

Chapter One

The Regional Planning Advisory Committee: Background and Mandate

The Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) has reached the unanimous conclusion that regional perspectives and regional collaboration within Manitoba's Capital Region need to be strengthened. There have been positive trends and developments within the Region, and considerable previous attention to this need, but the pace at which region-wide cooperation and thinking is advancing must quicken. Given that the Capital Region contains 64 per cent of the provincial population and Winnipeg represents 64 per cent of the provincial economy, the economic, social, environmental and political strength of the sixteen Capital Region communities and their governments matters to all Manitobans (Census Canada, 2001 Census; Conference Board of Canada, Statistics Canada, as quoted in "A choice between investing in Canada's cities or disinvesting in Canada's future", *TD Economics Special Report*, April 22, 2002. p. 5). Moreover, there are lessons from the RPAC's examination of the dynamics and developments within the Capital Region that have potential application throughout the province. For these reasons, the provincial gov-

ernment and the sixteen Capital Region municipalities* should engage in an act of region building.

Through this process, the Region's citizens, leadership, resources, and communities can begin to unite around a shared agenda for improving economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and quality of life within the Region. Regionalism in this sense is about more than improved intergovernmental cooperation. It involves creative problem solving and the identification of opportunities by all segments of the regional community: business, labour, non-profits, community-based organizations, research institutes, universities and colleges, and others.

To achieve these goals, the RPAC is recommending two complementary sets of policy initiatives that will serve to stimulate regional development in Manitoba.

* In Manitoba, municipality is a term used to describe a local government. In the Manitoba Capital Region there are three types of municipalities: cities, towns, and rural municipalities.

Building a Strong Manitoba Capital Region

The first set of policy initiatives takes the form of recommendations that focus on fostering regional thinking and cooperation between the sixteen Manitoba Capital Region municipalities. They are discussed in detail in Section Two of this report. The RPAC believes that a regional vision and purpose will develop when regional players engage in joint activities to reach common goals. The building blocks of a cooperative regionalism include:

- the creation of a Partnership of Manitoba Capital Region Governments
- service sharing
- tax sharing
- joint action on sustainable economic development
- conflict resolution

Three points must be made at the outset about these initiatives. The first is that they do not contemplate the creation of a new level of government. The second is that they do not contemplate the introduction of any new level of taxation. Finally, the provincial government has an important role to play in bringing these communities together and facilitating their joint activities. The long-term aim should be to foster regional partnerships of various kinds and to promote regional consciousness among residents of Manitoba's Capital Region.

Creating a framework for regional development

The second set of policy recommendations works toward the establishment of a clear and comprehensive planning and land-use policy

for the Region. They are discussed in Section Three of this report and involve such measures as:

- the adoption of a statement of planning principles
- the use of policy planning statements
- streamlining the planning process
- strengthening Provincial Land Use Policies

All of the recommendations in this report work towards the fostering of a strong regional consciousness and the establishment of an effective regional planning framework. Before outlining these proposals it is useful to place the Regional Planning Advisory Committee's work in context.

THE CREATION OF THE RPAC

In September 2001 the Government of Manitoba appointed the Regional Planning Advisory Committee to undertake public consultation, assist in stimulating public discussion, and provide advice to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs on regional planning policies for Manitoba's Capital Region. The terms of reference for the Committee mandate it to:

- undertake community consultations in order to gain public and stakeholder input on potential planning policies which better address the growth management issues facing the Capital Region
- prepare a report that will be considered by the Province in the development of a Policy Plan for the Capital Region.

The Regional Planning Advisory Committee members are:

- Paul Thomas: Chair: the Duff Roblin Professor of Government at the University of Manitoba
- R.S. "Bud" Oliver: former Mayor of the City of Selkirk, chair of the Red River Basin Commission
- Robert (Bob) Stefaniuk: Mayor of the Rural Municipality of Ritchot
- Lillian Thomas: Deputy Mayor of the City of Winnipeg
- Nick Carter: Deputy Minister of Natural Resources with the Government of Manitoba from 1979 to 1987
- Cathy Auld: Director of Donor Relations and Corporate Secretary with the Winnipeg Foundation
- Eleanor Thompson: Founder/Director of the Urban Circle Training Centre

THE CAPITAL REGION

The Capital Region is the designation used to describe Manitoba's capital city and the fifteen other municipalities in the Winnipeg region. In 1989 the Government of Manitoba established an intergovernmental committee called the Capital Region Committee, which included the mayors and reeves of the Capital Region municipalities and the Ministers of Rural Development, Urban Affairs (now the minister of Intergovernmental Affairs) and Environment (now Conservation).

The Capital Region is not an autonomous political jurisdiction nor does the Capital Region Committee constitute a fourth level of government. It is not a legal entity and has no administrative responsibilities or capabilities. The Capital Region is a territory designated through the political and administrative processes of the Government of Manitoba for

the purpose of creating a regional planning framework for the City of Winnipeg and the fifteen surrounding municipalities. The provincial government is responsible for bringing the Capital Region into existence and has the ultimate authority to make decisions on composition, overall direction, and specific decisions on planning and development within the Region. To a great extent, this authority is delegated to and/or shared with the sixteen municipalities that comprise the Region.

There are two cities, one town, and thirteen rural municipalities (RMs) in the Capital Region (See Map 1.1). They are:

- the Rural Municipality of Cartier
- the Rural Municipality of East St. Paul
- the Rural Municipality of Headingley
- the Rural Municipality of Macdonald
- the Rural Municipality of Ritchot
- the Rural Municipality of Rosser
- the City of Selkirk
- the Rural Municipality of Springfield
- the Rural Municipality of St. Andrews
- the Rural Municipality of St. Clements
- the Rural Municipality of St. François Xavier
- the Town of Stonewall
- the Rural Municipality of Taché
- the Rural Municipality of West St. Paul
- the City of Winnipeg

Geographically, the Capital Region is quite small, covering approximately 1.2 per cent of the land base of Manitoba. However, it plays an extremely important role in the socio-economic life of the province. The Capital

Region is home to almost two-thirds of Manitoba's population and accounts for over two-thirds of the provincial gross domestic product. This significant concentration of people and industry should not obscure the important fact that the Capital Region is not solely an urban region. Much of the richest and most productive farmland in the province lies within the Region, as do numerous quite distinct rural communities. The Capital Region is not simply a city and surrounding suburbs.

However, economic, social, and environmental issues do not respect boundaries. Not only do decisions made in one municipality have important implications for the entire Region, cooperation between municipalities has the potential to reduce costs, improve services, enhance growth, and protect the environment.

PLANNING AND THE CAPITAL REGION: SOME BACKGROUND

Since the Capital Region was first designated in 1989, the Government of Manitoba has undertaken a number of regional studies. As a part of the development of the Provincial Sustainable Development Strategy, in 1996 the Government of Manitoba worked with the sixteen municipalities of the Capital Region, the Manitoba Round Table on Environment and the Economy, and the public and adopted a Capital Region Strategy.

In 1998, on the recommendation of the Capital Region Committee, the Government of Manitoba appointed a Capital Region Review Panel. The Panel's 1999 report concluded that the existing regional framework for achieving orderly sustainable development and cost effective service delivery was not entirely effective. Shortcomings were identified in the protection of resources, utilization of infra-

structure, service sharing, dispute resolution, accounting, research, marketing, cost sharing, and planning. In some cases, the Panel concluded, "there simply is no 'Regional' structure in place." (*Capital Region Review*, 1999, p. 48) The Panel recommended that the Government of Manitoba pass legislation to enable the municipalities of the Capital Region (and other Manitoba municipalities) to establish a Regional Association. This recommendation reflected the Panel's view that "primary responsibility for advancement of Regional thinking is best left to the voluntary initiative of the municipal governments within the Region." (*Capital Region Review*, 1999, p. 74)

In January 2001, the Government of Manitoba released *Planning Manitoba's Capital Region: Next Steps*, its response to the 1999 Panel report. While it concurred with many of the panel's findings, the Government of Manitoba took the position that voluntary municipal initiatives were "only one part of the solution. Also key will be forging strong and stable partnerships among governments, while also instituting an effective policy and decision-making process." (*Next Steps*, 2001, p. 4) At that time the Province asserted its responsibility for land management, municipal government, resources, and the environment and announced a Capital Region planning framework to address land use and growth management in the Capital Region. The government framework included a commitment to:

- lead in the development of a regional policy plan
- appoint a Regional Planning Advisory Committee
- dedicate a regional planner and professional planning staff to deal specifically with the Capital Region

- diligently apply the Provincial Land Use Policies and begin a review process to enhance the policies and extend their application province-wide
- undertake a review of the statutes governing planning in Manitoba with a view towards modernizing and streamlining legislation
- develop and maintain common databases containing information on a wide range of topics related to the Capital Region
- give priority to maximizing the use of existing infrastructure before approving developments that require new infrastructure
- work with the municipalities in the Capital Region towards the development of the mutually beneficial tax-sharing models
- use the existing Capital Region boundaries in initiating the regional planning process
- work through consultation with municipalities and the Regional Planning Advisory Committee, to develop strategies to resolve inter-municipal disputes

CAPITAL REGION PLANNING

As its name suggests and its mandate makes explicit, the Regional Planning Advisory Committee has been tasked with providing advice on the development of a Capital Region Policy Plan. Before outlining the Committee's approach to regional planning, it is useful to describe briefly the current planning process in Manitoba. (The planning process is described in greater detail in Chapter Eleven.)

All sixteen municipalities in the Capital Region have adopted development plans that set out medium to long-term development goals and policies. Along with accompanying

zoning and building by-laws, these plans serve as the rules for land development in each municipality. These plans are jointly adopted by each municipal council (or planning district board in the case of municipalities that belong to planning districts) and the Government of Manitoba. There is a legislative requirement for plans to be reviewed every five years.

The City of Winnipeg Charter provides the legislative authority for planning within the City of Winnipeg. *The Planning Act* provides the legislative authority for planning in all other Manitoba municipalities.

Municipalities can join together to establish planning districts to develop uniform planning policies. In the Capital Region there are three such planning districts:

- The Selkirk and District Planning Area (comprised of Selkirk, St. Andrews, St. Clements, and West St. Paul)
- The South Interlake Planning District (comprised of Stonewall, Teulon, Rockwood, and Rosser)
- The Macdonald-Ritchot Planning District (comprised of Macdonald and Ritchot)

With the exception of Winnipeg's development plan (known as Plan Winnipeg), all development plans are required to conform to the Government of Manitoba's Provincial Land Use Policies Regulation (PLUPs) that are adopted under *The Planning Act*. In practice, Plan Winnipeg is evaluated for conformity to the PLUPs. First adopted in the 1980s, the PLUPs were revised in 1994 to incorporate the Province's Sustainable Development Principles and Guidelines. The Government of Manitoba is committed to reviewing these policies, applying them diligently, and extending them to apply to the entire province.

In its *Next Steps* document, the provincial government provided this explanation of how the proposed Capital Region Policy Plan would fit into the existing framework.

The policies developed by the Province will address growth in the entire region and are expected to be more detailed than the current Provincial Land Use Policies. In effect, they will become a strategic regional policy plan providing policy guidance for the more detailed municipal or planning district development plans. (*Next Steps*, p. 7)

The province's stated long-term goal is to have Capital Region municipal and planning district development plans brought into conformity with the province's Capital Region Policy Plan.

As Chapter Two demonstrates, the Regional Planning Advisory Committee has fulfilled its mandate to consult with the public and stimulate debate on Capital Region planning issues. This report represents the RPAC's contribution to the development of a Capital Region Policy Plan.

