



Brandon Chamber of Commerce

Policy Positions Manual

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BRANDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: POLICY POSITIONS

Representing the interests of our members and the business community

As the Voice of Business, The Chamber must ensure we speak for a majority of our members. Whether an issue is brought forward by a member, our board, a politician or the community at large, we seek consensus and to be well informed in developing credible policy positions. Our simple criterion for selection of issues is to select those issues that we determine will affect the broadest base of our members. We would also consider the cause of a smaller special interest group, or individual business member, as long as it is an issue that is relevant to our purpose and does not harm or conflict with the majority of members or any major industry represented within the organization.

Policy Process

Policies established by the Brandon Chamber of Commerce are based on consultation with membership, recommendations of the board of directors and the direction outlined by the incoming chair of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce.

Policy Approval

In accordance with the bylaws of Brandon Chamber of Commerce, a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast by board members is necessary to approve each policy position. These policies will be brought to the attention of appropriate government officials and other bodies to whom the recommendations are directed. The method of presentation of each item will be determined by a number of factors, including subsequent events and legislation which may affect the subject matter, additional information that may become available, the timing of a presentation, etc.

Policy Lifespan

Each resolution, once approved by the board, has an effective lifespan of three years unless otherwise stated. After three years, the board of directors can decide whether or not the policy should remain as a current policy position of the Brandon Chamber of Commerce.

Throughout the year, members will be updated and advised of the action(s) taken on each of these positions by way of summaries and reports in the Brandon Chamber of Commerce publications.

PROPOSED PLANNING ACT CHANGES FOR CITY'S OUTSIDE OF WINNIPEG

Brandon Chamber of Commerce

Issue

Municipalities outside of the City of Winnipeg, are governed by the Manitoba Planning Act, which provides the framework and regulation of authority and approvals for development across the province. The Planning Act, when enacted, took into consideration a majority of municipalities outside of the City of Winnipeg did not possess the professional skills and expertise, required to carry out strategic land planning and as such put in place a structure of Planning Commissions and Provincial Approvals, in order to govern zoning bylaws, conditional use and subdivision approvals.

While a number of cities, across the province, have taken an active role in developing their planning capabilities, including putting in place development plan processes, guidelines, hiring professional planners, etc., they are still required to conduct business under the existing Planning Act. As a result there is a level of redundancy in the system, creating delays in planning and zoning approvals, slowing down the development process and expending unnecessary time and money in resources, both at a municipal and provincial level.

Background

In June 2005, the Province of Manitoba enacted the Planning Act in order to establish provincial land use policies to guide the sustainable land use and development in the province. The Act governs all municipalities outside of the City of Winnipeg and provides the framework for planning and zoning activities.

The City of Winnipeg is exempt and is governed under its own charter, giving them a different level of autonomy and flexibility in which to set forth, the framework of approvals and processes to best govern their planning activities. They were afforded this responsibility due to maturity of their planning activities at the time the Act was enacted.

Over the years, a number of municipalities have matured in their own planning capabilities and as a result this has created a number of redundancies both at a municipal and provincial level. Outlined below are the sections of The Planning Act and the associated impact.

Planning Act Reference #1 - Zoning By-law and Secondary Plan Amendment Process

- **Planning Act Excerpt**

Public hearing

1. [74\(1\)](#) ***Between first and second reading of a zoning by-law***, a board, council or planning commission must hold a public hearing to receive representations from any person on the by-law, and give notice of the hearing in accordance with section 168.

Alteration to zoning by-law

2. [74\(2\)](#) If, after the public hearing, the board or council proposes to alter the by-law, a second public hearing must be held in accordance with subsection (1) to receive representations on the alterations to the by-law.

No hearing for minor alteration

3. [74\(3\)](#) A second public hearing is not required if the alteration is a minor one that does not change the intent of the by-law.

Adoption if no objection

4. [75](#) If no person objects to the zoning by-law at the hearing held under subsection 74(1), the board or council may

(a) give the by-law second and third reading; or

(b) pass a resolution not to proceed with the by-law.

- **Impact**

Presently all by-laws changes are required to go through first reading of council where no debate is permitted as part of the process. The intent of giving first reading is for Council to accept an application prior to notice of the public hearing being sent to surrounding residence. City of Brandon Council gives first reading to a by-law with no discussion as they rely on professional staff to ensure an application is complete.

The requirement for first reading, without going directly to a public hearing, extends the time by a minimum of two weeks for approvals and creates additional report preparation and presentation, with no measurable impact on the end result.

- **City of Winnipeg Charter**

The following wording in the City of Winnipeg Charter, allows for the streamlining of this process:

Hearing on zoning by-law

5. [236\(3\)](#) ***Before or after council gives first reading*** to a proposed zoning by-law,

(a) it must be referred to a designated committee of council;

(b) the city must give notice of a hearing by the designated committee of council respecting the proposed by-law; and

(c) the designated committee of council must conduct a hearing, and submit a report to council, about the proposed by-law.

- **Recommendation**

Amend the process for adopting or amending a Zoning or Secondary Plan By-law so that 1st reading is not required allowing for an application can go directly to a public hearing.

Planning Act Reference #2 - Subdivision approval authority

- **Planning Act Excerpt**

Board as approving authority

120 At the request of the board of a planning district, the minister may authorize the board to act as the approving authority for the area under its jurisdiction, subject to any conditions the minister considers appropriate

- **Impact**

Presently a city outside of the City of Winnipeg, is required to be part of a Planning District in order to retain subdivision autonomy from the province. This means that a subdivision plan is required to go through an additional approval process the Planning District Board, delaying the overall approval process by a minimum of one month. In the case where a city has professional staff and documented plans, all the work related to ensuring these plans meet municipal standards is conducted between the developer and the municipality. The requirement for the planning district to review these is redundant and takes up time and resources that could be better utilized to support other development activities.

A change to provide authority to qualified authorities at a municipal level would have no measurable negative impact on the process or the end result.

- **City of Winnipeg Charter**

The following wording in the City of Winnipeg Charter, allows for the streamlining of this process:

Delegation to committee of council

6. [256\(1\)](#) Council may by by-law

(a) authorize a committee of council or a designated employee to consider, and make decisions in respect of, applications for approval of plans of subdivision or specified types of plans of subdivision, and provide that applications for approval of plans of subdivision be referred to either the committee or the designated employee; and

(b) authorize the committee or the designated employee to approve plans of subdivision, or approve them with conditions that, under a by-law passed under subsection 259(1) (conditions for plans of subdivision), may be imposed in respect of plans of subdivision, except the conditions described in clause (d) of that subsection, without conducting a hearing respecting the application if the committee or the employee determines that the plan of subdivision conforms with section 257 and with other plans of subdivision of adjacent land.

- **Recommendation**

Amend the subdivision regulations to allow a designated city its own subdivision approval authority.

Planning Act Reference #3 - Variance or Conditional Approval Process

- **Planning Act Excerpt**

7.

8. Authority re minor variances

9. [102\(1\)](#) A board or council may, by by-law, authorize a designated employee or officer to make an order that varies

(a) any height, distance, area, size or intensity of use requirement in the zoning by-law by no more than 10%; or

(b) the number of parking spaces required by the zoning by-law by no more than 10%.

No notice or hearing required

10. [102\(2\)](#) An application for a minor variance does not require a hearing under section 96 or notice to any person.

11.

Decision on minor variances

12. [102\(3\)](#) The designated employee or officer must make an order

(a) rejecting the requested variance; or

(b) varying the application of the zoning by-law with respect to the affected property in accordance with the limits of subsection (1), subject to any conditions considered necessary to meet the requirements of clause 97(1)(b).

Submissions before setting conditions

13. [102\(4\)](#) A minor variance order must not be made subject to conditions unless the applicant has been given a reasonable opportunity to make representations about the proposed conditions.

14.

Notice to applicant

15. [102\(5\)](#) The designated employee or officer must send a copy of the order to the applicant, along with written notice of the applicant's right to appeal the order under subsection (6).

16.

Appeal of minor variance

17. [102\(6\)](#) The applicant may appeal the order of the designated employee or officer, and sections 94 to 100 apply to the appeal, with any necessary changes.

- **Impact**

Presently all applications for variance or conditional use are required to go through the three reading process, regardless of whether there are objections or not. At the best case, the process takes 6 weeks, however this can longer depending on the time of the year.

In jurisdictions, such as Alberta, delegation of authority has been provided to qualified professional staff whereby once a variance or conditional approval is approved, surrounding property owners are sent a notice of the approval and are provided the opportunity to appeal the decision of administration to City Council. If appealed, a public hearing is

conducted by City Council where a final decision is made. Administration maintains the ability to choose not to provide approval and to seek a decision of the Planning Commission or City Council on variances or conditional use applications which may be deemed to be contentious.

In providing the authority to administration, the process would be streamlined to between two and three weeks for a majority of applications. A change to provide the authority to delegate this approval would have no measurable negative impact on the process or the end result.

- **City of Winnipeg Charter**

The following wording in the City of Winnipeg Charter, allows for the streamlining of this process:

Authority respecting conditional uses

18. [253\(2\)](#) *Council may, by by-law, authorize a designated employee or a planning commission to consider, and make decisions in respect of, applications for conditional uses of real property or specified types of conditional uses, and applications for conditional uses of real property may be referred to either the designated employee or a planning commission as determined in accordance with the by-law.*

Authority respecting variances

19. [247\(2\)](#) *Council may by by-law authorize a designated employee or a planning commission to consider, and make decisions in respect of, applications for variances or specified types of variances and applications for variances may be referred to either the designated employee or the planning commission in accordance with the by-law.*

20.

- **Recommendation**

Amend the process to allow a designated city to delegate the initial approval authority to its administration for variances or conditional use.

It is recognized that The Planning Act plays an important role in ensuring consistent planning standards, practices and approvals across the province. One of the critical components to building a community or province is ensuring that individuals, organizations and companies understand we are “open for business”.

The Development Services Division and Economic Development Department of the City of Brandon raised these same recommendations under the Province of Manitoba Red Tape Reduction Task Force in support of this principle.

In order to attract new business development to the province, it is important to recognize the investment many municipalities have made in positioning themselves to take on a larger role in their

own planning and development and to seek out areas of redundancy, in order to be able to provide an economic advantage to attracting economic growth into the province.

Recommendations:

The Chamber recommends the Province of Manitoba make the following changes to The Planning Act:

Recommendation #1 - Zoning By-law and Secondary Plan Amendment Process - Amend the process for adopting or amending a Zoning or Secondary Plan By-law so that 1st reading is not required allowing for an application can go directly to a public hearing.

Recommendation #2 - Subdivision approval authority - Amend the subdivision regulations to allow a City with a professional staff complement (P.Eng and/or RPP) its own subdivision approval authority.

Recommendation #3 – Variance or Conditional Approval Process - Amend the process to allow a City with a professional staff complement (P.Eng and/or RPP) to delegate the initial approval authority to its administration for variances or conditional use.

Approved by the Brandon Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors February, 2017

FIRST NATIONS URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREAS (FNUDA)

Brandon Chamber of Commerce

First Nations Urban Development Areas – October 2016

Issue

Based on past history, there are indications that segments of the Community are not in favour of FNUDA's being established in Brandon. This is primarily based on beliefs of tax advantages offered to First Nations Businesses and People leading to an unfair competitive business environment. There also exists a belief by some that establishing FNUDA's in Brandon would have a negative impact on the social fabric of the community.

Background

First Nations Urban Development Areas are not only an important opportunity to engage Aboriginal people in Business and Employment opportunities with one of Manitoba's Fastest-growing populations, they are also an untapped economic development opportunity in our area.

In fact, a Blog post on October 15, 2017 by the National Aboriginal Economic Board, shows that:

“six communities have collectively created over 7,000 jobs and over \$77 million in annual economic activity benefiting both First Nations and neighbouring municipalities.

Combined success of the six communities include:

- *Existing and planned investment estimated to exceed \$1.5 billion*
- *Existing and planned investment has and will generate approximately 2,700 ongoing jobs held by reserve residents and approximately 4,400 ongoing jobs held by off reserve residents*
- *Approximately \$77 million annually in support of off reserve economic activity*
- *Over \$30 million annually in First Nation government revenues generated by the investment on the six urban reserves*
- *Approximately \$5 million annually in property taxes collected by non-First Nation local governments attributable to the investment on these six urban reserves*

In addition to quantifying the economic success of urban reserves, the report also identifies the five key factors that contribute to their success. These include: infrastructure and services, governance, land management regime, own source revenues and community support. These factors were determined by interviewing key community members in each of the six cases.”

While the term Urban Reserves once conjured up a negative response in many non-aboriginal communities, today 6 prosperous Urban Reserves have been created or exist in Manitoba and approximately another 55 in Saskatchewan. These developments have been successful in creating economic stimulus in those communities and in fact have been instrumental in building the relationships between First Nations and the Urban communities.

A FNUDA represents an area within an Urban zone that a First Nation owns and has surrendered to the Crown in order that it be designated as reserve land for the First Nations. Such lands allow for First Nations business ventures to enjoy the same privileges as those on traditional reserve lands. For First

Nations Businesses, this means that they must apply through a laborious and long process through Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada and receive approval by way of Order-In-Council before receiving status as an Urban Reserve. Once reserve status is granted, status First Nation peoples working or operating a non-incorporated business on the reserve are eligible to receive the Tax benefits set forth in the Indian Act and places the Reserve under the jurisdiction of the First Nation governance not the municipality. This primarily means that the lands are not subject to Municipal, Provincial or Federal taxes and the Status First Nation employees working on reserve do not pay Provincial or Federal Personal Taxes.

However, for a FNUDA to receive City services, they must enter into a “Municipal Services Agreement”, which stipulates which services the Municipality will provide, at what level and at what cost. These services could include the exact same services that businesses on non-reserve lands receive or the First Nation can negotiate receiving only specific services such as policing, garbage, fire or emergency services.

In addition, the Provincial and Federal Governments have been clear in their direction and appetite for First Nations Developments. They see Urban Reserves as an economic engine for not only the urban economy but in fact, the First Nations. In recent years, the City of Brandon has also taken a more supportive and open approach to building relationships with the Aboriginal Community through the creation of the Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples Council and the initial direction from City Council to proactively support the development of FNUDA’s in Brandon.

In summary, the Brandon Chamber of Commerce sees FNUDA’s as positive opportunities to build economic development and enhance our Business Community’s and in fact, the City’s openness to building strong relationships with our First Nation’s community in Brandon and South Western Manitoba.

Recommendations

Whereas The chamber supports FNUDA’s as an economic development tool and therefore propose the following recommendations:

1. The City be proactive in building relationships with First Nations and supporting the development of Urban Reserves in Brandon.
2. The City, through proactive research, prepare a Municipal Services Agreement template that is predicated on parity with businesses in Brandon that operate on non-reserve lands for Municipal Services provided, fees collected as compensation for tax loss, By-law compatibility and enforcement and dispute resolutions. The template will be used as a starting point for negotiating services and compensation for First Nations proposing or operating and Urban Reserve in Brandon.
3. When the creation of, or existence of a FNUDA in Brandon provides an opportunity to leverage infrastructure funding from higher levels of Government to advance the City of Brandon’s infrastructure investment, the City should proactively work with Provincial and Federal governments to leverage appropriate opportunities.
4. The Brandon Business Community be proactive in gaining an understanding of First Nation Urban Development Areas and foster a business relationship with First Nation communities and FNUDA tenants conducting business in Brandon.

FLEXIBLE PROVINCIAL FUNDING FOR POST-SECONDARY

Brandon Chamber of Commerce

Issue

There are many businesses in Manitoba that are unable to find enough employees with the right skill sets. This situation is placing barriers to economic growth within the province. Post-secondary institutions need to be equipped with tools to respond quickly to labour market needs in order to address skilled labour shortages when identified.

Background

Businesses across the province have encountered missed or delayed opportunities due to a lack of available skilled workers. Given the nature of the current labour market needs, most often, colleges are the institutions businesses look to in order to deliver the required training for in-demand jobs.

As institutions directed by labour market needs, Assiniboine Community College (ACC) and Red River College (RRC) maintain strong connections to employers. A 2015 Graduate Satisfaction and Employment Survey found that 96 per cent of recent graduates from ACC who were seeking work are employed and nearly four-fifths of these jobs are permanent. The average annual salary is \$44,050. Ninety-four per cent chose to stay in Manitoba. Further, 84 per cent of recent graduates believed the skills they learned at ACC helped them to secure their current job. At RRC, 94% of recent graduates who were seeking work are employed, 98% of graduates chose to stay and work in Manitoba, and 96% of employers report being more than satisfied with RRC hires.

The current funding environment does not provide institutions like ACC and RRC the ability to fund training programs in a quick and responsive manner as opportunities arise in the community.

The agility and responsiveness of colleges for skills training opportunities must make strides to match the pace of businesses. Incremental unrestricted funding would allow educational institutions to address the most pressing labour market needs and deliver the necessary training. This in turn allows businesses to be more competitive in regional and national markets while helping individuals to obtain skilled employment at higher wages.

Recommendations

1. The provincial government should provide incremental unrestricted funding that can be used at the discretion of Manitoba post-secondary institutions for the purposes of single or short-term program offerings in response to identified labour market demand in support of economic growth.
2. The provincial government, along with key industry stakeholders should review the effectiveness of this funding after three years.

3. The provincial government should work with Manitoba post-secondary institutions to establish set criteria that will be used to evaluate each training opportunity to ensure compliance with the expectations for this unrestricted funding.

Approved by the Brandon Chamber Board of Directors December, 2015

KEYSTONE FUNDING

Brandon Chamber of Commerce Policy

Background:

The Keystone Centre is a significant economic driver in Western Manitoba. The Keystone hosts a variety of events and activities, providing the community with a large part of its social, recreational, cultural and agricultural fabric. The Keystone is one of the largest convention, entertainment, agricultural and recreational complexes in Canada. The building has hosted everything from the Memorial Cup, Arabian Horse shows, international concert tours and major conventions.

The Keystone opened its doors in 1972, the product of a joint venture between the City of Brandon, the Government of Manitoba, and The Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba. This partnership continues through the present day with annual contributions of \$375,000 from the city (\$250,000 for operations and \$125,000 for debt reduction). The province also contributes \$375,000. In addition, the City of Brandon has designated a portion of the annual Accommodation Tax funds collected be set aside for Capital Improvements at the Centre, on a case by case basis.

The Centre finds itself in a situation where the structure and facility is aging and areas of the building are simply wearing out. As the Centre is structured as a non-profit organization, and historically has operated at a deficit, the ability to plan long term for capital improvements has not been possible. Funding repair and capital improvements from operations has not been feasible. Capital projects have been implemented on an as needed, reactionary basis as funding from the partners, community funds and federal programming becomes available (Canada 150 Infrastructure, BACF, Aviva Community Fund). This system requires The Centre to approach funding authorities on a case by case basis; projects only proceed as funding is made available through the various funding partners. A project that fits the funding criteria of a community fund may not be the highest priority project at the Centre, but may still proceed. This speaks to the requirement of a long term capital plan that provides capital funding to the Centre so capital projects can be addressed in priority sequence and when they make operational sense.

The Brandon Chamber of Commerce recognizes the important role that the Keystone Centre plays as an economic engine to attract people and business to our community. The Chamber recognizes that long-term planning allows an entity to be proactive in solving problems and reacting to rather than reacting to conditions as they arise. While we are aware of the importance of the Centre to our community, we also are cognizant of the responsibility to the tax-payers of Brandon.

Recommendations:

1. The City commit to funding a reasonable 5 year capital plan for the Centre, with funds to be used to invest in necessary capital upgrades to maintain the existing facility.
2. The Province commit to fund, in matching dollars to the City, a reasonable 5 year capital plan for the Centre, with funds to be used to invest in necessary capital upgrades to maintain the existing facility.
3. The Centre explore additional revenue generating opportunities, including charging for parking, and leasing of surplus lands, in an effort to reduce the annual contribution to the Centre required from taxpayers.
4. The City remove the funding allowance from the Accommodation Tax and use these funds as initially proposed - a "heads in beds" and "destination marketing program" to attract events to Brandon.

Approved by the Brandon Chamber Board of Directors December, 2015

FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRY TURN AROUND NEEDED

Issue

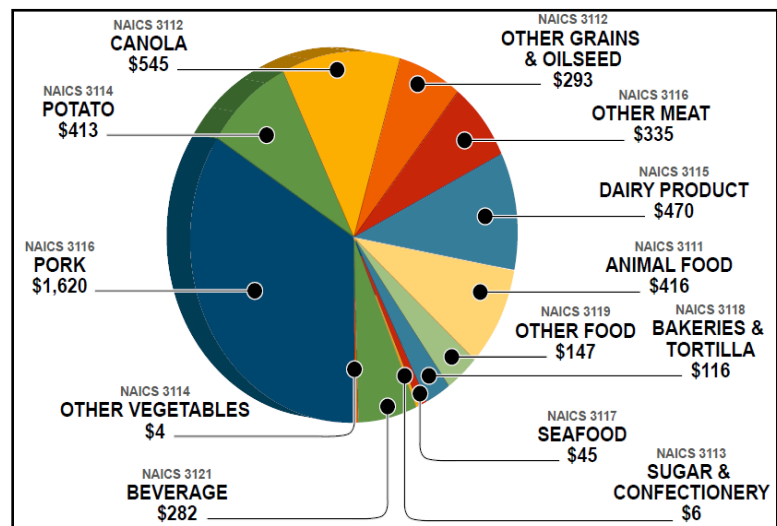
The Rural Development Institute (RDI) at the Brandon University was retained by the Manitoba Government) to take a snapshot of Manitoba's 2011 food and beverage processing (FBP) and ask where it might be in 2020. They issued their report in mid-2014; with the conclusions presenting two scenarios.

1. If nothing is done to turn things around in pork and potatoes their sales could decline by \$530 million by 2020, (16%, \$260 million/year for pork and 63%, \$270 million/year for potatoes).
2. Fix those sub-sectors, and the overall sector's annual sales could grow by \$700 million.

This is \$1.23 billion dollar difference or more than 26% difference in the size of the FBP sector just 5 years from now. Many in the industry think this #1 scenario is overly optimistic; in that the decrease in Manitoba food processing will be much greater than the report stated, unless government action is taken.

The food and beverage processing (FBP) industry is a major economic contributor:

- Manitoba's FBP sales (2011) were \$4.69 billion
- Representing 28% of all of the provincial manufacturing revenue and 15% of all exports
- Directly employing more than 12,000 people (representing nearly one of every four persons (22%) employed in manufacturing) and many more indirectly
- Representing 5% of Canada's FBP sales and 7% of international exports.



The adjacent chart displays the sub-sectors within the Manitoba food processing sector as at 2011.

Pork, canola and potato account for 55% of FBP sales. Of these 3; the largest and 3rd largest are in trouble.

For Manitoba's pork-processing, the RDI report says unless "effective action" is taken, involving collaboration between government and industry and creation of a new strategic plan, this sub-sector could decline by 16% (\$260 million/year) from the 2011 level of \$1.6 billion. This is the main reason for their #1 scenario above.

Hog producers remain largely at an impasse with the province over non-science based restrictions banning the building of new barns, claimed by the provincial government to be for environmental reasons.

This has reduced the supply for the processing plants as barns have aged and gone out of production. This reduced supply has forced Maple Leaf Foods in Brandon to reduce its workforce, and driven its percentage of capacity utilization to such un-economic and non-competitive levels it may close at some

not too distant time in the future. This would result in a dramatic negative impact far larger than the RDI worst case scenario.

Attempts to diversify processing (while using existing hog production) with new smaller niche slaughter/processing plants has met with a lack of support from the provincial government, which refused to offer even the normal support, such as new employee training programs, to the potential business that would move to Manitoba.

The potato industry faces a different problem -- a decrease in sales of french fries, which is increasing the competitive pressures from US plants. The report says these pressures "may precipitate reduced sales by 63% to \$150 million, and a resulting reduction of approximately \$270 million/year in sales in 2020". The report suggests a need for research into higher yields and better production economics.

Potatoes are a multimillion crop in Manitoba. Last year there were 70,000 acres of production¹, making Manitoba the second-biggest producer behind PEI. Of those acres 55,000 were for processing, grown by about 60 farmers. The balance was "table" potatoes largely consumed in Manitoba.

The canola crushing sub-sector appears to be stable, although the last two crush plants worth many \$100's of millions were built just west of Manitoba's border and industry reports that the provincial government made few, if any, attempts to attract them to our province.

The loss of the high technology flax processor, Pizzey's Nutraceuticals to South Dakota was also confirmed to have occurred without any attempt by the provincial government to keep them in Manitoba.

The other 45% consists of a diverse array of processors that are smaller and less export dependent. The group as a whole exports 20% of its production, with 80% sold to the Manitoba market. Even the domestic sales face the competitive pressure from foreign, predominantly US, based competitors accessing the Manitoba market.

This sub-sector faces competitive pressures similar to the overall manufacturing industry. It needs additional support from the provincial government by way of export enhancement, training programs similar to other jurisdictions.

The provincial government's lack of action on these issues is highlighted by the provincial Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development speaking to a Manitoba Food Processors Association meeting after the RDI report was public where he did not even mention that any of these issues existed.

Resolution:

That the Provincial Government:

- Recognize the food and beverage processing (FBP) sector's importance as part of the overall manufacturing industry in Manitoba.
- Continue to work with MB Pork Council to support the Special Projects Program to allow for new hog barn construction within an appropriate environmental management system.

- Continue to work with pork producers and processors to investigate innovative financial resources with the objective of developing additional pork production to bring better balance between production and pork processing capacity to remain competitive in the North American market.
- Establish a task force to work with the processing potato industry (potato production and processing plant sectors) to increase competitiveness relative to other areas of North America against which it competes. Have it reported by September 2015 and commit to implement recommendations by November 30, 2015 so the industry has time to plan for the 2016 season. To wait till spring of 2016 means delaying for an entire year.
- To better meet the needs of the FBP sector within the overall manufacturing industry, transfer the responsibility for expansion of the FBP sector from the department dealing with rural primary agriculture production to the department already focusing on manufacturing businesses; as the needs of the food processing businesses are more closely aligned with other manufacturers than the needs of the primary producers.
- Establish a task force to:
 - Review the best practises in other jurisdictions (e.g. Alberta) and
 - Examine the needs of Manitoba's food processing businesses; and then recommend changes to the Manitoba government's approach to expanding the food processing sector in Manitoba.

Approved by the Brandon Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors April, 2015

Adopted by Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, May 2015

MUNICIPAL RED TAPE REDUCTION POLICY

Issue

Many businesses in Brandon perceive regulations at City Hall to be burdensome, costly, time-consuming and frustrating. The Chamber would like to suggest ways to reduce the regulatory burden on businesses to ensure the City of Brandon is viewed as 'Open for Business'.

Background

The Brandon business community has been frustrated by the complexity and time required to obtain the various permits, licenses, rezoning, inspections and approvals necessary to proceed with development and otherwise conduct business in Brandon.

The Brandon Chamber continues to hear from businesses on development opportunities that have been lost or significantly delayed for our city because of the cumbersome amount of regulations and processes and the lack of clarity when it comes to accessing information.

In the spirit of presenting positive and constructive solutions, the Brandon Chamber of Commerce calls on the city to review the requirements and processes to achieve the following:

- a) Clarity of process and requirements
- a) Accountability for timelines
- b) Transparency & Consistency
- c) Client centric culture
- d) Improved communications

Ensuring a positive environment that encourages business growth benefits the city and its resident's through job creation and an enhanced tax base and is in everyone's long-term economic interest.

Recommendations:

1. Provide a more efficient business to government process such as “one window” access to government services both online and within City Hall.
2. Streamline the permitting process to eliminate the need for an applicant to return several times to City Hall and reduce the amount of duplicate information that is currently required on a number of different applications for one project.
3. Ensure there is a cooperative, helpful environment in the administration of the bylaws, whereby municipal staff is encouraged to facilitate an outcome sensitive approach, rather than a zero tolerance, process focused approach.
4. Create a culture of customer service and a supportive attitude towards applicants in the planning and building department, rather than a prescriptive, preventative attitude.
5. Establish a marketing and customer relations program to significantly enhance education and communications-related application requirements for all applicants. It is important that applicants be given:
 - a. a clear communication strategy
 - b. easy to comprehend information guidelines and checklists,
 - c. access to decision makers in all applicable departments to explain the requirements for permits and waiver
 - d. clear timelines
6. Create a standardized single reference document (i.e. development package) outlining the process business owners must undergo to move their project forward.
 - a. This should involve a description of who to see, relevant contact information, what documents will be needed at each step, and a rough timeline for each.
 - b. This document should be made readily available across a number of venues, including the city’s website, with copies kept at reception / departmental front desks at City Hall.
 - c. This could have the dual benefit of providing an initial sense of guidance for proponents while potentially reducing some of the demand placed on municipal staff.
7. Provide the ability for one staff person to assist a business through a whole project to ensure consistency of the project to reduce the back and forth for the applicant. Ensure applicants have access to knowledgeable and appropriate employees, including more senior staff, safety codes officers (building inspectors), etc., as needed. Encourage municipal staff to be more thorough and better prioritize projects so they are able to suggest requirements the first time an applicant meets with the City department. Applicants are often frustrated when new requirements are implemented with every new meeting at the City.

8. A streamlined communications framework should be developed between – and within – relevant City departments to ensure consistency in the requirements and comments for permitting / development applications.
9. Ensure that staffing levels within the development services department are commensurate with need, providing businesses with the expectation that project milestones can be met within a clear and reasonable timeframe.
10. Reduce some of the costs involved in pre-planning for projects within the City. This is cost prohibitive to businesses who are interested in developing land or building new projects but have yet to be approved for a project. Consider preapprovals with a modified and less costly plan.
11. Establish a Standing Committee with appropriate industry participation to provide oversight and advice on improvements to the processing of the various permits, licences, re-zonings, inspections and approvals necessary to proceed with developments and otherwise conduct business in Brandon.
12. Develop and implement “Engineering Design Guidelines for Infrastructure”. The design guidelines should provide technical engineering design standards that are used in the preparation of construction drawings for the construction of public infrastructure. This should cover topics ranging from the approvals process for construction drawings, surface and underground infrastructure design guidelines, to geotechnical study requirements.

Approved by the Brandon Chamber of Commerce board of directors, May 20 2015