

Scott Gillingham Policy Questions Responses

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

My platform reinvests in key services that saw restraint during the pandemic, and invests in customer service features like "Neighborhood Action Teams," better 311 responses and development case managers so that builders will have an advocate for their projects as they move through the system. But I don't believe the problem with permit delays is a resource problem alone. It's also a cultural problem, and a structural problem that comes from permits being in the wrong *kind* of department.

Later in the campaign, I will be announcing a plan to reorganize customer service functions across City Hall to improve the customer service focus for key services like permit issuance. I'm encouraged by improvements to the permit department over the past few years and I believe these can be accelerated - not just with additional resources, but also with a better, "yes first" approach with managers who are accountable for hitting specific timelines, targets and results. We need to make that change - and invest more capital in digital service fulfillment - so that permit issuance is no longer something that depends on whether you have a good or bad relationship with a particular manager. We need to issue permits to projects, not to people.

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?

By way of demonstrating my support for these changes, I already took action as City Council's Finance Chair to make this City policy in the 2022 budget. (Please Page 32, Volume 2 of the 2022 Budget Book for details).

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

Yes, and I would go further. On the campaign trail, I have heard repeatedly of cases where Winnipeg's contracts are different from standards used in several industries. Adopting industry standards leads to a better understanding of contract requirements by all sides, shared expectations, and a balanced playing field for all parties. I would not only support moving to standardized documents for the sector; I also believe that a Council Committee should hold public hearings on the differences in our contracts generally to squeeze out the temptation by our departmental staff to always add additional points of complexity.

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

As the Chair of Finance overseeing six consecutive budgets, I have a deep appreciation for the need to make responsible use of taxpayer dollars. I delivered budgets - including budgets amid the pandemic emergency - that maintained services and often kept operating cost increases below inflation while increasing investments in infrastructure. I developed and implemented the City's first four-year balanced budget process that forces council and the administration to take a longer-term view of both operating and capital spending. As a result of my work, Winnipeg's S & P credit rating was actually increased earlier this year.

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While I have yet to announce the details of my financial plan, one policy I will carry over from the existing Council is that at least some increased tax revenue will be formally dedicated to infrastructure investment to be sure we do not repeat the mistakes of the early 2000s.

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

First, I will continue to do what I have already been doing; the Metro Region isn't theory from my vantage point. I've been a member of the Metro Region board for several years. I am now its Co-Chair, and a champion on City Council for increased regional cooperation. I will continue in that role as mayor, and look forward to the establishment of the regional planning board and the regional development plan. In a recent speech to a Metro Region event, I made my view clear: we sink or swim together, and cooperation will accomplish far more than trying to pretend it is in our power or to our long-term benefit to freeze growth in surrounding municipalities.

On a broader scale, I will be speaking later in the campaign about the need for a punchier economic strategy for Winnipeg that sells and shapes our industrial and community strengths rather than trying to be all things to all potential investors. I have also made proposals - like my plan to loosen zoning restrictions along key commercial corridors - to get more housing development in the City at a moment when ease of approvals is critical for those investments.

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?

There are a range of issues - better tendering, better planning, better contracts, evolving financial models in a new era of risk, and industry capacity challenges - which can be addressed through better policy. Rather than pretending to you that I or other city council members alone have the expertise to deliver best practices, I am the first mayoral candidate to propose we get the right expertise to do it for a change. Earlier this year, as a city councillor, I brought a proposal to a public EPC meeting to call for the hiring of a Chief Construction Officer for the City. That proposal will be in my final platform as a mayoral candidate.

The CCO would be hired for the breadth of their expertise in private and/or public sector construction work. He or she will report directly to Council, like a CFO, so their advice isn't lost in the system or hidden behind conflicting departmental priorities. He or she will provide system-wide advice to:

- Recommend policies to improve capital projects management
- Assist directly in procurement planning and coordination for major projects
- Support departments and ensure they are keeping pace with best practices in construction management and procurement, and
- Liaise directly - and knowledgeably - with the Winnipeg construction sector on behalf of City Hall to ensure industrial and public policy issues like labour capacity, training, staging and materials supply were addressed.