

OUR PLAN, OUR CITY

BRANDON CITY COUNCIL

———— 2015 - 2018 ————

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

The City of Brandon's organizational vision is one of Serving and Building Community, a philosophy that is brought to life every day by the collective values of professionalism, respect, integrity, diversity and excellence displayed by its staff.

In the spring of 2015, Brandon City Council and the City of Brandon organization embarked upon a three-year strategic plan, entitled "Our Plan, Our City", which built on the strength of this vision. The plan's 10 priority areas focused on infrastructure, both above and below the ground, expansion of Brandon's residential, industrial and economic base, renewal of recreation and greenspace, revitalization of Brandon's downtown, and a stronger fostering of inclusive, accessible and socially responsible communities.

As we welcome the fall of 2017 and enter the final year of this current Brandon City Council's mandate, we are proud to provide our community with a progress update on our 10 strategic priority areas. Working together with you, our residents, we are Serving & Building Community!



KEYSTONE CENTRE

The Keystone Centre continues to operate as a one-of-a-kind community centre in Brandon. With more than 540,000 square feet of space available under one roof, the Keystone Centre hosts in excess of 1,500 event bookings and draws in 1.2 million visitors each year – resulting in an economic spinoff of \$62 million to local businesses annually. However, now in its 45th year of operation, the centre’s age is plainly showing. Capital funding needs range from \$500,000 to \$2 million each year and are often postponed when annual revenue and grant funding fall short.

The 2014-2018 Brandon City Council has committed the following to the Keystone Centre to ensure it can continue its role as a “first choice” facility for conventions, recreation, agricultural and entertainment events across Western Canada:

- In its 2016 and 2017 budgets, Brandon City Council committed \$500,000 annually (\$400,000 of which was invested from the Accommodation Tax reserve each year) to assist the Keystone Centre in its capital budget needs;
- Working with the Keystone Centre’s Board of Directors, council helped the facility secure capital funding totalling \$375,000 from the Province of Manitoba in 2017;
- As a member of the Keystone Centre’s Leadership Group, the City of Brandon continues to work with the Province of Manitoba to streamline the Keystone Centre’s governance structure.

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

Downtown Brandon is no longer seen as just the business district of this growing Prairie City. Residents and visitors to Brandon want to be drawn to a downtown where they can work, live, and play – somewhere that gives them options for shopping, dining, and entertainment in a dynamic, safe and inviting environment.

Brandon City Council continues to place focus on rejuvenating and expanding the fabric of Brandon’s historic downtown, including:

- Assisting Brandon University’s efforts to acquire a significant assembly of lands in the heart of the downtown for a proposed mixed-use development;
- Continued financial support for the Brandon Downtown Development Corporation (Renaissance Brandon), which has allowed the group to administer an Upper Story Redevelopment Initiative, a Redevelopment Grant Program, a Downtown Façade and Storefront Improvement Grant Program, and a Rent Abatement Grant Program;
- The City of Brandon continues to invest in its own downtown properties, including the securing of a long-term institutional tenant to lease basement space within the A.R. McDiarmid Civic Complex and the transformation of an empty parking lot at the same facility into the new A.R. McDiarmid Outdoor Plaza;
- Greater focus by a number of City of Brandon departments on maintaining a safe and liveable downtown, specifically via the implementation of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) principles, lighting improvements, and the Brandon Police Service’s Community Safety initiatives.

WATER TREATMENT INFRASTRUCTURE



Providing safe drinking water to the community remains among the City of Brandon's core priorities. Brandon's Water Treatment Plant continues to produce high quality, potable water for its nearly 50,000 residents. However, with older portions of the plant now operating well beyond their design life, an overhaul of the facility has been planned to ensure it can continue to safely and consistently deliver water to our residents.

Since this City Council placed the City of Brandon's Water Treatment Plant as its No.1 priority for the receipt of senior government funding dollars, the following has been accomplished:

- Federal-Provincial-Municipal funding totalling \$3,236,260 has been secured to conduct the planning and design phase of the City of Brandon Water Treatment Plant Upgrade, which has begun with the hiring of a consulting engineering firm to complete detailed design of a new membrane technology treatment process;
- A request for additional funding of \$4,461,740 has been submitted for the construction of a new chemical building for the plant, an investment which would eliminate the needs for on-site chlorine gas storage and allow the City to move forward with lead-leaching reduction strategies of benefit to older areas of Brandon where water service connections made of lead may still exist.

DRAINAGE



Brandon's enhanced river flooding protection infrastructure was put to the test in the Spring of 2017, and successfully held back one of the highest spring river levels on record. However, there is still much to do to address drainage deficiencies in many established areas of Brandon, which have revealed themselves during the current wet climate cycle. New development on the fringes of Brandon will also have an impact on the City's current drainage systems.

With support from Brandon City Council, the City of Brandon's Development Services Division has worked to achieve the following:

- Completion of a comprehensive city-wide drainage study that has identified critical drainage projects that can now be built into future capital plans;
- Continued work by the Engineering Department on the establishment of a city-wide storm water management strategy, taking into consideration the information contained within the drainage strategy;
- In collaboration with Brandon Area Planning District, a Southern Drainage Plan is being assembled to examine and proactively address drainage as Brandon grows its southern boundaries.

PLANNED GROWTH

Brandon and its neighbouring municipalities continue to enjoy growth in the building construction sector, with the overall value of reported construction in Brandon and the RMs of Elton and Cornwallis topping \$106 million in 2016. Existing neighbourhoods have been buoyed by vibrant infill developments, while the creation of new neighbourhoods in Brandon's south and west corners signal the strength of Brandon's residential housing market. The City of Brandon's Development Services Division has placed steady focus on timely, customer-focused service that better enables development while maintaining high standards for urban growth.

Led by this Brandon City Council's direction, the City of Brandon's planned growth strategy includes:

- A comprehensive South Brandon Annexation Strategy, spurred on by a request from a landowner to bring 170 acres of RM of Cornwallis land into Brandon's municipal boundary for a future regional retail and residential development;
- An ongoing review of the Brandon and Area Planning District governance structure, which will examine areas of service sharing and autonomy to ensure best implementation of the district's Fringe Area Growth Strategy;
- The creation of an Industry Advisory Group comprised of representatives from the City of Brandon, the Construction Association of Rural Manitoba, the Brandon Chamber of Commerce, Brandon & Area Realtors and the Downtown Brandon Development Corporation (Renaissance Brandon), which meets quarterly to discuss development trends and topics of mutual interest, and to collaborate on solutions relation to planned urban growth;
- The introduction of the City of Brandon's Development Cost Charge By-law and Policy, which could create a consistent and transparent method of paying for off-site infrastructure associated with new growth in Brandon;
- An openness for continued discussions with interested property owners on how the City of Brandon may implement aspects of its North Brandon Gateway Secondary Plan.

WHEAT CITY GOLF COURSE

The Wheat City Golf Course and Recreation Centre continues to be an integral piece of Brandon's affordable and accessible public recreation offerings. The facility offers the only 18-hole golf course within Brandon City Limits and provides outdoor recreation amenities like tennis courts, walking trails, a tobogganing hill, and groomed skiing and snowshoe trails.

This Brandon City Council remains committed to keeping the golf course and its recreational offerings affordable and accessible to the public, having made the following investments:

- Council approved the sale of the aging Recreation Centre building and a small portion of underutilized land immediately surrounding the building to be developed into condominium and commercial space, along with a mixed-use community recreation centre, with proceeds from the sale of this building and parcel of land available for potential capital improvements to the golf course;
- Protection of the current recreational asset via the enhancement of the course's flood protection infrastructure in the fall & winter of 2016, which ultimately saved the course from substantial flood-related damage in the spring of 2017;
- The City of Brandon continues to operate and invest in the Wheat City Golf Course as a publicly-owned course, which is anticipated to average 20,000+ rounds of golf played annually.

RECREATION FACILITIES & COMMUNITY SPACES

Brandon's spirit truly comes alive when its residents and visitors are having fun, being active and taking advantage of the many recreational offerings and community spaces within the City of Brandon. For some, that means a walk, bike ride or picnic along the Assiniboine River Corridor, while for others it means an early morning lap swim, watching family splashing through a spray park on the weekend, or working up a sweat on the sport field after work. For many, it may also mean volunteering or participating in community programming at Brandon's various gathering places.

Brandon City Council remains focused on striking a balance in maintaining and enhancing its recreation facilities and community spaces, including:

- Continued support for the outdoor recreation hub model as laid out in the City of Brandon Recreation Facilities Master Plan, with planning and design underway for the creation of a new hub in the Valleyview neighbourhood in 2018;
- The development of a Community Centres Strategy to evaluate and propose solutions for emerging infrastructure issues at Brandon's aging community centres, beginning with the successful remediation of structural issues at Valleyview Community Centre;
- A refurbished outdoor track and field facility and a renewed pool at Brandon's Community Sportsplex have rejuvenated Brandon's sport-event hosting potential and have provided Brandon residents with modern fitness options in the community;
- Committing a total of \$350,000 in capital investment to the Riverbank Discovery Centre since 2014 and kick-starting Phase 1 of the Brandon Riverbank Inc's "Back to the River" Master Plan with the provision of a loan of up to \$1 million for the creation of an outdoor covered stage and 3,000 seat natural amphitheatre at the Riverbank Discovery Centre;
- The pursuit of detailed site development options for the phased construction of an outdoor soccer & field sport facility, subject to capital funding & successful community fundraising efforts.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Brandon continues to sharpen its competitive edge as a North American hub for business and a service centre for a regional population of some 180,000 people. The city's overall business cost competitiveness is consistently ranked by KPMG in the top 10 of Canadian cities and Brandon has been regularly ranked in the Top 10 Best Places to Live in Canada. Supported by Brandon City Council, the City of Brandon's 2014-2019 Economic Growth Strategy, "Prosperity by Design", has been tackled in earnest and has helped to leverage the following:

- An \$11.2 million expansion of the Brandon Municipal Airport terminal building, with \$1.6 million in forthcoming work to rehabilitate the facility's airside electrical systems and a \$2.5 million project to replace the airport's current maintenance building;
- Collaboration with the Brandon Chamber of Commerce to achieve many of the recommendations within its Municipal Red Tape Reduction Policy, and to make recommendations to the Province of Manitoba on how The Planning Act can be changed to facilitate easier development in Brandon;
- The development of an Industrial Lands Servicing Strategy, which will include a supply and demand analysis, the development of a secondary plan, and the development of online marketing pieces for industrial sites and commercial development opportunities;
- A creative, modern approach to workforce attraction, including the creation and marketing of a free online job portal (www.jobsinbrandon.ca), the provision of City tours for job candidates who are visiting the community for interviews, and the facilitation of Work Ethic Development training to local businesses;
- The development of a Brownfield Strategy and Incentive Program, which provides municipal tax offsetting credits to eligible property owners to remediate and redevelop contaminated land;
- Additional revenue for Brandon First via a "2-for-1 dollar" matching contribution from the Accommodation Tax Reserve Fund, allowing the event recruitment organization to more proactively pursue events.

COMMUNITY INCLUSION

The strength of diversity and uniqueness that makes up Brandon's growing population - now approaching 50,000 people - has never been more apparent. In delivering services and programs to its residents, the City of Brandon strives to connect with all its residents through accessible and respectful service delivery that recognizes the many different backgrounds, abilities and needs in the community.

Brandon City Council's continued collaboration with arms-length groups such as the Age Friendly Committee, the Poverty Committee, the Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples' Council, the City of Brandon Accessibility Working Group, the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation, and the newly-established Brandon Bear Clan, have accomplished many things, including:

- Partnering with the Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples' Council to develop a Memorandum of Understanding on Aboriginal Economic Success and develop an Aboriginal Economic Strategic Plan to improve Aboriginal education, labour market participation, and the availability of business initiatives, and to establish long-term collaborative actions to address existing education and employment gaps;
- The development and delivery of in-depth training on Indigenous Awareness and Negotiations and educational materials on the growing viability of First Nations Urban Development Areas in Canada;
- Leveraging resources available within the Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation to deliver programming within the City of Brandon Affordable Housing Strategy;
- The creation of a multi-pronged Accessibility Plan to ensure the City of Brandon's compliance with The Accessibility for Manitobans Act;
- Continued work by the City of Brandon Poverty Committee to develop a Food Policy Council and a Social Planning Council.

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

For many years, the City of Brandon's core mission statement has focused on improving safety, health, economic security and quality of life for its residents. Each year, the cost of delivering these aspects to the community increases and the municipality must respond strategically to ensure sustainable service delivery and long-term quality of life in Brandon.

Brandon City Council continues to give careful consideration to the annual budgeting process and ensure best value for tax dollar by:

- Approving modest tax increases at or below the rate of inflation in three consecutive budget years (0.43% in 2015, 0.26% in 2016, 0.97% in 2017);
- Implementing a three-pronged approach to financial stewardship by focusing on expense management controls, alternative revenue opportunities, and the use of lifecycle costing and asset management tools.