

City Planning

EQUITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND resilience are integral components of planning. It is also essential to address Indigenous rights in a meaningful way. The City of Winnipeg is currently in the process of adopting *OurWinnipeg 2045*, a development plan that emphasizes good governance, environmental resilience, community well-being, and social equity.¹ The CCPA-MB Alternative Budget proposes several strategies aimed at addressing these principles, including:

- Redirect engagement resources to support equity-deserving communities;
- Address Treaty, Aboriginal and inherent rights in planning policies;
- Align planning goals with budgets and policies;
- Support planning goals through taxation policy.

These strategies are designed to ensure that financial resources and benefits align with the vision set out in planning documents, to increase capacity and fairness in how communities participate in planning processes, and to promote equity in the distribution of financial resources.

1. Redirect Engagement Resources to Support Equity-Deserving Communities

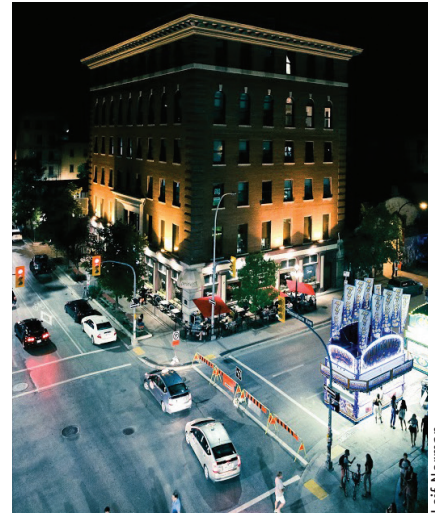
Public participation and involvement in decision-making is the foundation for equitable planning. The City of Winnipeg is required to consult on major

planning decisions, such as when creating new development plans, and frequently undertakes consultation for other types of projects. In many cases, these can be months-long processes, with open houses, surveys, workshops, and stakeholder committees. While these processes can be extensive, engagement and consultation often do not reflect the diversity of the city, nor adequately reflect the needs of hard-to-reach populations. Uneven resources and power dynamics make it difficult for all to participate equally.² This is exacerbated by a lack of representation and understanding of the experiences of equity-deserving groups by the professionals involved in planning and engagement processes.³ The shift to online consultation during the pandemic may have increased access for some, but worsened it for the many people that face barriers related to internet and technology access, furthering exclusion from participation processes. As social equity and reconciliation are key goals of *OurWinnipeg 2045*, consultation must adequately reflect the experiences of equity-deserving groups, and is designed in partnership with communities.

There are several ways to improve participation processes, including by working with community-based organizations that have established relationships with equity-deserving communities, providing mentorship to non-traditional providers to support engagement, and changing procurement processes to allow for more diverse engagement providers. While more equitable engagement and consultation is important, it must also be accompanied by a commitment to equitable outcomes, and ensuring that equity-deserving groups have *meaningful* influence in decision-making.

Work With Community-Based Organizations On Outreach

One strategy for improving engagement processes is to contract with established community-based organizations that have experience working with diverse communities. This can be particularly important for communities with non-English speakers, those with distrust of government processes, or those facing additional barriers.⁴ For example, Metro Transit in Minneapolis-St. Paul developed a program to contract with multiple community-based organizations to lead engagement processes in different neighbourhoods.⁵ The contracted organizations had a deep understanding of the communities they worked with, making them able to improve the representativeness of survey responses, and ultimately improve services for equity-deserving groups.



Leif Norman

A key principle for partnering with community-based organizations is that they must be fairly compensated for this work, similar to other consultants. We recommend earmarking specific engagement funding to be allocated to community-based organizations, and increasing funding for outreach that follows this model. Partnering with community-based organizations to undertake engagement processes may also require changes to the procurement process, such as issuing smaller contracts, providing more support for applicants, and reassessing minimum conditions.

Create a Training Program to Support Non-Traditional Engagement Providers

To include more diverse providers for engagement services may require training and support. Successful models have trained facilitators with the aim of bridging gaps between community members and institutions. For example, the State Parks Authority in Los Angeles developed a promotores program which trained community members as outreach ambassadors. This led to increased access for under-represented groups, and co-production of the built environment.⁶ We propose the development of a training program to increase capacity for organizations or individuals that could expand the pool of applicants that can work with the City on community consultation and

engagement. This program will require funding for training, staff to support the program, and support for expenses such as translation, childcare and transportation to increase access.

We recommend that budget funds be allocated to undertake a full review of the implementation of TRC recommendations on planning policy and processes, with attention to identifying actual and potential impacts of City of Winnipeg planning policies for Treaty, Aboriginal and inherent rights.

2. Address Treaty, Indigenous and Inherent Rights in Planning Policies

The City of Winnipeg has made a commitment to reconciliation, including adopting the *Winnipeg Indigenous Accord* and committing to addressing five Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.⁷ One of the commitments is to “repudiate concepts used to justify European sovereignty over Indigenous peoples and lands... and to reform those laws, government policies, and litigation strategies that continue to rely on such concepts.”⁸ As noted in a staff report, this requires assessing City of Winnipeg by-laws, policies and litigation strategies.⁹ While this likely has impacts in

many areas of City governance, there are clear implications for planning and development. The most recent Winnipeg Indigenous Accord report states that little progress has been made in this area.¹⁰ We recommend that budget funds be allocated to undertake a full review of the implementation of TRC recommendations on planning policy and processes, with attention to identifying actual and potential impacts of City of Winnipeg planning policies for Treaty, Aboriginal and inherent rights. As well, a process for consultation with First Nation and Métis governments and Indigenous organizations should be established in order to address Treaty, Aboriginal and inherent rights in planning and development activities into the future. Lastly, other TRC Calls to Action have not been addressed by the municipal government, including language rights. This might include public signs and markers, and the renaming of districts.

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3. Align Planning Goals With Budgets and Policies

Budget priorities often conflict with achieving planning goals. We recommend two strategies to address this: linking capital and operating budgets to planning goals, and undertaking analysis on the full costs of development.

a. Linking Capital and Operating Budgets to Planning Goals

While planning goals focus on environmental, social and fiscal sustainability, these are often at odds with capital and operating budgets. For example, while plans support mixed-use, compact development to reduce transportation emissions, capital budgets include funding for new road networks that will likely increase emission. There are also inequities in how spending decisions impact communities, such as in recreational facilities and maintenance, with little opportunity for community members to influence spending decisions. As such, we recommend that the City link planning goals to budgets, by conducting spatial and socio-economic impact analysis of capital and operations spending, including how it aligns with planning goals, and by developing concrete evaluation criteria and benchmarks on alignment between plans and budgets.

b. Undertaking Analysis on the Full Costs of Development

A related concern is that the full costs of different types of development are not accounted for in approval processes. Water, sewer costs and local road costs may be borne by developers but do not include the long-term costs for maintenance, education, recreation or leisure. While new developments may have active transportation investments paid for by developers, they do not include connections to existing networks, limiting their utility. Relatedly, the City of Winnipeg lacks holistic models about the potential long-term costs and benefits of development and capital projects. We recommend that integrated models be developed that assess the full costs of different types of development, and be used in decision-making processes. While impact fees that account for the full cost of development are currently not in force in Winnipeg, the long-term costs should inform the decision-making process.

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4. Support Planning Goals Through Taxation Policy

Taxation policies can support – or undermine – land use policies and objectives.¹¹ There are several areas where taxation policy should be revised to support planning goals. One area is surface parking lots, which create a hostile environment for pedestrians, can contribute to safety concerns, and detract from neighbourhood vitality.¹² While they could be used for more productive purposes, a large percentage of downtown is devoted to surface parking. The revenue from surface parking, combined with low tax rates, discourages their sale and conversion. Bringing surface parking lots' tax rate in line with their future potential would provide additional revenue for the City, as well as create incentives for owners to either develop their properties or sell them to those willing to develop. Another area for alignment is residential taxation policies. The benefits to the city from higher density developments are not reflected in property taxes, with condominiums and apartments taxed at the same rate as single-detached homes, despite the lower long-term infrastructure costs associated with higher density development in established communities. Lastly, we continue to advocate for impact fees that account for the long-term costs of infrastructure,

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serving and operation be used as a growth management tool. We recommend that property tax strategies be aligned more closely with planning goals to encourage the types of communities envisioned by *OurWinnipeg*.

We continue to advocate for impact fees that account for the long-term costs of infrastructure, serving and operation be used as a growth management tool.

Total New Expenditure:

- \$70,000 – 1 FTE to coordinate linking operating and capital budgets to planning goals
- \$152,500 – Improve resources for public engagement
- \$35,000 – 0.5 FTE to address Treaty and inherent rights in planning
- \$100,000 – Implement a full-cost accounting method for future development

Total: \$357,500

Endnotes

1 City of Winnipeg (2021). *OurWinnipeg 2045: Development Plan* (submitted for second reading by council). Available at <https://www.winnipeg.ca/interhom/CityHall/OurWinnipeg/Documents.stm>

2 Bryson, J. M., Quick, K. S., Slotterback, C. S., & Crosby, B. C. (2013). Designing public participation processes. *Public Administration Review*, 73(1), 23–34.

3 García, I., Jackson, A., Greenlee, A. J., Yerena, A., Chrisinger, B., & Lee, C. A. (2021). Feeling like an “odd duck”: The experiences of African American/Black and Hispanic/Latin/o/a/x planning practitioners. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 1–15.

4 TransitCenter. (2021). *Equity in practice: A guidebook for transit agencies* (pp. 97). New York, New York: TransitCenter.

5 Ibid.

6 Loukaitou-Sideris, A., & Mukhija, V. (2020). Promotors for parks? The potential of a public health model to improve outreach and community engagement in park planning. *Leisure Sciences*, 1–23.

7 City of Winnipeg (n.d.) *Indigenous Relations Division*. <https://winnipeg.ca/indigenous/reconciliation/default.stm> (Accessed: Jan 15, 2022).

8 Ibid.

9 City of Winnipeg (2016) *Administrative Report: Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action*. Council Minutes, Feb 24, 2016.

10 City of Winnipeg (2021) *Winnipeg’s Indigenous Accord: Partner Goals & Progress Report*, pg. 51

11 Bengston, David N., Jennifer O. Fletcher, and Kristen C. Nelson. “Public Policies for Managing Urban Growth and Protecting Open Space: Policy Instruments and Lessons Learned in the United States.” *Landscape and Urban Planning* 69, no. 2: 271–86.

12 Michael Manville and Donald Shoup, “Parking, People and Cities,” *Journal of Urban Planning and Development* 131, no. 4 (2005).