

Winnipeg 201: Citizen Engagement in Development

May 31st 2014

Cindy Klassen Recreation Centre

GREETINGS and OPENING REMARKS

Christina Maes Nino, Community Animator for the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg (SPCW) opened the workshop and welcomed the participants. She summarized the purpose of the workshop – to develop a community based position on how the City should engage citizens when major developments take place. Out of the morning, participants would also better understand the City's current engagement mechanisms and the approaches that other jurisdictions take.

A. Impetus for the Workshop

A.1. Whose Winnipeg?

In March, 2013, the SPCW organized a forum titled “Whose Winnipeg?” at the Millennium Library. Over 120 people attended to voice concern with the public process and decision-making at City Hall. Three overarching themes emerged during the event: integrity, transparency and accountability of Civic Government and bureaucracy; public input, and; Winnipeg's municipal governance structure. The group agreed that the next steps should include:

1. Learning More
2. Engaging Others
3. Working Together

A.2. Winnipeg 101: Introduction to City Structure, Consultation and Development

As part of the “learning more” step, the SPCW organized “Winnipeg 101” in September, 2013. Staff from The City of Winnipeg Planning Department attended to present on the development plan, OurWinnipeg, and the development planning process.

Martin Sandhurst from SPAR presented on various practices and tools utilized in other municipalities to address some of the concerns that were discussed at the “Whose Winnipeg” forum. These include:

- neighbourhood association role
- community engagement model
- open government commitment
- public notification processes
- plan objective – zoning regulation links
- plan recommendation – capital budget allocation links
- zoning modification parameters
- surplus land disposition
- special purpose funding tools
- planning academy & handbook

Small Group Discussions revolved around the many ways to move forward relating to:

- Communications with the public
- Genuine consultations and engagement
- Accountability of City officials to the public, and
- ‘Planning gaps,’ meaning particular land use matters that do not have existing or adequate plans to address them

B. WINNIPEG 201 Presentation

Martin Sandhurst (SPAR) then introduced the day's workshop exercise and provided context information for participants. Based on outcomes from the "Whose Winnipeg?" and "Winnipeg 101" forums, the focus for the exercise was on those development proposals considered to be 'game-changers,' distinct from more routine developments or once-in-a-generation initiatives. Recent game-changers have occurred in many areas designated New Communities, Major Redevelopment Sites, and Reinvestment Areas since OurWinnipeg and Complete Communities were adopted by City Council in 2011. Other game-changers have been proposed for smaller sites with potentially huge impacts within established neighbourhoods. Challenging for all stakeholders involved in developments of this scale and significance is that the City of Winnipeg has neither a Council-endorsed community engagement model nor a formal requirement to consult with the community as part of the development application review process.

Martin included these slides in his presentation:

Winnipeg 201 Focus

1

NOT DAY-TO-DAY DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

- REZONING
- SUBDIVISION
- CONDITIONAL USE
- VARIANCE

NOT ONCE-IN-A-GENERATION PROCESSES

- PLAN WINNIPEG REVIEW
- OURWINNIPEG/COMPLETE COMMUNITIES PREPARATION

MIDDLE-GROUND – "SHOW STOPPERS" & "GAME-CHANGERS"

- NEW COMMUNITIES
- MAJOR REDEVELOPMENT SITES
- REINVESTMENT AREAS
- SMALLER SITE WITH HUGE IMPACTS ON ESTABLISHED NEIGHBOURHOOD



Winnipeg 201: Our WPG/CC Urban Structure

2

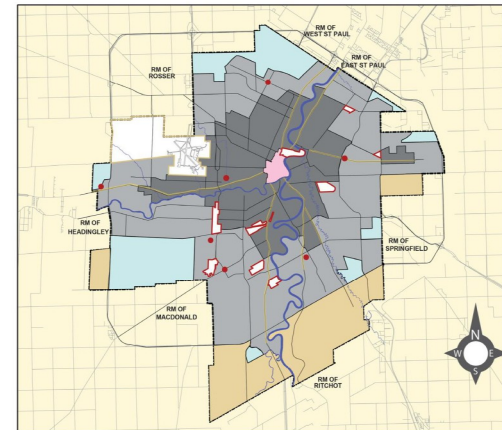


figure 02a
Winnipeg's urban structure.



Winnipeg 201: Winnipeg Community Engagement Context

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REQUIREMENTS

- CITY OF WINNIPEG CHARTER
- DEVELOPMENT PROCEDURES BY-LAW
- ORGANIZATION BY-LAW

ADVICE

- PLANNING REPORTS FOR COUNCIL COMMITTEES
- PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

POST-OURWINNIPEG EXPERIENCES

- FORT ROUGE YARDS
- RIDGEWOOD SOUTH
- TAYLOR
- SOUTH ROYALWOOD

NO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY OR MODEL



Winnipeg 201: Our WPG/CC Implementation – Policy Direction

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THE NEW APPROACH:

- “CC REPRESENTS A SHIFT IN DIRECTION THAT REFLECTS THE IMPORTANT PARTNERSHIPS AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS THE CITY OF WINNIPEG HAS WITH THE STAKEHOLDERS WHO WILL ULTIMATELY BE BUILDING OUR COMMUNITIES”
- “DEFINED BY COLLABORATIVE AND TRANSPARENT DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, THIS APPROACH HAS BEEN USED TO CREATE THE VISION FOR OW/CC AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE USED FOR IMPLEMENTATION”

DIRECTION 1:

- “ENSURE MORE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS BY ESTABLISHING A COLLABORATIVE PLANNING ROLE...AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF PLAN PARTICIPATION”

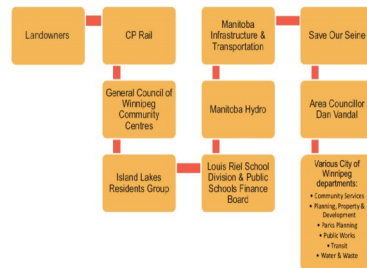
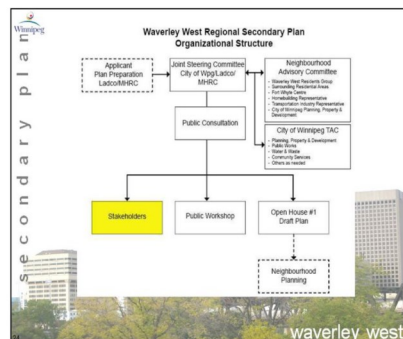
ENABLING STRATEGIES:

- “ENGAGE THE CITY OF WINNIPEG PUBLIC SERVICE AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS IN A PARTNERSHIP-BASED APPROACH TO PLANNING”
- “PURSUE MEANINGFUL AND PROACTIVE PARTICIPATION TOWARD THE ACHIEVEMENT OF COMMON GOALS FOR GROWTH AND CHANGE”
- “ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY BY CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL STAKEHOLDERS ON AN ON-GOING BASIS”
- “WORK COLLABORATIVELY TO ADDRESS LOCAL PLANNING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF OW/CC”



Winnipeg 201: Process Comparison – 2005 to 2014

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Winnipeg 201: Community Engagement Context – Elsewhere

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DEFINITION

“THE PROCESS OF ENGAGING THE PUBLIC IN DECISIONS THAT AFFECT THEM, INCLUDING POLICIES, PLANS, STRATEGIES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, FOR THE PURPOSE OF MAKING DECISIONS THAT ARE MORE INFORMED AND REFLECTIVE OF PUBLIC CONCERNS AND VALUES” [GUELPH]

“TIMELY AND MEANINGFUL CITIZEN AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN CIVIC PRIORITY SETTING, DECISION-MAKING, PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT, AND SERVICE DELIVERY” [VICTORIA]

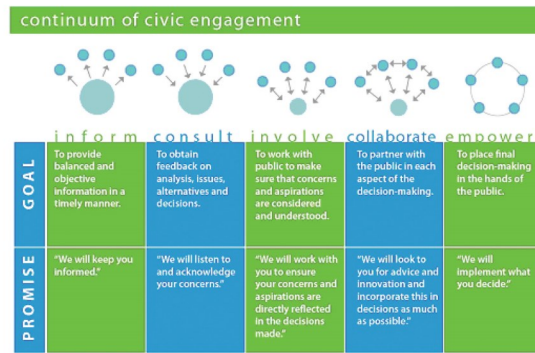
CONTINUUM [IAPP]

INFORM
CONSULT
INVOLVE
COLLABORATE
EMPOWER



Winnipeg 201: IAPP Continuum

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Winnipeg 201: Community Engagement Context – Elsewhere

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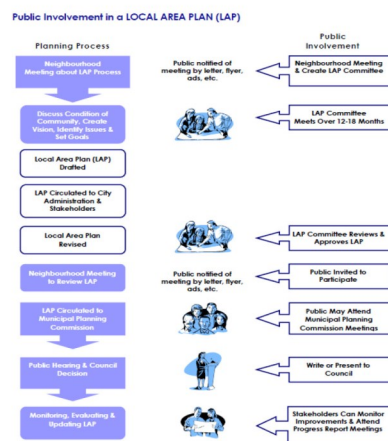
CANADIAN CITIES WITH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODELS

WEST VANCOUVER
EDMONTON
SASKATOON
WATERLOO
BURLINGTON
AJAX
HALIFAX

VICTORIA
CALGARY
FORT SASKATCHEWAN
GUELPH
HAMILTON
OTTAWA

Winnipeg 201: Process Comparison – Saskatoon

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Winnipeg 201: Community Engagement Context - Elsewhere

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IMPETUS

- MUNICIPAL AMALGAMATION
- COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITY
- GRASSROOTS DEMANDS FOR FORMAL STATUS

PRINCIPLES

OPEN & TIMELY COMMUNICATION	EARLY INVOLVEMENT
TRANSPARENT	ACCOUNTABLE
INCLUSIVE & REPRESENTATIVE	MUTUAL TRUST & RESPECT
RESOURCE AVAILABILITY	EVALUATION & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT
INPUT & FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITIES	COORDINATED APPROACH

PROCESS

- COLLABORATIVE
- SUPPLEMENTED

Winnipeg 201: Victoria's "Foundations for Success"

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▪ "IMPROVED ENGAGEMENT CANNOT BE SEEN IN ISOLATION...IT SHOULD BE LINKED WITH IMPROVED DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES, IMPROVED WAYS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION, AND VISIBLY IMPROVED RESPONSIVENESS. IF ENGAGEMENT DOES NOT LEAD TO RESPONSIVENESS AND TANGIBLE RESULTS, THE VISION WILL NOT BE ACHIEVED. WORSE, APATHY AND CYNICISM WILL INCREASE"

- Victoria citizen participant

▪ VICTORIA'S PROCESS RECOMMENDS IMPROVED ROLE CLARITY FOR:

- CITY COUNCIL
- CITY STAFF
- PUBLIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE
- NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION
- GENERAL PUBLIC



Winnipeg 201: Workshop Exercise

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▪ PURPOSE – CONTRIBUTE TO DESIGN OF MADE-IN-WINNIPEG COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODEL

▪ FOCUS – INITIALLY, ON "GAME-CHANGER" SCALE

▪ TASKS – ROLE CLARITY & KEY PROCESS STEPS

▪ RESULTS – LINK WORKSHOP OUTCOMES TO ACTION



C. Workshop Discussions

Participants divided into three table groups for the workshop exercise. Facilitators and note-takers worked with each group to discuss their expectations for a better community engagement process when developments are occurring. The Canoe Club property was used as a case-study for the exercise, as representative of a potential 'game-changer' scale of development. Workshop participants were asked to assume that:

- The City had declared the property surplus;
- The City will engage the community about the property prior to repurposing or selling it;
- The City is interested in community input, and;
- there is no predetermined deadline for the completion of the community engagement process.

Groups were asked to first identify the roles of City Council, City planners, developers and community groups/citizens in community engagement. They then outlined the steps they would like to see in the engagement process.



C.1. Roles and Responsibilities in Community Engagement

City of Winnipeg Staff

PROCESS LEAD, RESOURCE & COLLABORATOR:

- Protect city/public interest
- Set guidelines/requirements for process – to include impact assessment and notification

LIAISON

- Provide vision, education, encouragement, and communication to community groups, developers and Council
- Help create clear understanding/translate city processes – guide through this process

ADMINISTRATOR

- Set standards, guidelines for planning and consultation
- Assess alignment with plans
- Research and develop best practices

Community Groups

INFORMED PARTICIPANTS

- Educate themselves about project rules (plans, restrictions) and impact
- Take part in advisory body/ies and events
- Provide external expertise in process and articulate priorities

LIAISON

- Disseminate information to residents and gather input from them
- Network between community groups

WATCHDOG

- Raise awareness of community concerns
- Hold all players accountable

City Council Members

Groups all agreed that Councillors should be more directly involved than just voting on the final development process. They wanted to see Council:

REPRESENT THEIR COMMUNITY

- Attend and encourage community consultations
- Ensure everyone has timely and equal access to information

DEVELOP STANDARDS/PROCESS CHECKS

- Create Third Party body for oversight/objective process assessment (CoW staff have lost trust necessary to perform this role)
- Set standards for engagement, requirements for consistent processes

UPHOLD STANDARDS

- Upholding the engagement standards
- Coordinate information between groups
- Ensure developers are accountable in process

Developers and Consultants

BUILD THE VISION

- Bring ideas and develop proposals based on community vision
- Share ownership of process
- Provide technical expertise

COMMUNICATE (SHARE AND LISTEN)

- Be transparent about intentions, provide information (it's okay to make a profit)
- Consult on plans and options with community, integrate input

C.1. Roles and Responsibilities in Community Engagement Con't...

The participants also identified roles and responsibilities for citizens at large, though there was some overlap with those for citizen groups, generally participants saw citizens at large as:

INFORMED PARTICIPANTS

- Attend meetings and provide feedback and expertise
- Be informed of city activities
- Owners of the process

VOTERS

- Hold politicians accountable
- Contact elected representative and share concerns

C.2. Key Steps in the Community Engagement Process

Overall Process Improvement Requirements for City of Winnipeg:

Set-up third party process, ombudsman

Standardize processes of engagement to include principles and standards for advisory groups

STEP 1: RESEACH AND PREPARATION

Understand the community: local demographics, level of civic engagement, resources

Understand the site: standards, plans, possibilities, connection with other sites

Build community relationships and citizen responsibility

Educate community / residents about the planning and engagement process.
Provide information that is highly accessible

STEP 2: PLANNING

One group suggested an EOI process happen during the planning stage, to be assessed by an advisory committee which is developed later on in the process. The other two groups believed that developing an advisory committee or joint steering committee should proceed an EOI or RFP.

Option A:

Request for expressions of interest

Conduct technical assessment of impact of EOIs. Make this publicly available and standardized

Option B:

Develop clear timelines for process and development of plan

Develop a joint steering committee or advisory board

Hold a public meeting early to share information and invite participation

STEP 3: FORMAL CONSULTATION

Option A:

Set-up advisory committee to include definitions, training, and facilitation

Option B:

Community groups organize and consult their own membership

Use information from public meeting, steering committee/advisory board to set clear priorities/parameters to developers terms of reference to invite development

STEP 4: INTERACTIONS

Option A:

Initiate broad community engagement – get feedback on the EOIs for advisory committee to use

Educate advisory committee on options, plans, process, etc.

Option B:

Community engagement results/information used to set parameters for RFP

Multiple opportunities for public review of proposals

STEP 5: FEEDBACK/ACCOUNTABILITY

EOI or Proposal is recommended by advisory committee

Political process of responsibility (Council to vote on recommended proposals)

Publicly available interim reports – ideally developed by an objective third party

Additional participatory processes for more detailed development planning after the proposal is selected would be ideal.

D. WRAP-UP & WHAT'S NEXT?

Once the table groups had completed the two-part exercise, participants were asked to comment on the process and identify highlights. Collectively, participants had experiences with what they described as inconsistent and frustrating consultation processes concerning game-changing development proposals in their neighbourhoods—with insufficient communication about the process and inadequate information about the proposals being common themes. Participants noted that these experiences made it difficult to move from lamenting bad processes towards determining an ideal community engagement process during the exercise. It was also noted that rebuilding trust between developers, community groups, city councillors and the planning department will be necessary in order to introduce process improvements. Although the workshop exercise was challenging, participants put together realistic and fair role expectations and outlined potential community engagement process steps.

Participants then discussed how the results from the workshop should be used. Broadly, the group agreed that next steps should include:

1. Initially, develop a 'community engagement platform' for the upcoming civic election—potentially to be shared through a jointly developed election issues website through the support of the Social Planning Council and, ultimately, to be shared with City Council following the election;
2. Additionally, share the workshop results with the City's planning department and, subsequently, encourage collaborative preparation of a City of Winnipeg community engagement strategy.

A special thanks to all of the participants in Winnipeg 201 who put their energy, experience, knowledge, and time into the development of this report. The groups represented at this session included:

South Osborne Residents' Group	Right to Housing Coalition
Downtown Residents' Association	Winnipeg Harvest
Unitarian Church Green Action Committee	Bike Winnipeg
Winnipeg Transit Riders' Association	OURS-Winnipeg
Council of Women of Winnipeg	
Citizens for Charleswood Habitat Preservation	
Centennial Community Improvement Association	

