

Submission to the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development

Re: 2026 Preliminary Budget – Development Approvals, Building Permits & Inspections

Submitted by: Winnipeg Construction Association (WCA)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2026 Preliminary Budget. The Winnipeg Construction Association represents more than 800 member firms across Winnipeg's industrial, commercial, and institutional construction sector. A well-functioning permitting system is foundational to economic growth, job creation, housing supply, and investor confidence.

We are supportive of the added investment in PPD contained in this budget. Our comments focus on ensuring that these new resources translate into meaningful performance improvements that benefit the entire city.

1. Performance Improvements Required

The City's performance indicators show persistent challenges:

- Citizen satisfaction with zoning and building permits has declined to 50% for 2025, down from 62% in 2021 (page 2).
- Residential development outcomes continue to lag peer cities.
- Timelines and predictability remain top concerns for industry despite stable permit volumes.

PPD does not just issue permits — it is a core economic development department. Delays create cascading impacts: project slowdowns, deferred hiring, increased costs, and reduced competitiveness for infill and redevelopment projects.

Improved performance needs to be the primary outcome of the 2026 budget.

2. WCA Supports converting Temporary FTEs to Permanent Positions

The construction industry is strongly supportive of the added investment in staffing. The 2026 Preliminary Budget includes 15 new full-time equivalent positions, with 10 directly supporting Development & Inspections and Urban Planning & Design to meet provincial permitting obligations (page 187).

A significant portion of these FTEs reflect temporary staff being converted into permanent roles — a very positive step. This change should help improve:

- Staff retention
- Continuity of expertise
- Consistency in reviews
- Reduced turnover-related bottlenecks
- Stability during peak construction seasons

Capacity building is essential. But these new resources must be tied to measurable improvements in permit issuance times and service performance.

3. The End-to-End Review is a Critical Opportunity to Drive Performance

We acknowledge that the City has commissioned and completed an End-to-End Review of the Planning, Permit, Inspection and Occupancy process, with results forthcoming.

We are optimistic that this review will:

- Identify bottlenecks
- Clarify workflow inefficiencies between Zoning, Plan Examination, and Inspections
- Recommend modernized, streamlined processes
- Produce actionable steps to shorten permit issuance times
- Establish improved performance-accountability mechanisms

The review must become a driver of transformation, not a report that sits on a shelf. This is a pivotal moment for the department.

Conclusion

The construction industry is fully prepared to support the City in accelerating housing development, major institutional projects, and private-sector investment. We appreciate Council's commitment to resourcing PPD and we support the added investment included in the 2026 budget.

However, funding alone will not produce the needed improvements. To achieve real impact:

- PPD performance must improve
- Added capacity must translate to shorter permit timelines
- Cost-of-service and efficiency concerns must be addressed openly
- The End-to-End Review must be implemented with urgency
- PPD should be recognized and managed as a core economic development engine for Winnipeg

When permitting works well, the entire city grows.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Respectfully,



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