



Brandon Chamber of Commerce **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.



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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



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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.

Adopted by the Brandon Chamber of Commerce board of directors, May 2015