, 18.05, 18.06, 18.07, 18.08, 18.09, 18.10 |
| 19. | The policies pertaining to specific types of transaction have been adhered to. | 19.01, 19.02, 19.03, 19.04 |