

OurWinnipeg Community Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

Date: October 30, 2018

Location: Millennium Library

Attendees: 10 members

Overview

Brett Shenback, Michael Robinson and Gary Holmes provided updates on the OurWinnipeg and Complete Communities review since the last meeting. A brief update on the Residential Growth Study and Employment Lands Study progress and timelines were provided.

Feedback was requested on the following Complete Communities questions:

- What are the outcomes targets and benchmarks to track progress on Complete Communities?
- What should the City target for the proportion of greenfield and infill development (currently 60% greenfield, 40% infill) and over what timeline?
- Should the City consider supporting certain industrial developments that require less than a full range of services in order to be competitive?
- Should the City identify specific urban corridors for additional investment, design guidelines, and prioritization? Should this include density and intensification criteria?

The following discussion occurred.

- When discussing urban corridor planning and prioritization it was asked “who decides which streets get a plan development overlay or secondary plan to define how design and development occur?”
 - Complete Communities will include general policy and maps for specific types of urban corridors and intends to have an implementation table
 - Some corridors have more detailed plans to guide development (i.e. Corydon) whereas Ellice and Sargent have developed organically but could use more detailed designs and plans to reach their full potential. Planning and zoning tools (i.e. secondary plans, planned development overlays) and community mobilization and political capital can support prioritization efforts.
 - There was some concern that the City would double down on less innovative corridor plans and design rather than being innovative. Member preference was to make prioritization and subsequent implementation plans as concrete as possible.
- As part of the Residential Growth Study corridor segments will be identified for further investment. Scenario planning will also be presented to the public for consultation in spring 2019. Members were interested in additional opportunities to provide feedback on the development criteria as separate conversations were had with developers and the community which didn't allow for cross-pollination.
- A member asked how the City would 'direct' economic development. The response was primarily through zoning and land use designations.
- A member suggested that Complete Communities needs to have solid decision-making criteria similar to the Transportation Masterplan with integrated planning and implementation.

- In regards to community engagement it was suggested that the City inform the community why change is needed before suggesting specific changes. Public input typically received is often perceived as or is actually uninformed opinion. Back and forth dialogue with the public is important for public and City learning and identification of issues and priorities. I.e. municipal election referendum question on Portage and Main.
 - A member highlighted that the City and community need to have conversations about how to address the resident and political fear around change or perceived risk in moving our city forward. Once we identify the situation, the City will be expected to take action to resolve it.
 - The City should provide meaningful, well-resourced public, administrative and political consultation, or not do it at all. At a minimum, community engagement is required at the public hearing level within the current structure. The City should be more strategic about public consultation and when input is asked for rather than letting the ‘chips fall where they may’. The City should utilize evidence-informed input from the Public Service and local and international external city building experts (e.g. Jan Gehl), make the best plan in the public interest, and then inform the public of the direction.
- Benchmarks and targets are important to determine Complete Communities goals. Guidance is needed to clarify decision-making processes to choose them from the high level to operational levels that meet intended objectives.
- Members suggested that the City needs to be more proactive in knowing what was happening on the ground (e.g. pockets of decline to focus investment), and having the evidence on priority issues. It could more easily take advantage of other government grants/resources at short notice e.g. affordable housing, active transportation.

The OurWinnipeg team proposed a guiding framework from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG), with a localized perspective using the PEG Indicators. The policy analysis process was shared to demonstrate how we will move from existing policy to defensible, proposed new policy. It is based on the UNSDG ‘filter’ that would restructure the document based on policy intent and interconnections between them. The interdepartmental engagement process was shared in which to build evidence around the goals, identify policy, process or implementation gaps and co-create or modify policy. The OurWinnipeg team will also begin meeting with key organizations in the City to test drive this framework and gain buy-in. Feedback was requested on the following OurWinnipeg questions:

- Are there any concerns about the proposed amalgamation of five policy documents (i.e. A Sustainable Winnipeg, Sustainable Water and Waste and Sustainable Transportation) in previous plan into three, OurWinnipeg, Complete Communities and a Priority Actions Plan?
- Do the United Nations goals provide a solid framework for evidence and measurement of how well Winnipeg is doing?
- How can the City best engage the community in Phase 2?

The following discussion occurred.

- It was highlighted that it is City ‘hardware’ or structure that needs to change, not just the policy.
- A member suggested that metrics were important for the ease of implementation, in determining priorities and impact and connecting them to the existing policy template.
- Public Engagement:

- The City should focus on specific topic areas and experts to consult with and host an event similar to the OurWinnipeg Community Launch held in September 2017 where there was space for debate, evidence and best practices.
- It was suggested to have an informed panel of speakers to advance various policy areas for deeper public and council education: e.g. transit, housing, infill, governance/decision-making structure, relationship between plans and budgets, development plan models. E.g. Arthur Schafer- Centre for Professional and Applied Ethics, University of Manitoba, and the Happy Cities team.
- When the City is ready to discuss recommended 'big policy shifts' with the public and politicians it will be a great opportunity for public debate and education. It should be done in an easy, fun, inspirational format that is creative with two way engagement so the public, city and council learn, not just another survey.
- It was suggested that the Community Committee decision-making structure needs to be reviewed to encourage city wide issue prioritization rather than ward based issues. In the past there was a more objective Planning Commission process that uses topic expert recommendations to be approved by Council. A similar example using an expert advisory precedent is the downtown Urban Design Advisory Committee.