

## MANITOBA'S VISION FOR THE CAPITAL REGION

The Manitoba Government's vision for the Capital Region is one of a safe, healthy, efficient and prosperous region with a strong core city, where the public, governments and organizations work together, enhancing community development opportunities, effectively managing and protecting resources, and providing citizens with a high quality of life.

### A. EFFECTIVE REGIONAL PLANNING

#### A.1 Regional Policy Plan and Regional Planning Advisory Committee

The Capital Region Review Panel stated that “... *the efforts by individual municipalities or planning districts to address issues of a Regional nature cannot, in itself, ensure a sound Regional perspective on such issues*” (page 47). The Panel further noted that a regional plan should not consolidate existing plans nor replace them, but should focus on “*development policy or activity which entails potentially significant impacts beyond the boundaries of the individual municipalities or planning districts*” (page 48). The Manitoba Government agrees with these statements.

The Province and many municipalities believe that Provincial leadership is needed in order to effectively address the broad range of issues which cross municipal boundaries.

Low density development on the fringes of the region's urban centres (both within and outside urban centres' boundaries), often referred to as sprawl, is an example of one of these regional cross-jurisdictional issues. Some believe it is linked with a consequent decline in the central part of Winnipeg and deterioration of existing public infrastructure in the City (as well as other urban centres). Although previous Manitoba reports have not identified the specific causal links between sprawl and inner city decline, the Province nevertheless recognizes that both issues need to be addressed if the region as a whole is to prosper and grow.

The Province has thus launched *Neighbourhoods Alive!* and joined as a partner with Canada and Winnipeg in the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative. These programs are aimed at revitalizing Winnipeg neighbourhoods and housing most in need.

A number of other regional issues have been identified by the public. The Province agrees that these also need to be addressed. Some of these issues relate to:

- protecting vital resources such as potable water and soil from pollution or excess use;
- urban infill development;
- the efficient use and maintenance of existing public infrastructure;
- financial and service efficiencies;
- hazards and nuisance, particularly across boundaries;
- protection of agricultural land and resources; and
- the inappropriate location of potentially incompatible uses.

The Government of Manitoba recognizes the interdependency of communities in the region and believes that large area or regional planning will offer an effective means of managing settlement, servicing, environmental, resource and economic issues. It also provides an effective means for community participation in setting regional priorities and adopting plans. This concept was also highlighted by COSDI.

Local planning will need to be better coordinated and/or integrated with regional planning over time. As well, processes will need to be developed which will ensure consistency of municipal and district plans with a regional Policy Plan.

Some of the problems associated with development in the Capital Region have occurred because planning authorities (municipalities, planning districts and the Province) have not always reviewed development in the larger regional context. Many issues are inter-municipal in nature (e.g. transportation, drainage, environmental issues, etc.), and often development in one municipality impacts on another. There is a need for the Province to review land development with a regional perspective in mind and with the co-operation of all municipalities.

In consultation with municipalities, planning districts and the public, the Province will begin the process of developing a set of planning policies that will apply specifically to the Capital Region. A Regional Planning Advisory Committee will be appointed to assist in stimulating public discussion and to advise the Province.

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. (See Appendix A for a brief summary of this new planning framework)

### Actions

1. **The Province will take the lead in developing planning policies that better address the growth management issues facing the Capital Region.**
2. **The Province will appoint a Regional Planning Advisory Committee (RPAC) to assist in stimulating public discussion and to provide advice on regional planning policies. RPAC membership will represent regional interests. Public participation in the process will be encouraged.**
3. **The Province will dedicate professional planning staff whose responsibilities will be to deal specifically with the Capital Region.**

## A.2 Provincial Land Use Policies

The Capital Region Review Panel recommended that “...*the Province review the regional implications of the Provincial Land Use Policies, and encourage their application . . .*” (page 74). There have also been numerous other suggestions for stronger application of the Policies from the public and non-government organizations.

*The Provincial Land Use Policies* (PLUPs) were originally developed in the mid-1970s. They have been used to guide the review of municipal and district development plans in Manitoba (outside of Winnipeg) since 1980, when they were adopted as a regulation under *The Planning Act*. The PLUPs were last reviewed and amended in 1994. (See Appendix C for a brief history of the planning framework affecting the region.)

Currently, the PLUPs provide only general guidance for the development of land in large urban centres. Planning at the regional level will require greater emphasis on specific policies for both urban and rural municipalities. There have also been concerns expressed that *The Provincial Land Use Policies* require strengthening, that their application needs to be broadened, and that they need to be applied diligently and perhaps more consistently.

### Actions

4. **The Province will diligently apply *The Provincial Land Use Policies* and begin a review process with a view towards enhancing the Policies and extending their application province-wide.**

### A.3 Planning Legislation

The Capital Region Review Panel noted a number of inconsistencies in legislation governing the City of Winnipeg (*The City of Winnipeg Act*) and other municipalities in Manitoba (*The Planning Act* and *The Municipal Act*). These differences have evolved over time as the Manitoba Government has granted Winnipeg different powers due to its size and extensive administrative structure, while at the same time responding to the different needs of other Manitoba municipalities. (See Appendix C for a brief history of the planning framework affecting the region.)

The Panel recommended that, “*wherever relevant, all provincial legislation, policy and procedures treat all municipalities within the Capital Region consistently*” (page 74). The Capital Region Strategy (Policy 1.3) also recommended that applicable laws, regulations and policies be better integrated and coordinated. Integrated planning laws could also enhance the Province’s community planning and economic development framework, and would be consistent with the recommendations of COSDI.

#### Actions

- 5. The Province will undertake a review of the statutes governing planning in Manitoba with a view towards modernizing and streamlining legislation.**

### A.4 Regional Information

The Capital Region Review Panel reported that, “*Perhaps as a result of fiscal constraint, related data collection and research functions receive little attention at either the municipal or provincial level*” (page 46). COSDI also noted the importance of easily accessible information for effective public participation. To achieve many of the regional objectives, comprehensive and current information is needed to produce effective plans, policies and programs. It is also vital to have co-operative policies developed from common databases available to citizens and planning authorities.

The Province believes that research is required in a number of areas in order to clearly define the nature of the problems, as well as to assist in solving them. Potential study areas include: wells / groundwater, septic fields and waste disposal, lot availability / demand, updated population analysis, and developmental cost benefit analysis.

## Actions

- 6. The Province will develop and maintain common databases containing information on a wide range of topics related to the Capital Region and will provide public access to the information. The Province will also undertake research to provide additional data where necessary to assist in defining regional issues and their scope, and to indicate potential solutions. Such research may cover areas such as: groundwater / water quality, septic fields, lot availability / demand, updated population analysis, and developmental cost benefit analyses.**