

B. PLANNING FOR A SUSTAINABLE REGION

B.1 Safe, Efficient and Sustainable Services

It is recognized that maintaining the public infrastructure that is already in existence will pose major challenges in the upcoming years without significantly greater amounts of additional capital funding. The Province and municipalities believe that maximizing the use of existing infrastructure and resources is of critical importance. As well, efficient use of existing infrastructure will assist in ensuring safe, healthy and economically sustainable growth within the region.

Furthermore, recent events regarding water quality in communities and individual residences illustrate that the wise use of our water resources is of prime importance. The Province agrees with the Drinking Water Advisory Committee Report, in that it believes that ensuring a high level of water quality is of paramount importance in any discussions of development planning. The Province is concerned about the amount of residential development in the region over the last number of years relying on private wells and septic fields. As well, issues associated with waste management, drainage and flooding must be taken into account in these discussions.

While the City of Winnipeg has experienced a declining tax base, many other municipalities in the Capital Region have experienced growth and tax base increases. Much of this growth would not have occurred if not for the presence of the city. That growth also impacts on Winnipeg's infrastructure and services and yet the city does not benefit proportionately. The Government of Manitoba believes that the region must grow in harmony and that this will require mutual support and co-operation.

Similar situations exist in other jurisdictions, where co-operative models such as tax-sharing have been used with some success. The Capital Region Review Panel also suggested that "*an arrangement for sharing costs and revenues might in some cases be a logical outcome.*"

The Capital Region Review Panel recommended voluntary municipal associations to address this challenge. In some instances, voluntary municipal approaches have worked well. However, in instances involving land use, development and environmental management, the impacts on resources and jurisdictions often cross municipal boundaries and are more difficult. These impacts can be significant. Thus, more concerted efforts and Provincial leadership may be necessary to achieve the full benefits of a regional partnership, and the efficient and safe use of our shared resources.

Actions

- 7. The Province will give priority to maximizing the use of existing infrastructure before approving developments which require new infrastructure. The Province will also review its current approval processes and regulatory requirements for wells and septic fields, with a view towards strengthening them. The Province expects to implement the Drinking Water Advisory Committee's recommendations in this area.**

- 8. The Province will work with the municipalities in the Capital Region towards developing tax-sharing models that are mutually beneficial.**