

## Chapter Two

# The Consultation Process

Following its appointment in 2001, the Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) undertook an seven-step process in seeking public and stakeholder input and the preparation of this, its final report.

### 1) MET WITH CAPITAL REGION MUNICIPAL COUNCILS

Starting in October 2001, the RPAC met with fifteen of the sixteen Capital Region municipal councils, the Council of Cartier having declined the RPAC’s invitation to meet with the Committee. (For a list of the RPAC consultations and the people who presented at these meetings see Appendix One). The purpose of these initial meetings was to acquaint the councillors with the role of the RPAC, establish a dialogue, and develop a mutual understanding of the key issues and positions. The RPAC asked the councillors to set the agendas; as a result their thoughts and ideas guided the discussion. At the request of the City of Steinbach Council, which is currently not a part of the Capital Region, the RPAC also met with the Steinbach Council.

### 2) DEVELOPED A DRAFT SET OF PRINCIPLES FOR PUBLIC DEBATE

Early in its proceedings the RPAC developed the following set of principles to guide its deliberations. Throughout the planning process the RPAC invited comment on these principles, as well as other planning-related issues.

#### 1. *Municipal Role in Planning*

Municipalities should continue to have primary responsibility for day-to-day land use planning and decision-making for their local communities, within provincially approved parameters and the regional context.

#### 2. *No New Level of Government*

A positive economic and social climate in the Capital Region can be achieved without the creation of another level of government. The problems in the Capital Region are not of such a magnitude as to require major restructuring of governments or the establishment of major new institutions to deal with them—and there appears to no support for such action among most municipalities or the provincial government.

### **3. Regional Planning is a Provincial Role**

Municipal councils are elected to represent their local communities; it is not their direct responsibility, nor are they expected to address concerns outside their jurisdictions. Therefore, in the absence of a regional authority, the government of Manitoba is the only level of government that has a clear mandate to address regional issues. Given that the Capital Region represents over 60 per cent of the Province's population and economy, it is appropriate that the provincial government, representing all Manitobans, pay continuing attention to development in the Region and provide leadership to enable the Region to realize opportunities and to deal effectively with its challenges.

### **4. Regional Planning Based On Clear Principles and Law**

Any necessary policy direction and control of the development processes in the Capital Region should be based upon broad public interests that are clearly expressed in provincial law, land use policies and regulations. This legal framework must be flexible enough to accommodate the diversity among the municipalities in the Capital Region. Provincial policies and actions should be based upon clearly stated principles and criteria, and they should be public and consistent.

### **5. Public Consultation and Co-operation**

Within the context of law, planning processes in the Capital Region should be open, accessible, participatory, inclusive, responsive and collaborative. In particular, thorough public consultation should be fundamental in any planning exercise. Consultation with stakeholders and appropriate Aboriginal communities is also to be encouraged.

### **6. Provincial Role in Planning**

The role of the provincial government in planning and development processes should include the following:

- a) to provide policy leadership and support to enable the Region to realize opportunities for sustainable economic growth and healthy communities;
- b) to ensure better integration and coordination of municipal land-use planning decisions with related activities such as water management, transportation, environmental protection, public health and safety, etc.;
- c) to deal with 'spillover' effects where municipal land use decisions have impacts that affect neighbouring municipalities, the Region or the Province as a whole;
- d) to help resolve intermunicipal disputes where these pose a barrier to development of an effective policy response to problems arising from growth and change;
- e) to ensure some measure of consistency, predictability and fairness in municipal decision-making over time and across jurisdictions, particularly with respect to the rights of minorities;
- f) to strengthen local democracy by providing organizational capacity and information resources to support municipal decision-making;
- g) to ensure regionally and provincially significant resources are wisely used and protected where necessary, including the use of the land base, soils and minerals, flora and fauna, water and air; and
- h) to ensure the most economical, effective and safe use of local and provincial infrastructure and services through planned growth.

**7. Sustainable Development & Enhanced Public Input**

Sustainable development must be promoted. An improved overall land use planning process that balances social, environmental and economic considerations should take place to ensure that the land base, other resources and the environment are protected for future generations.

**8. Timely Planning Decisions**

The planning process at all levels should be efficient and expeditious to avoid undue costs and delays that lead to the loss of benefits for local communities, the Region and the Province. Provincial government concerns and directions should be expressed as early in the planning process as possible.

**9. Province to Encourage Co-operation**

The provincial government should consider new incentives and remove any existing disincentives, to promote voluntary intermunicipal collaboration and co-operation within the Capital Region.

**10. Information Sharing, Dialogue and Shared Vision**

The provincial government should provide policy leadership by creating forums and opportunities for sharing information and conducting meaningful dialogue. It should undertake the systematic collection of common data. The provincial government should also promote the emergence of a shared vision for the Capital Region that can provide a sense of unity and direction for all stakeholders, including citizens, governments, business, and voluntary and non-government organizations.

**3) PUBLISHED DISCUSSION PAPER**

In April 2002 the RPAC prepared and distributed *Strengthening Manitoba's Capital Region, General Principles and Policy Directions*, a public discussion paper. The discussion paper outlined principles and policy options and directions for the Region. In addition, it contained basic information about area, population, governance, historical development, revenues, farming, and previous studies. Background information on the Capital Region, discussion papers, public opinion poll results, maps, and reports on public meetings have been posted on the Government of Manitoba's Capital Region webpage ([www.gov.mb.ca/capitalregion](http://www.gov.mb.ca/capitalregion)). All other websites cited in this report are given in full in Appendix Eight). Some are also available in print format.

**4. HELD PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Six public meetings were held throughout the Capital Region in May and June 2002 to discuss the issues raised in *Strengthening Manitoba's Capital Region* and other Capital Region issues that members of the public wished to address. Approximately 340 people attended these meetings, at which 60 formal presentations were made to the Review Committee. (See Appendix Two for a list of presenters and Appendix Three for a summary of the views brought to the RPAC's attention.)

**The public consultations**

The public hearings and consultations that the RPAC conducted have played an important role in shaping this report. As might be expected in such a large and divergent region, people presented a range of different and

differing views. Through the presentations the following issues were identified:

- A concern about the balance of control over planning between the provincial government and the municipalities
- Rejection of a new level of government
- The need for a participatory planning process
- Support for a mechanism to improve communication within the Region
- Interest in service sharing, tempered with concern over accountability
- The need for regional approaches to development
- The need to establish a secure long-term water supply for the Region
- The need for improved rural drainage
- Concern over the treatment of the watershed
- Concern over development on flood plains and the impact of flood protection measures on the entire Region
- Debate over the extent, causes and implications of low-density urban development (often called urban sprawl)
- Concern for the nature of the relationship between Winnipeg and the fifteen other municipalities in the Capital Region

## 5. ORGANIZED STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Three stakeholder meetings were organized throughout 2002. Two meetings were held with participants who were invited because of their knowledge of land use planning and associated fields; the third was a series of meetings with provincial government representatives who implement policies directly

related to land use in the Capital Region. At these sessions Manitoba Departments of Conservation, Transportation and Government Services, Agriculture and Food, Industry, Trade and Mines, Culture, Heritage and Tourism, and Intergovernmental Affairs staff made presentations about planning policy for the Capital Region. (For a listing of invitees and participants, see Appendix Four.)

In addition, the RPAC met with senior staff from the City of Winnipeg and representatives from the Manitoba Municipal Board and the Winnipeg Real Estate Board. Brian Peddigrew, a Director with Alberta Municipal Affairs provided a first-hand account of the Alberta Capital Region's formation and structure.

## 6. SURVEYED RESIDENTS' VIEWS

The RPAC commissioned Probe Research, Inc. to survey Capital Region residents in June 2002. The results of this poll of 693 Capital Region residents were posted on the Capital Region website. The following points summarize the main survey findings.

- One half of residents surveyed (49 per cent) feel that the Government of Manitoba should not take steps to curb urban sprawl if it means restricting the choices that residents have about where to live in the Capital Region, while 36 per cent said the province should take action to curb sprawl.
- The two major disadvantages to living in the Capital Region outside of Winnipeg while working in Winnipeg or making use of city services were the length of the commute and the cost of travel.

Strong support was expressed for the following propositions:

- Winnipeg's economic and social well-being is important to the entire province and

government decisions about regional land use should be strongly influenced by this. (32 per cent agreed completely.)

- Some services like water and sewer and some emergency services should be extended to communities around the city of Winnipeg if this would achieve more efficient service delivery. (34 per cent agreed completely.)
- Municipalities including Winnipeg should have a greater say than the provincial government in local land development decisions. (28 per cent agreed completely.)

Somewhat less support was shown for the following propositions:

- Objection to land development for new houses or industry if it means losing farmland in the area around Winnipeg (23 per cent agreed completely.)
- Requiring residents from outside Winnipeg who use the City's recreational services to pay more for them than people living in Winnipeg do. (23 per cent agreed completely.)

Limited support was expressed for the following proposition:

- Paying more in taxes to support the construction of roads and sewers for a city that is more spread out. (13 per cent agreed completely.)

In addition, members of the public made representations as individuals or groups through the website, e-mail, and by letter.

## 7. PROVIDED CAPITAL REGION GOVERNMENTS WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT ON A DRAFT OF THE FINAL REPORT

In March 2003, the RPAC provided the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and the Mayors and Reeves of the Capital Region municipalities with a preliminary draft of the Committee's final report, allowing for further regional input.

### CONCLUSION

Overall, the above activities have provided the RPAC with the benefit of the views of a wide group of Capital Region residents—municipal councillors, experts, researchers, and specialists in commerce, government, and academia. The people with whom the Committee consulted provided thoughtful, articulate, and valuable input.

Throughout its deliberations and in preparing this report, the RPAC was assisted by the staff of the provincial department of Intergovernmental Affairs.

The Committee members wish to express thanks for the help that has been extended to them. The RPAC has endeavored to use the information presented to it, available research, and its collective judgement to prepare this report.

