

Chapter Five

Getting the boundaries right

An important element in any initiative to create a co-operative, regional approach to development and planning issues in the Manitoba Capital Region is to get the boundaries right. Indeed, in its terms of reference the RPAC was explicitly asked to consider the overall boundaries of the Capital Region. The RPAC has done so, and while it recognizes that strong arguments can be made for a larger Capital Region, it is recommending that there be no change in the current membership of the Capital Region.

Through the course of the RPAC's hearings and meetings it became apparent that many rural municipal councillors were concerned that the City of Winnipeg might seek to annex all or a portion of one or more of the municipalities in closest proximity to the City. Such an apprehension stands in the way of the development of regional co-operation. To allay these concerns, the Government of Manitoba should declare a five-year moratorium on any annexations or amalgamations within the Capital Region. This would create a breathing space in which regional consciousness and collaboration could grow without the fear of potential annexations or consolidations.

HISTORY OF THE CAPITAL REGION BOUNDARIES

In 1989, the Government of Manitoba formed a Capital Region Committee of elected officials, which consisted of the mayors and reeves of thirteen municipalities along with the provincial Ministers of Urban Affairs, Rural Development and the Environment. The initial members of the Region were: the City of Winnipeg and the Rural Municipalities of Springfield, Taché, Ritchot, Macdonald, Cartier, St. François Xavier, Rosser, West St. Paul and East St. Paul, Rockwood, St. Andrews, and St. Clements. Later, the Town of Stonewall and the City of Selkirk asked to join, and in 1992, when the new Rural Municipality of Headingley was created, it too was added to the group, bringing the Capital Region to a total of sixteen municipalities. The Region's boundaries have not changed since then.

Prior to 1991, the City of Winnipeg had planning authority over the Additional Zone, a territory immediately outside the City of Winnipeg. Both the citizens and the municipal councils that had been included in the Addi-

tional Zone found this territorial extension of the City of Winnipeg’s planning authority to be an irritant, and the provincial government eventually abolished the City of Winnipeg’s Additional Zone authority. Several times during the RPAC’s hearings, presenters sought assurances that the RPAC would not recommend the establishment of some new form of Additional Zone arrangement. It is the RPAC’s view that the City of Winnipeg and the other municipalities within the Region should and can deal with regional issues on the basis of foresight, mutual self-interest, and collaboration. Therefore the RPAC is not recommending a return to the concept of an Additional Zone.

There exist a number of different bases on which the Capital Region boundaries could be defined. In its deliberations, the RPAC considered the following factors:

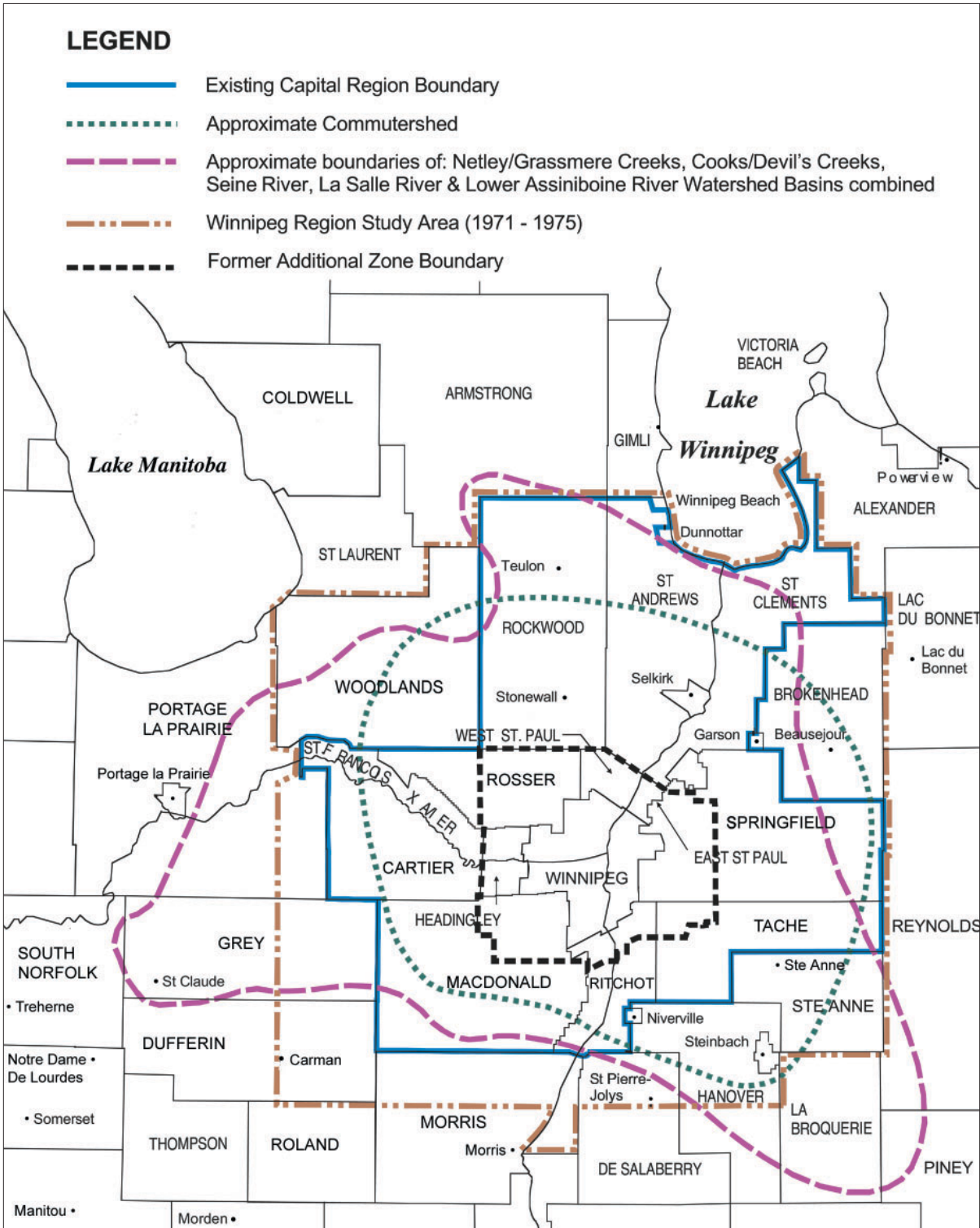
- geographical proximity, physical characteristics and community of interest
- commuting and dominant transportation patterns from/to a population centre
- economic markets, clusters of related industries, suppliers, service providers and customers, and linkages among communities
- existing and expected land use and related developments
- existing and expected patterns of human settlement, migration and employment
- cultural and historical ties
- the need for coordinated municipal and provincial programs and services, in fields such as environment, education, health, agriculture, transportation
- patterns of communication and interaction among individuals and organizations

- the use of infrastructure, recreational facilities, and cultural amenities, and the confidence that these regional assets will be maintained
- patterns of government and private spending
- the need to ensure effective governance (i.e. direction setting) for the region, financial sustainability and accountability;
- the perception of local communities and their leaders that they are part of a definable region and their willingness to act on a regional basis for some limited, but significant purposes
- peoples’ access to and familiarity with the neighbouring communities that are not the location for their primary residence and/or place of employment

The following brief descriptions illustrate how different regional configurations emerge from applying these different criteria. (See Map 5.1)

Commutershed: Following the commutershed of Winnipeg, and adjusting for municipal boundaries would increase the size of the Capital Region to about 24 municipalities from the current sixteen. This would add the Rural Municipalities of Woodlands to the northwest, Brokenhead to the northeast, and Ste. Anne and Hanover to the southeast. The City of Steinbach and the Towns of Beausejour, Ste. Anne, and Niverville are also within the Winnipeg commutershed.

Municipalities Surrounded by The Current Capital Region: Adding some municipalities because they are completely or mostly surrounded by municipalities that are already within the existing Capital Region would mean the inclusion of the Town of Teulon, the



MAP 5.1 POTENTIAL CAPITAL REGION BOUNDARIES

Village of Dunnotar, the Rural Municipality of Brokenhead, the Town of Beausejour, and the Town of Niverville. This would add five municipalities to increase the Capital Region to 21 municipalities.

Combining Commutershed With Municipalities Surrounded by Current Capital

Region: This would increase the Capital Region to 29 municipalities.

Watersheds/Basins: In 1999 the Consultation on Sustainable Development Implementation (COSDI) Report recommended wide area planning for sustainable development purposes based upon the broad natural resource areas of the province, and used watersheds and as an example of a potential wide area. A Capital Region based on the approximate boundaries of the Netley/Grassmere Creeks, Cooks/Devil Creeks, Seine River, and Lower Assiniboine Watershed basins combined, would include all or parts of about 35 municipalities (adding parts of the Rural Municipalities of Reynolds, Piney, La Broquerie, De Salaberry, Grey, Portage la Prairie, and Armstrong).

Combining Commutershed with Watersheds and adjusting for municipal boundaries:

This would create a Capital Region of 30 municipalities, adding the Rural Municipality of La Broquerie to a Capital Region based upon the commutershed.

Original Winnipeg Region Study Area

Boundaries: Consideration was given to the original Winnipeg Region Study Area boundaries of 1971-75. These included all or parts of 30 municipalities around Winnipeg but not including the City itself.

Not Following Municipal Boundaries:

Most of the boundary determinations described above were adjusted for municipal boundaries. However, presumably one could have a region based purely on a natural boundary like a watershed, or an “imaginary” boundary like a commutershed or a principal market area.

In conclusion, the RPAC recommends that the boundaries should, at least for now, remain as is, not because it believes the boundaries are necessarily perfect the way they are, but because there is already some history (fourteen years) of these municipalities working together.

Furthermore, the RPAC believes that the proposed Partnership of Manitoba Capital Region Governments has the potential to be sufficiently successful in promoting the Region that other neighbouring municipalities may ask to join.

Finally, the RPAC believes that the municipalities now in the Capital Region are integral to the make-up of the Region and that they are so intertwined with the market, the commutershed, the culture, and history of the Capital Region, that they should remain a part of it.

The RPAC recommends that:

- 5.1 The Government of Manitoba declare that, for a five-year period, it will support or approve only voluntary amalgamations or annexations in the Manitoba Capital Region.
- 5.2 The municipalities that currently comprise the Manitoba Capital Region, that is the Rural Municipalities of Cartier, East St. Paul, Headingley, Macdonald, Ritchot, Rockwood, Rosser, Springfield,

St. Andrews, St. Clements, St. François Xavier, Taché, and West St. Paul, the Town of Stonewall, and the Cities of Selkirk and Winnipeg should continue to be members of the Manitoba Capital Region.

