

Rick Shone – August 8, 2022

Question One: What would you do to ensure the permit department is adequately resourced in the future?

A top priority for me is to speed up the processes in the permit department so that those applying for permits can begin building as fast as possible, complete the project and then move on to the next. The City of Winnipeg moves far too slowly, costing the economy millions in lost revenues each year. The City should not be the cause of delay in the construction process and requires a complete cultural shift to one of providing exceptional customer service. As mayor, I will immediately review all benchmarks and current targets and begin to put steps in place to speed up the process such as adding more online permit options, single points of contact, less required inspections and/or greater use of technology to submit inspection criteria. The Process Improvement Team has a key role to play and in addition to working with staff to improve operational processes, I would like to see them work more closely with the business community to focus on projects that will improve customer service and drive more efficient service.

Question Two: Would you support changes to the Permit Reserve Fund to increase the total fund and ensure it is replenished prior to any funds leaving the permit department for consolidated revenue?

As depicted in your graph and evidenced in the most recent 2022 Operating and Capital Budget, PP&D is generally a profitable department for the city. Many businesses I have met with have mentioned that even more permits may be taken out if the process was easier and faster. This indicates that the City is potentially losing revenue because of the way the system is set up. As we cannot always time economic boom or bust, the creating of a Permit Reserve Fund in 2007 was a prudent idea. The current cap of \$2 million is now \$1 million less than when first created. Due to the current financial situation of the city, I would support the continuation of the \$2 million cap at this time. This fund was established for three purposes. First, to mitigate revenue shortfalls, which rarely occurs. Second, to fund temporary staffing needs in situations where more staff are required than were budgeted for. This is an important function as it allows the department to scale up to meet unexpected demand. Third, and possibly most important on a regular basis is that it was set up to fund service and system improvements. This could be a fund that the Process Improvement Team can tap into to iterate and act more quickly on decisions that will have significant impact to the businesses the city serves. The fund should be replenished and it should exist to fund these three functions.

Question Three: Would you support the use of the widely-accepted standardized documents (CCDC) for City of Winnipeg construction tendering?

Yes, this is something I would support as mayor and have reviewed several cities that use CCDC contract forms currently. In my experience working with the provincial and federal government in the tender process, I have often found that proprietary tender documents are extremely labour intensive to work with and are often not flexible enough to provide an appropriate quote for the situation at hand. This often discourages business from quoting and in turn the organization, the City of Winnipeg in this case, receives less choice which is less desirable for the citizens of Winnipeg. It is important to create more

clarity and goodwill between the City and the businesses they engage with. Using standard documents will encourage outside business investment into Winnipeg.

Question Four: How do you plan to balance the responsible use of taxpayer dollars and funding important infrastructure projects?

Winnipeg has limited access to resources from which we must prioritize many infrastructure projects. Maintaining an up-to-date City Asset Management Plan is key in determining which existing projects are nearing end of life and/or require improvements. This will allow the City and the construction industry to effectively plan for these upcoming projects. Winnipeg employs an existing asset prioritization tool which guides decision making for competing future investments. It is important to bear in mind which investments are vital and which investments are desired when deciding which capital priorities to pursue. Investment decisions must be made with consideration towards the collective benefit to Winnipeggers along with the long-term service costs of the project. I support a multi-year capital budgeting process to guide and enhance strategic long-term planning.

Question Five: What will you do to improve collaboration in the Winnipeg Metro Region to attract outside investment?

Winnipeg and the other members of the Winnipeg Metro Region are the drivers of the Manitoban Economy. Two thirds of the population live in this region that generates 70% of the province's GDP. Yet the WMR must become more competitive if it hopes to attract more foreign and/or private sector investment. A coordinated approach to planning and economic development are required conditions to attract more investment. Each municipality has competing interests and the lack of common vision and unwillingness to work together hinders our economic growth. We must find new mechanisms to address the financial concerns that come with collaboration in a large and diverse metro region. Each member must be able to realize the benefits of working together while maintaining its culture and autonomy. Manitoba is unique in that a large percentage of the population is clustered in such a small region. The more collaborative the WMR is, the more it will drive economic growth and better manage that growth together with a regional approach.

Question Six: As the City embarks on more significant infrastructure projects, what will you do to ensure Winnipeg construction projects can be executed more smoothly and efficiently?

Winnipeg must strictly prioritize investment projects and maintain existing infrastructure if it is to minimize the gap between its capital investment requirements and estimated future capital funding. I have recently announced a policy to appoint a business ombudsman to cut through layers of bureaucracy and help businesses navigate city hall. Large and small projects can benefit by having a point of contact that will navigate the planning process for business and ensure that projects begin on time. Time is money and the city, business and our economy loses potential revenue through costly delays.

Facing budget and financial restraints, Winnipeg must seek varying forms of funding. This is very often sourced from the provincial or federal government however looking to past P3's as example, these private/public partnerships are valuable and expedient financing options. It is extremely important that large projects constructed in a timely fashion, are well built, and completed on budget. For this to occur,

Winnipeg must better engage the marketplace to understand vendor capabilities and leverage competition during the tender process. Choosing the right contractor for the work based on a comparison of the capabilities required for the entire scope of the project can lead to greater efficiency. Ultimately the director of public works is responsible for ensuring projects are completed on time and within the allotted budget.