

WMR Growth Management
and Servicing Plan – Plan20-50

December 2019 – February 2020 Consultation Summary Report

WHAT WAS HEARD

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This report summarizes the input captured through a series of public consultation workshops held in February 2020. The data collected by Blueprint at these workshops was coded and analyzed to identify key themes, and these findings are reflected here. Other findings from one-on-one meetings are not captured in this report.

Part 1:

Consultation Summary

Background

In 2019, the Winnipeg Metro Region (WMR) was mandated by the Province of Manitoba to develop a long-term plan to coordinate land use, service delivery, economic development and infrastructure in the Manitoba's capital region. This plan, called Plan20-50, is to be completed by early 2021 for provincial approval. In 2019, the WMR was named a regional partner for economic growth by the Province of Manitoba.

Plan20-50 will include policies to enhance cooperation and align development and servicing plans with regional objectives.

Engagement objectives

Plan development began with an initial period of consultation and data gathering. This pre-planning and engagement was an essential step to set the stage for the next phases of plan development. The objectives of this period of engagement were:

- To build awareness and understanding of the mandate WMR was given to create a Regional Growth Management and Servicing Plan, including what policy areas it may contain and what it will entail;
- To gather perspectives on shared and unique issues, challenges for the WMR and priorities to drive positive change;
- To gather input on operational considerations and how to make the plan work “on the ground”; and
- To identify where there are gaps in the data: what new or up-to-date information is needed to develop the policies that will best serve the capital region.

Approach

Early on, several WMR board members and municipal representatives agreed to act as advisors to the consultation process (list included in Appendix D.) The following guiding principles for the process were developed based on the insights of the advisors and the International Association of Public Participation Core Values.

Guiding principle	How it shaped consultation
Inclusive process	Process designed to reach those affected by, and with influence over, aspects of the regional plan.
Accessible	Process designed to be flexible, with multiple ways to participate.
Meaningful information	Process includes examples of plan elements to increase understanding of what a regional plan is and what policies look like in other jurisdictions.
Safe, respectful space	Workshop guidelines enforce respectful dialogue.
Focus on policy and practical aspects of the plan	Process ensured dedicated time with senior administrators to gather input and questions about how the regional plan will work “on the ground.”
Transparent process	Process included reporting on what was heard from stakeholders and how it was considered in the regional plan, along with opportunities for iterative feedback as the plan is developed and before it is finalized.

Activity

Consultation began in December 2019 with a half-day with the WMR board. In February 2020, seven sessions were conducted with a broad stakeholder base, including representatives from municipalities, Indigenous groups, economic development, social services, industry, environmental interest groups, construction and associations to gather data and perspectives to consider in the development of the plan. There was a high level of interest and participation in the consultations, with more than 200 participants attending workshops.

Each workshop was professionally facilitated, with exercises designed to solicit maximum input from participants in the time allotted. Participants were asked to provide input on the current and future situation in the capital region. They reviewed the proposed policy areas to be developed in the regional plan via facilitated roundtable sessions, large group debriefs, written comments and sticky note exercises.

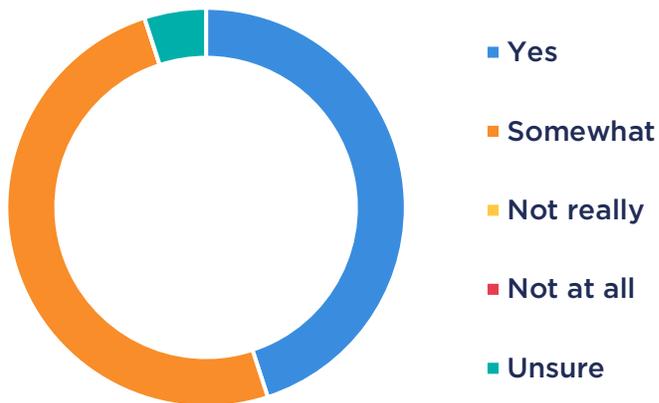
Session Day	Time	Group	Participation
December 6	8:30-12:00	Winnipeg Metropolitan Region Board	23
February 3	8:30-12:00	Municipal Councils, Planners, Economic Development Officers and Chief Administration Officers	35
February 3	1:30-3:30	Social and Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations	24
February 4	8:30-12:00	Municipal Councils, Planners, Economic Development Officers and Chief Administration Officers	27
February 4	1:30-3:30	Developers, Planners, Construction, Professional Associations	41
February 5	8:30-12:00	Municipal Councils, Planners, Economic Development Officers	29
February 5	1:30-3:30	Economic Development Influencers	33
February 7	9:00-11:30	City of Winnipeg Senior Administration	27
Total Phase 1 workshop attendance			239

Participant feedback

At the conclusion of each workshop, participants were asked to complete a feedback form to allow facilitators to make any adjustments in advance of the next workshop.

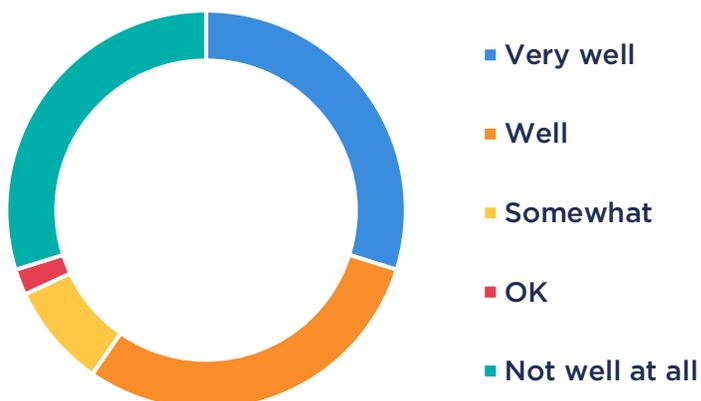
When asked:

Did you receive the information you were looking for?



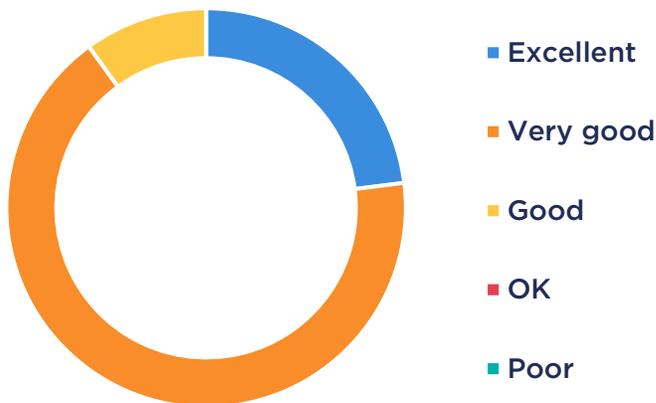
Over 80% of respondents indicated "yes" or "somewhat."

How well did you feel you were able to participate? (scale 1-5)



85% of respondents selected "well" or "very well."

Overall, how would you rate the session overall? (scale 1-5)



84% of participants ranked the session “very good” or “excellent.”

Key themes and how they are being considered in the plan

In many instances, we heard the same comments across all the workshops. For example, water, transportation and infrastructure (including land-use development) are critically important to everyone, and how we plan for and pay for these assets is a recognized challenge. All recorded comments from workshops were digitized and analyzed to arrive at overall common themes. These are outlined below.

Common themes that emerged in the majority of sessions	How they are being considered as the regional plan is developed
Meaningful collaborations between levels of government across all municipalities within the region are critically important.	Creating a regional plan will provide a framework for future collaboration across the capital region.
The lack of consistency in planning processes in municipalities across the WMR is a challenge.	Up-to-date data is being gathered across the region to understand how planning processes differ and to create baseline data measurement across the region.

<p>There is a desire to see a consistent standard of decision making across all municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg.</p>	<p>A regional plan will create a transparent framework for decision making across the capital region.</p>
<p>The autonomy of municipalities is important and must be balanced with provincial processes.</p>	<p>Successful capital regions respect individual municipalities' autonomy while creating a clear, consistent framework to support the success of all regional members.</p>
<p>Priorities of urban and rural municipalities may differ or be contradictory.</p>	<p>A regional approach will identify and address differing priorities in a balanced manner.</p>
<p>The WMR requires a new approach to planning and development in order to be strategic and attract investment.</p>	<p>A regional approach will allow the WMR to gather data and create and maintain an economic dashboard, to market the region as an attractive, investment-ready place to do business.</p>
<p>There is a desire for a better understanding of the shared benefits/shared risks of supporting a shared growth plan.</p>	<p>Recommendations for how best to do this will be considered by reviewing other successful jurisdictions and via the engagement of experts in this field.</p>
<p>There is a need to develop public transit options and transit infrastructure across the region.</p>	<p>Planning for connected transportation to and from communities within the region and building infrastructure for future use will support growth, including job development, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.</p>

<p>There is a need to improve Internet availability and connectivity across the region.</p>	<p>Accessible and reliable Internet connectivity across the region is a priority to ensure all communities have access to this critical economic enabling infrastructure.</p>
<p>There is a need to look at the regulatory framework across the region and how it varies from municipality to municipality.</p>	<p>Data will be collected across the region to help planners understand where there are regulatory challenges and best practices that can be considered in Plan20-50.</p>
<p>Sustained and reliable funding (in new dollars) from provincial and federal governments is essential to enact growth management and servicing planning across the region if it is to succeed. This cannot just be “words on a page.”</p>	<p>A review of current funding and options will be developed to support decision making in the best interest of the region. This review will provide analysis as to where benefits can be achieved.</p>
<p>There is a need for coordinated and transparent land-use planning policies across the region.</p>	<p>An inventory of best practices will be compiled during policy development.</p>
<p>There are widespread issues with water and sewer capacity and treatment, including the cost of infrastructure, regulations and rates.</p>	<p>An inventory of water/sewer capacity and infrastructure will be done to ensure that up-to-date data informs the regional plan approach.</p>

Themes and ideas specific to each session are included in Part 2: Consultation Breakdown.

Part 2:

Consultation Breakdown

What was heard

Themes and ideas specific to each consultation session are outlined in this section. All recorded comments from workshops, including table discussion notes, sticky notes used in policy area exercise, group debriefs, feedback forms and survey results, were digitized, coded and sorted for analysis and reporting. The resulting database—with detailed input on challenges, opportunities for the region, new or emerging best practices for regional collaboration—and this report summarizing key themes by consultation were provided to the planning team for consideration as they develop the plan.

WMR board session

WMR board members attended a facilitated workshop in December 2019 to share opportunities, challenges, risks and priorities for their municipalities and the metro region. The exercise allowed the group to identify similarities and differences across different jurisdictions, including:

- Water and watershed protection must be managed;
- Differences in land patterns between rural and urban areas that spur different needs, requirements and objectives;
- Unpredictable provincial funding for municipalities in the region;
- An interest in managing growth in a sustainable way;
- An interest in meeting ageing-in-place housing challenges;
- An interest in protecting quality agricultural land;
- The challenge of addressing climate change;
- The task of managing solid waste;
- The challenges of funding infrastructure improvements; and
- The importance of balancing local autonomy with regional planning.

Proposed draft policy areas to be included in the plan were presented to the WMR board. Members were given time to review the draft policy in pairs, discuss their impressions and ideas, and critique each policy area. Items deemed missing or insufficiently addressed by the board in the proposed policy tiers include:

- Revenue and cost-sharing;
- Emergency measures services;
- Operational/administrative implications;
- Labour and jobs;
- Local food production and food security;
- Alternative sources of energy;
- Assisted-living considerations;
- Medical services;
- Recreation;
- A look to tomorrow's technology; and
- Agricultural production emphasis.

The input provided by the WMR board in the preliminary consultation workshop was used to inform planning for the broader consultations scheduled in February 2020.

Municipal sessions

Representatives that included elected officials, chief administration officers (CAOs), stakeholders and economic development officers from the 18 capital region municipalities were invited to attend one of six consultation workshops the week of February 3–6, 2020. The workshops were designed to introduce the Plan20-50 process, discuss specific challenges and opportunities within municipalities, and seek input on proposed Plan20-50 policy areas. The following takeaways emerged from these sessions.

Infrastructure: Infrastructure (internet, construction and maintenance of roads, pipes and so on) is top of mind throughout the capital region. Infrastructure requires adequate resources to plan, build and maintain throughout its life cycle. For example, the capacity and need for water/sewer hook-ups differ across the region; however, the importance of water/sewer capacity and the impact of regulation is unified across the region.

Population density and housing: There are diverse opinions on what communities should look like (types of housing, density etc.), and density must be coordinated in order to manage the required infrastructure. There is a need for ageing-in-place housing options in many municipalities; people want to stay in their communities.

Land use: How land is used as a result of zoning, cost and proximity to services is creating a hodgepodge of land use across the region. The inconsistency in approaches to land-use planning was identified as an impediment to economic growth in the region. In addition, Manitoba's agriculture sector is a key economic driver in the province, and judicious preservation of land suitable for agriculture production is essential.

“Aging infrastructure roads, sewer lines and water lines are challenges.”

“Economic challenge of residential tax base is not sustainable.”

“Land use is not diverse enough, can accommodate light industrial but not commercial.”

“People want neighbourhoods, not subdivisions.”

Transportation: Improved public transportation networks to move people from region to region are essential in order to access employment and schools and to support quality of life in communities across the region.

Climate change mitigation: There was a broad consensus that planning for new or existing development of any kind must take climate change into account. Tools to mitigate climate impacts for residential, commercial, agricultural and industrial stakeholders are essential.

Sustainability: Business planning cycles across the region should support sustainability. There is a role for coordinated procurement and shared servicing to assist with lowering costs.

Shared risk and reward: Shared risk and reward was raised often and must be addressed as the plan is developed. What shared risk and reward actually look like for municipalities in a regional model was one concern that was shared by all stakeholders.

CAO debriefs

A separate debrief was held for municipal CAOs following each of the morning sessions on February 3, 4 and 5 to seek specific feedback on the challenges and opportunities regarding the implementation of a regional plan.

Budget: Budget constraints are real in every municipality. Costs are increasing while funds are decreasing, and this reality makes investment in infrastructure, climate change resiliency, servicing and ageing in place (amongst other things) a real challenge.

Funding model: The costs and benefits of a formal metropolitan region must be shared in a way that is fair to all. Continued advocacy for new provincial and federal funding will be crucial for a regional plan to be successful. There is optimism that the process of developing Plan20-50 will help make the case.

“Transit and interconnectivity improvements are a critical driver (of growth) of complete communities.”

“Focus on adaptation for climate change.”

“Who is paying to manage a coordinated approach? Who will do it?”

“What works for one municipality might not work for the other.”

Collaboration: The CAOs also emphasized the need for structure and clarity if a new regional plan is going to be applied and administrated evenly: Who is planning what? How will individual municipal plans fit into the framework of a regional plan?

“Cost-sharing has a precedent, but revenue sharing is a huge selling point for the average taxpayer.”

Land-use planning: It was emphasized that preserving agricultural land is a major motivator to achieve better consistency in applying regulations with respect to land use.

“Help us preserve farmland.”

City of Winnipeg senior management

Senior management staff from across all City of Winnipeg departments, including the Office of the CAO, were invited to attend a consultation workshop on February 7. The workshop was designed to introduce the Plan20-50 process within the context of existing City of Winnipeg policies, such as Our Winnipeg and the Transportation masterplan, etc., and to seek input on proposed policy areas. The City of Winnipeg is home to almost 90% of the capital region population. The 27 members of senior management who attended the session provided the following takeaways.

Funding: When City of Winnipeg senior management met, their concerns focused on funding models, the limits of city resources extending outside of the perimeter, transportation and sustainability. The pressure on the city’s budget to maintain services within the city limits is already a challenge.

Shared risk: The costs and benefits that result from the creation of a formal metropolitan planning region must be shared in a way that is fair to all. New funding (which means a new funding model) from other levels of government will be essential if the region, including the City of Winnipeg, is going to be expected to coordinate planning and regulatory support and programming.

Demand: There is concern at the City of Winnipeg about increasing competition coming from outside of the city for city services and programs.

Development outside of Winnipeg’s perimeter affects demand on city services and infrastructure, but the city administration and elected officials have no agency to manage this demand. Any future policy, e.g. a regional plan, must ensure that *“...the standards of development are the same across the region.”*

Transportation: Planners see the value of regional transportation networks (transit and road infrastructure and programming), but the cost to provide this inside and outside of the perimeter makes getting traction challenging.

Climate Change: It was noted during the session that the City of Winnipeg has a newly established Office of Sustainability that oversees how the city’s Climate Action Plan is interwoven in policy development and implementation across departments.

Land use: Coordinated planning would benefit the entire capital region.

Environmental and social stakeholders

Representatives from environmental, social and non-governmental organizations were invited to a consultation workshop on February 3. The workshop was designed to introduce the Plan20-50 process, discuss specific challenges and opportunities within municipalities, and seek input on proposed Plan20-50 policy areas. The following takeaways emerged from the session.

“Need ...sustainable funding for service requirements.”

“We are not self-sufficient as a region if we don’t meet our greenhouse gas targets etc. We have to make the targets real in the context of all policies.”

“Standards of development are the same across the region.”

Climate and the Economy: Public transportation, building codes and land-use planning all touch on issues of both climate and the economy. Public transportation and active transportation networks are essential for quality of life (affordability and ability to get to employment/school/home) and are proven to combat climate change. The implementation of a green building code and better coordination of land-use planning across the region would help offset the cost of climate change and lower capital and operating costs over the long term.

Water: Water is a critical asset and must be managed in a coordinated and balanced way regardless of what “kind” of water it is. Land drainage, watershed districts, water and sewer connections and capacity, drinking water, water levels impacted by climate change and so on all require an integrated approach to resource management, infrastructure investment and land-use planning.

“Climate change is a huge concern with our young people. The plan will have to be based on science.”

“Net zero carbon future must be considered.”

Funding: Some participants highlighted that there are issues across the region that revolve around money and that, in some cases, investment is determined by the cheaper development option versus the right development option.

Economic equality: Current issues around poverty, lack of access to food security, affordable housing, climate change and access to opportunity should be considered in developing any new plan.

Economic development stakeholders

Representatives from a diverse array of economic development agencies and interests across the capital region were invited to a consultation workshop on February 5. The workshop was designed to introduce the Plan20-50 process, discuss specific challenges and opportunities within municipalities, and seek input on proposed Plan20-50 policy areas. The following takeaways emerged from the session.

Collaboration: There is resistance to industrial growth, but with renewable power in Manitoba, there is potential to be a leader and diversify industry. However, collaboration is essential to compete globally.

“Transit and transportation are first.”

“Shared services agreements should be rewarded.”

Consistency: The 18 municipalities that make up the capital planning region must demonstrate that there are clear and supported policies for smart (targeted) growth and servicing. In addition, member municipalities need to be realistic about what services can be supported in light of rural depopulation and enforcement of consistent standards for delivery (regulations).

“We all benefit from stronger sense of identity, collective sense of direction.”

“Equalization across regions is a good thing.”

Transportation: Transportation is a key component with respect to climate change mitigation and economic development. Improved public transportation, active transportation networks and efficient transportation networks are needed in the face of climate change, including highway and ring road options for the movement of goods. In addition, public transportation networks are essential to move people from region to region. Right now, there are a lot of people living and working in opposite directions and not using the services in their own communities.

Property and development stakeholders

Representatives from construction, property development and land-use planning sectors across the capital region were invited to a consultation workshop on February 6. The workshop was designed to introduce the Plan20-50 process, discuss specific challenges and opportunities within municipalities, and seek input on proposed Plan20-50 policy areas. The following takeaways emerged from the session.

“Unsustainable system, we need to work together to make this plan work.”

“Working on 75 little projects instead of working on 5 big important well thought out projects.”

Collaboration: There is a strong desire to see decision makers at every level of government collaborate and for regulations—from land-use zoning to water and sewer rates—to be consistently applied *and communicated* across the region. Efficient planning and timelines are difficult to achieve under the current system.

Land-use planning: The City of Winnipeg’s land-use planning process is also inconsistently managed and drives development in areas that should be left as agricultural land. It would be beneficial to de-emphasize boundaries and focus more on a regional basis when planning. It is important to identify and recognize unique nodes throughout the region (residential; transportation, including active transportation; watershed districts; and so on). It is also important to understand that all communities are different and that these differences should be acknowledged.

Indigenous representation: One omission to be addressed that was identified by group members is that often Indigenous representatives are not asked to join the planning table early in the process—and yet, many have the capital to invest across the region. There are structural barriers to Indigenous participation that must be addressed to improve coordination and partnerships.

“Build in traditional knowledge to the plan.”

“Not everyone wants the same thing...”

Online form submissions

The original invitation to the workshops invited all invitees to submit their input online at any time. The following are verbatim comments provided to the WMR.

“The lack of understanding of what our region is and the economic imbalance that has been emerging in the last 4-5 years.”

“Working together with regional partners to help one another secure funding concerns about maintain unique identity of municipalities, local priorities while working as a region.”

“Great opportunities to address shared concerns and find opportunities for mutually beneficial economic growth.”

“Lack of Indigenous treaty land business development areas for economic development.”

“Test-some big challenges.”

“Start with a fundamental understanding of what this region is. Stop trying to mimic other regions.”

“Our municipality is experiencing a real period of growth. We have been successful in this growth because we have maintained input into our planning process at the local level, have minimal red tape and have built positive relationships with developers and businesses.”

“Advocating for treaty land selection to settle outstanding claims.”

“Well planned development and growth in Manitoba that is not only based on collaboration with our regional partners but also the unique needs of our communities.”

“The Indigenous population is the largest of any province or territory and is growing the fastest. We need to support and prepare those interests.”

“Keeping employment lands close to residential. Increased density while still maintaining a full range of options. The use of cost benefit analysis that measures economic, environmental, and social costs and benefits. Rationalizing boundaries to infrastructure capacities and complete communities.”

“The best practices of municipalities that have been successful in attracting growth and reducing red tape, the importance of having an efficient and responsive planning process that takes into consideration innovative ideas to help promote development and growth.”

Written submissions

One written submission was received. Please see Appendix C.

Conclusion

In addition to the Plan20-50 consultation workshops, WMR staff met with organizations, government officials and individuals representing a broad spectrum of interests to provide briefings on the Plan20-50 process and to solicit input. A list of these individuals and organizations is included in Appendix A.

All of the data collected and collated throughout the pre-planning phase has been provided to the planning consultants in order to identify gaps and inform the next phase of research. Phase 1 of targeted information gathering, including data collection on population and employment forecasting, water and sewer capacity, and current land-use patterns in the capital region, is now underway.

Appendices

Appendix A

Stakeholder data

<https://20to50.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Appendix-A-stakeholder-data-protected.xlsx>

Appendix B

Feedback forms

<https://20to50.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Appendix-B-feedback-forms.pdf>

Appendix C

MHCA submission May 2020

<https://20to50.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Appendix-C-MHCA-submission-May2020.pdf>

Appendix D

List of consultation advisors

At the end of November, the following members of the WMR board agreed to advise on the consultation design and provide feedback to Blueprint.

1. John Orlikow
2. Mayor Cheryl Christian
3. Mayor Clive Hinds
4. Larry Wandowich