

CITY PLANNING
AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN WINNIPEG:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE
RESIDENTS' ADVISORY GROUP PROVISIONS OF THE
CITY OF WINNIPEG ACT

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BY
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the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of

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INTRODUCTION

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PURPOSE

This thesis investigates the role of citizen participation in local government. Specifically, it analyses the role of the Residents' Advisory Groups in Winnipeg's local government. The Residents' Advisory Groups, along with the Community Committees, were intended to be the vehicle that enhanced citizen participation in the local government. The Residents' Advisory Groups, however, have not been successful in involving citizens in the local government process. They remain in operation, but, for the most part, they are inactive. The members of the Residents' Advisory Groups are thoroughly frustrated because they do not have anything of importance to do. This study will, therefore, analyse and evaluate the intent of The City of Winnipeg Act's citizen participation provisions or more specifically the performance of the Community Committees and the Residents' Advisory Groups, in order to determine the cause of the Residents' Advisory Groups' ineffectiveness, and will draw conclusions about citizen participation based on that analysis.

CITY PLANNING AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION DEFINED

It is important to the thesis to have a clear understanding of the meaning of the terms "city planning", and "citizen participation". They are, therefore, defined as follows.

City planning refers to the formulation and implementation of policy that is undertaken to guide the future development of the city. The planner of the city is the City Council, for it is the function of government to make and carry out policy.

Citizen participation refers to the involvement of citizens in City Council's policy development activities.

METHODOLOGY

Chapter One provides a background to the establishment of The City of Winnipeg Act. The intent of the legislative reform is presented and the Act's emphasis on improving citizen participation is outlined. The Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure is then introduced. Its role in planning is outlined.

Chapter Two, in turn, analyses the performance of the Residents' Advisory Groups in enhancing citizen participation in local government. This was undertaken through: a review of past studies on the subject of Residents' Advisory Groups; a questionnaire distributed to current Residents' Advisory Group members; examination of Residents' Advisory Groups' minutes of meetings; interviews with past and present Residents' Advisory Group members, City Councillors, academics and City of Winnipeg Department of Environmental Planning staff members; and personal observations resulting from four years of membership in the Assiniboine Park-Fort Garry Residents' Advisory Group.

The cause of the Residents' Advisory Groups' ineffectiveness in involving citizens in government policy development is the subject of Chapter Three.

Chapter Four examines the lack of policy-making undertaken by the Winnipeg government. It assesses City Council's performance in its intended role as the "planner of the city". The chapter concludes with an analysis of the role of the Residents' Advisory Groups in Winnipeg's local government.

Finally, chapter five offers some concluding remarks and recommendations on the role of citizen participation in local government.

CHAPTER ONE
THE CITY OF WINNIPEG ACT

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SYNOPSIS

Chapter one consists of two segments. Part A provides a background to the establishment of The City of Winnipeg Act (the Act) and the "Unicity" Government. The factors which initiated the legislative reform are presented. The Act's intended updating of city government, of creating a new form of local government more capable of meeting contemporary urban needs, is also discussed.

Part B outlines the Act's emphasis on improving citizen access and participation. The provisions of the Act intended to enhance citizen participation, namely the Community Committee - Residents' Advisory Group structure, are outlined. The Act's new planning process with its stress on participation is also presented.

A: BACKGROUND TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CITY OF WINNIPEG ACT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN WINNIPEG PRIOR TO UNICITY

Up until the 1950's the structure of local government in Greater Winnipeg had never really been perceived as inadequate. Before 1945 fourteen municipalities governed in the Greater Winnipeg area. For the most part these municipalities co-existed amicably, experiencing very few governmental problems. When a servicing problem did arise requiring the necessary cooperation between municipalities, a single-purpose inter-municipal board or commission was established. By the 1950's there existed the Greater Winnipeg Water District (1913); the Mosquito

Abatement Commission (1927); The Greater Winnipeg Sanitary District (1935); the St. James-Winnipeg Airport Commission (1937); the Metropolitan Planning Commission (1949); the Metropolitan Civil Defense Board (1951); and the Greater Winnipeg Transit Commission (1953) as well as a number of other special boards and authorities.¹

In the post-war period, due to rapid development taking place in many of the municipalities, concern grew over the ability of these single-purpose bodies to provide and maintain the ever-increasing requirement for new and more extensive services. There was a widespread feeling amongst the municipalities and at the provincial level of the need for better inter-municipal cooperation and coordination beyond what the boards and commissions could offer. This local government concern resulted in a special Metropolitan Subcommittee of the Joint Provincial-Municipal Relations Committee being established in 1951 to study the matter of the organization of local government services in the Greater Winnipeg area. In late 1952, the Subcommittee reported and made the recommendation of establishing a single Metropolitan Board to replace all existing Metropolitan Boards or Commissions. The Subcommittee's recommendation was not one upon which there was action although the participating municipalities did decide that there was a need for a much more comprehensive investigation of the so-called "metropolitan problem" by a smaller commission with broader terms of reference.² The result was the establishment in 1955 of a new commission called The Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission.

In 1959 The Greater Winnipeg Investigating Commission, after an extensive investigation, submitted its report. The report contained

many far-reaching recommendations for municipal reorganization. It concluded that long-term planning for the Greater Winnipeg area was impossible under the existing system and that an area-wide metropolitan government was necessary. In 1960, The Metropolitan Winnipeg Act was introduced into the Manitoba Legislature and later adopted.

The Metropolitan Winnipeg Act created a two-tier system of government (a metropolitan level and an area municipality level) and allocated certain responsibilities to each level.³ The metropolitan level (The Metropolitan Corporation or "Metro") was assigned the responsibility of governing those services which were "metropolitan in character".⁴ These services included assessment of property for tax purposes, planning, zoning and building controls, water supply and wholesale distribution within the metropolitan area, sewage and land drainage, major streets and bridges, public transportation, major parks and recreation areas, civil defense and disaster and mosquito abatement. The area municipalities retained largely local functions such as local roads, local sewage collection, local water distribution, local parks and other functions of this nature.

Evaluations of the Metropolitan Government, 1960-1971, note Metro's success in the provision and maintenance of municipal services. Administratively Metro was successful in improving Greater Winnipeg's physical infrastructure. Metro was able to plan and complete roads, bridges, parks and other public works. Part of the success of Metro in providing services must be attributed to the fact that the capacity and condition of all of the area-wide service systems had fallen so far behind the needs of the growing metropolitan population that simply bringing them up to a merely acceptable level represented a major achievement.⁵

As successful as Metro was administratively so was it unsuccessful politically. Almost from its inception in 1960, Metro suffered criticism and opposition from the Mayor and City Council of Winnipeg and the suburban municipalities. There was intense resentment among the members of the area councils toward the imposition upon them of a level of government for which they had not asked, on which they had no representation, for which they had to raise the financing and which had taken over an important part of the authority which they had previously enjoyed.⁶

In response to the political conflict and subsequent problems created by the formation of Metro, the Province commissioned, in the 1960's, a number of studies to find a solution to the local government controversy. The 1964 Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg Review Commission, headed by Lorne R. Cumming, endorsed Metro and the two-tier system of government despite the problems being voiced by the City of Winnipeg and the suburban municipalities. The 1966 Local Government Boundaries Commission did not report until late 1970, by which time a new provincial government was in power. The local government boundaries commission report recommended a continuation of the two-tiered system of government but with area municipal representation on a strengthened metro government. The New Democratic Party (NDP) government did not act on the Local Government Boundaries Commission report but, rather, proceeded with research of its own. Shortly thereafter the government's views concerning the structure of local government in the Greater Winnipeg area were presented in the White Paper - Proposals for Urban Reorganization in the Greater Winnipeg Area.

The NDP government saw the inability of the various local governments to cooperate, particularly the obvious lack of cooperation between the two most important local governments, as the main factor necessitating local government reform. As Meyer Brownstone, the principal consultant to the NDP government's Cabinet Committee on Urban Affairs reflected:

"The initiating factors were a result of the decade-long conflict between the area municipalities and Metro and more particularly, between the latter and Mayor Juba.

...The Provincial Government was annoyed with the bickering between Metro and the City of Winnipeg and was determined to resolve the situation."⁷

The NDP government came to believe that a one-tier form of government was the best equipped to solve the Metro problems and increase local government efficiency. This view was put rather succinctly at the time by Earl Levin, a consultant to the provincial Cabinet Committee on Urban Affairs, in a research paper entitled "The Structure of Government for Metro Winnipeg":

"The Metro experience proved an important lesson; in matters of government the effective discharge of responsibilities cannot be made dependent upon cooperation among autonomous bodies of equal status but must be ensured through the clear allocation of responsibilities and power to one specific authority. If power is divided or shared among a number of government authorities the result must inevitably be confusion and conflict...it is fragmentation of responsibility and the authority to act which lies at the heart of the Metro dilemma."⁸

THE WHITE PAPER

On June 25, 1969 an NDP government was elected for the first time in the history of Manitoba. The NDP were committed to resolving urban

problems and, according to party policy, were, for the most part, in favour of amalgamation. Upon completing their review of Winnipeg's system of local government, the NDP published, in 1971, its White Paper - Proposals for Urban Reorganization in the Greater Winnipeg Area. The White Paper outlined the problems in the existing system of municipal government, the need to rectify those problems and provided some innovative proposals for doing so.

It outlined the following problems and needs of the Greater Winnipeg area:

- "(1) The need for effective planning and development of the region as a whole;
- (2) The problem of fragmented authority. Fragmented authority prevents important coordinated decision-making from being made;
- (3) The problem of the wide disparity in the quality and level of services between one municipality and another;
- (4) The inequitable exploitation of the tax base due to the fact that tax-revenue producing industries locate in one community while their workforce may come from other municipalities, resulting in the latter being unable to afford the services and programs their citizens want and need;
- (5) The inequitable concentration of social problems and hence the costs of social programs in the core area of Greater Winnipeg;
- (6) The concentration of many of Greater Winnipeg's cultural, recreational and entertainment facilities in the core area, with the resulting costs being inequitably borne by the core area;
- (7) The problem of the complex and confusing two-tier system of government that inhibits the citizens of Greater Winnipeg from determining those responsible for decision-making. The inevitable result is that the citizen begins to feel frustrated, alienated and hence withdrawn from active participation in the community."⁹

The White Paper summarized the problems confronting Greater Winnipeg as stemming from three main roots: fragmented authority; segmented financial capacity; and lack of citizen involvement. It

proposed to overcome these difficulties, firstly, through the unification of municipal government which would provide a single centralized authority and a single centralized financial capacity and, secondly, through the creation of a system of Community Committees which, it was hoped, would provide a vehicle for effective citizen participation.¹⁰

The recommended new government structure combined administrative centralization with political decentralization. The White Paper described the concept in this way:

"It is the view of this Government that all major services should be unified, but that local government itself - the political processes of local government - must at the same time be decentralized and, through a proposed system of Community Committees, be brought closer to the people.

We are convinced that these must be parallel processes; and that one cannot succeed without the other.

We therefore propose to proceed with the unification of local services under a single administration and the establishment of a system of Community Committees..."¹¹

The approach to local government reform as outlined in the White Paper included new ideas and concepts never before contemplated in Canadian municipal government. The inclusion of features such as Community Committees represented a recognition of the need for local government to move beyond its traditional role - to move toward becoming a more active and responsive form of government.

THE EVOLVING ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Significant features of Unicity were the philosophy and objectives of local government on which it was based. Unicity was the result of a conscious attempt to update local government from its traditional role to one more applicable to Canada's new urban era.

Traditionally, local governments have been largely concerned with "housekeeping" matters which were administrative in nature. The role of the traditional housekeeping administrative form of local government consisted of the provision and maintenance of municipal services such as roads, water supply, sewage collection and disposal, the provision of protective services, etc.¹²

The traditional form of local government was developed to meet the needs of what can be described as Canada's pre-urban era - an era of small towns and cities with stable populations. It is understandable, then, that traditional local government was limited in its responsibilities. It was designed to provide local services to small centres.

Traditional local councils performed somewhat of a trusteeship role. Essentially, the trusteeship role involved the provision of community services as economically and efficiently as possible. The responsibility of the local council was to decide the extent of the range of community services to be provided, with due regard for the annual levy on those who paid property taxes to support them.¹³ The traditional local government's approach to decision-making was non-partisan and based, all too frequently, on financial and technical considerations.¹⁴

Traditional local government functioned with little difficulty up until the period of rapid urbanization following World War II. For the first half of the twentieth century urbanization occurred in Canada but the pace was very moderate compared to the rate experienced between 1951 and 1971.

"In the period 1951 - 1971 Canada expanded its urban population at a rate of more than 3,000,000 persons per decade, or three times the rate of expansion that had prevailed for the first half of the century. What is even more revealing is the fact that by 1971 there were 25 cities which had populations exceeding 100,000 (14 of them exceeding 200,000), compared to only 11 in that category in 1951."¹⁵

As cities grew larger and more rapidly in the decades following the war, they generated a host of new problems and issues. The traditional housekeeping form of local government was not equipped to govern the emerging dynamic urban centres. Due to the new growth pressures, Canadian local governments found themselves faced with greatly increased traditional responsibilities and a large number of new responsibilities not even contemplated at the time the municipal system was established.¹⁶ The concerns of city residents extended beyond the provision of essential community services. Local government was being called upon to become involved in such matters as the social dislocation caused by urban development, the provision of public housing, the protection of city neighbourhoods, the impact of city development on the quality of urban life, and the pursuit of social and economic justice.¹⁷ Public opinion was sharply divided on these new urban issues. Local government decision-making needed to reflect an awareness of alternatives and their consequences with respect to each issue. It was thus felt local government should become more political by encouraging debate and meaningful citizen expression. The non-partisanship of traditional local government was no longer adequate as city residents sought to influence the quality of urban life and to develop a tolerable city environment.¹⁸ A need had developed for local government to be a more representative, responsive body.

The City of Winnipeg Act attempted to provide local government with the means of taking on this expanded new role. As the chief consultant to the provincial government's Cabinet Committee on Urban Affairs noted:

"The new Act was an attempt to update city government and remove it from the traditional preoccupation with activities of a housekeeping nature. To accomplish this, the Act provided for innovative features that enhanced representation, facilitated participation, and provided for a cohesive management structure to support the new political elements."¹⁹

The City of Winnipeg Act attempted to design a politically minded, policy-making form of government. Features of the Act important in the creation of a politicized, policy-making form of government were the provision of greater representation and enhanced citizen participation. (These features of the Act will be discussed later in this chapter.) The entire political and administrative structure of the new government was designed specifically to encourage the development of a policy-making form of government as well.

The council was organized into three standing committees - Environment, Finance, and Works and Operations. Later a fourth, Recreation and Social Services, was added. There was also provision for an Executive Policy Committee. The Act set the main responsibilities of the standing committees as the formulation of policy recommendations and the evaluation of policy implementation by the administration.²⁰ The policy matters initiated by the standing committees would advance to the Executive Policy Committee before reaching City Council. The Executive Policy Committee had the responsibility of overall policy formulation and specifically the coordination of policy proposals emanating from the standing committees.

The city administration was organized in a similar fashion to the council and its committees. Each city department was headed by a commissioner who was responsible for coordinating the activities of the department. The department commissioners and a chief commissioner made up the Board of Commissioners. The Board was to consider and make recommendations to the Executive Policy Committee on policy matters and on all matters concerning the carrying out of the administration of the government of the city.²¹

The Act provided that the new Council would focus mainly on policy decision-making. The Council was granted substantial powers of delegation so that it could refer matters of detail to either the administration or standing committees and thus leave Council's agenda free to discuss important policy issues.²² Under the new Act it was anticipated that Council, when meeting as a whole, would be expected to act more as a deliberate and legislative body concerned largely with issues and policies rather than administrative detail as was the frequent preoccupation of municipal councils in the past.²³

Also to facilitate the development of the local government's new role was an attempt to build into the new local government structure elements of the parliamentary model of government. A key provision of this model, which was proposed in The White Paper, but deleted from the legislation, was the requirement that the mayor be chosen by and from the elected members of council.²⁴ Through this process, the mayor could provide leadership on council since he had majority support and, at the same time, he would only remain in this position so long as he retained the confidence of the councillors.²⁵ The members of the Executive

Policy Committee were to be chosen in the same manner as the mayor. The Executive Policy Committee headed by the mayor was to be like a cabinet and thereby charged with the responsibility of formulating government policy. However, in the end the legislation had the mayor elected through the traditional means of an at-large election and the opportunity to develop a parliamentary system with all its attributes was lost.

B: THE CITY OF WINNIPEG ACT'S CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROVISIONS

THE ACT'S EMPHASIS ON CITIZEN ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

A significant aspect of the local government reform was the inclusion of provisions to enhance citizen access and participation. One reason for this was that at the time local government reform was being contemplated in Winnipeg the notion of greater citizen involvement was becoming more widespread and acceptable. Political theory formulated in the turbulent decade of the 1960's urged the adoption of such concepts as political decentralization and of statutory provision for citizen participation.²⁶

Also, a required component of the desired new issue-oriented, policy-making role of local government was active citizen involvement. Increased citizen involvement was required because of the many new controversial urban issues (requiring value judgements) facing urban governments.²⁷ The NDP government's commitment to developing increased citizen involvement in the new policy-oriented government is evident in the White Paper:

"If Greater Winnipeg is in fact to become a better community - a better place in which to live and work and play - it is essential that every effort be made,

not merely to improve the quality of local government, but to see to it that, in any new governmental form, the citizens of Greater Winnipeg in truth can and do have an effective say in the policies and programs which affect them."²⁸

Given the administrative centralization contemplated, a parallel process of political decentralization was considered necessary in order to ensure that participation did not suffer as a result of the consolidation efforts. This was still another reason for the emphasis on citizen involvement. The White Paper noted the occurrence of participation problems in recent local government reform efforts in some large Canadian cities. It was felt that these recent reforms made government more removed from the people. The White Paper concluded:

"In order to avoid the kind of unresponsive government experienced by citizens in large cities, and to tap the abundant energies and resources of all the diverse citizens that make up the Greater Winnipeg community, it is necessary to devise some new and different structures, ideas and techniques.

It follows logically that devising a new system of local government must involve in addition to the necessary political and administrative structure, the creation of more direct and satisfactory avenues of access by the citizen to his elected representative."²⁹

In response to the requirement of creating a more representative and responsive local government, the Unicity Government was equipped with two key features for improving citizen access and participation. The first was the creation of an unusually large council of fifty members. The increased number of elected representatives serving smaller wards was intended to provide a closer relationship between the citizens and their local government (In 1977, however, The City of Winnipeg Act was amended so that the Council was reduced from fifty to twenty-nine members, and

the number of Community Committees and Residents' Advisory Groups was cut from twelve to six.)

The second feature meant to improve citizen access and participation was the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure.

COMMUNITY COMMITTEES

The main component of The City of Winnipeg Act designed to increase citizen involvement was the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure. The Community Committees were established as local committees of Council. They were to be composed of councillors elected from the wards in that area of the city for which the Community Committee was responsible. The Community Committees as indicated in the government's White Paper were designed to be the vehicles for providing citizen involvement in the affairs of the community. They were developed to meet the following objectives:

"...of improving substantially the relationship between councillors and the individual citizen and between councillors and the community at large, and thus to enrich and make more intensive and meaningful the communication between the citizen and his elected representative;
...of creating at the local level, the sort of climate in which citizen interest, participation and active involvement can and will flourish;
...of overcoming public apathy and overcoming the now prevalent "leave-politics-to-the-politicians" sort of attitude; and
...of being the framework within which the local citizen cannot merely perceive clearly the issues affecting him, but can act forcefully and effectively in his own self-interest."³⁰

In The City of Winnipeg Act the Community Committees were allocated responsibility in three general areas. The most important responsibility assigned to the Community Committees was in the area of communication.

The Act provided that the Community Committees shall:

- "a) develop and implement techniques to maintain the closest possible communication between the City and the residents of the community, so that residents' views on policies, programs, budgets and delivery of services may be communicated to the council, the committees of council, and the board and commissions continued or created under the Act; and
- b) develop and implement techniques to provide the residents of the community with information concerning existing and potential city policies, programs and budgets so as to facilitate residents in discussing and developing views concerning these matters."³¹

Section 24 of the Act went on to stipulate that the Community Committee shall hold meetings to "consider the business of the community", "to facilitate participation by the residents of the community in the preparation of submissions concerning the annual current and capital budgets", and "to consider progress reports on the programs and projects of the city" and "to hold a Community Conference which all residents of the community shall be invited to attend and participate in discussion of city programs."³² The intentions of the provisions in Sections 23 and 24 were to facilitate public participation by ensuring that residents may communicate their views to government and to inform residents about the activities of government.

The Community Committees had two other more tangible responsibilities. One was in the area of supervision. The Act stated that each Community Committee shall "supervise employees in the delivery of services".³³ The third responsibility of the Community Committee was in the area of planning. The Community Committee was designed to be the vehicle enabling citizens to be actively involved in the planning process. The Community Committees were intended to be the focal point in the community concerning

the formulation of plans and the hearing of representations on planning and zoning matters. Details of The City of Winnipeg Act's planning process, particularly its emphasis on citizen participation, are discussed later in the chapter.

RESIDENTS' ADVISORY GROUPS

The Residents' Advisory Groups form the other half of the City of Winnipeg Act's innovative structure for enhancing citizen participation. Each Community Committee was to have a Residents' Advisory Group attached to it. Residents' Advisory Groups were to be composed of interested citizens elected at the Community Conference.

Residents' Advisory Groups are provided for, and their role and responsibilities are outlined, in Section 21 of the Act. Subsection 21(4) specifies that the role of the Residents' Advisory Group is to "advise and assist the members of the Community Committee as to the performance of their functions under the Act."³⁴

The consultants to the NDP government's Cabinet Committee on Urban Affairs designed the Residents' Advisory Group system to provide constructive citizen participation. The chief consultant stated:

"It (the Residents' Advisory Group system) is not, as alleged to encourage an adversary confrontation situation. It is rather to relate people, politicians and administrators in a positive, constructive way..."³⁵

The Residents' Advisory Groups were, essentially, to be the focal point in the community for citizen involvement. They were to act as an organizational vehicle for enhancing constructive citizen participation. The Residents' Advisory Groups, were to provide access to information and a channel for communicating and influencing local government decision-making.³⁶

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The City of Winnipeg Act introduced a new system of planning to the city. Besides attempting to provide for more effective and forceful planning, the new planning process was the focus of much of the Act's commitment to enhancing citizen participation.

The new planning process, as set out in Part XX - Environment - of The City of Winnipeg Act, contained a hierarchical approach to plan preparation by requiring the construction of three levels of comprehensive plans. These were the Greater Winnipeg Development Plan, the District Plan and the Action Area Plan. The Greater Winnipeg Development Plan was defined as a statement of the city's policy and general proposals for the use and development of land in the city (and in the additional zone) and includes measures for the improvement of the physical, social and economic environment as well as the transportation system. The District Plan was similar to the Greater Winnipeg Development Plan but it only applied to a specific district of the city. The Action Area Plan was defined as a plan for a specific area in which the city proposed comprehensive treatment in the nature of development, redevelopment, improvement, or by the establishment of a social development program; or by a combination of them both. The requirement of the preparation of three levels of comprehensive plans was a new concept to planning legislation in Canada. It was based on the premise that planning can and should be structured by legislation.³⁷ The objective of the legislation was to overcome the permissive and unstructured approach to planning. By encouraging plan-making the Act sought to convert the practise of municipal planning Winnipeg from a disjointed, ad hoc, and

reactive process into a prospective, coordinated, policy-making function.³⁸

Part XX of The City of Winnipeg Act attempted to facilitate public participation in the planning process in a number of ways. An important provision was in the area of plan formulation. The Act sought to provide the public with the opportunity to participate in the formulation of the three levels of plans. In the past the public was consulted only after the plan had been drafted. This type of planning informed rather than involved the public in planning. The new legislation, therefore, attempted to provide a framework through which the public could contribute to the formulation of plans.³⁹ This was accomplished through the Act's requiring Council to consult the Community Committee on the formulation, amendment or replacement of plans. As well, the Act required the Committee on Environment to hold public hearings on the Development Plan and District Plans at an early stage.⁴⁰ For Action Area Plans, considered to be the most important plan in terms of community control, the Act required that the public hearing be conducted by the Community Committee.⁴¹

Part XX also enhanced citizen participation by improving the public hearing process. It politicized the public hearing process and brought it down to the community level. Under the Metro legislation "minor" applications (exemptions from the zoning by-laws) never came before political representatives, but were decided by the appointed Board of Revision.⁴² The new planning process required that all applications be heard by a politically representative body - that being the local Community Committee. By holding the hearing at the Community

Committee level, the meetings were designed to be more convenient and less intimidating for the residents.⁴³

The Act also made provisions for publicizing the planning process as well as other business of the Community Committee. Subsections 25(2) and 25(3) required the Community Committee to advertise the matters to be discussed at the Community Committee meeting and to notify the residents of the community of the time, place and general subject of the Community Committee meeting.

CONCLUSION

The City of Winnipeg Act was an attempt to update city government and to remove it from the traditional preoccupation with activities of a housekeeping nature.⁴⁴ It was to create a form of local government more capable of meeting contemporary urban needs. The Act provided the necessary framework for the Unicity Government to perform the new, more substantive role of an active, policy-making form of government.

A significant feature of the new policy-making role was the requirement of citizen participation. Through the establishment of the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure the Act sought to enhance citizen participation. The Residents' Advisory Groups were to be the vehicle allowing citizens to become involved in government policy-making and decision-making.

Footnotes: Chapter One

1. The Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg Review Commission, Report and Recommendations. (Province of Manitoba, 1964), p. 4.
2. The Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg Review Commission, p. 5.
3. Committee of Review City of Winnipeg Act, Report and Recommendations, (Province of Manitoba, 1976), p. 7.
4. Committee of Review City of Winnipeg Act, p. 7.
5. Earl Levin, "City Planning as Utopian Ideology and City Government Function". Presented to the Theory II class, Department of City Planning, University of Manitoba. Winnipeg, April 11, 1984, p. 9.
6. Committee of Review City of Winnipeg Act, p. 9.
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CHAPTER TWO
RESIDENTS' ADVISORY GROUP PERFORMANCE

CHAPTER TWO
RESIDENTS' ADVISORY GROUP PERFORMANCE

SYNOPSIS

The introduction of the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure in 1971 was greeted with considerable optimism and relatively extravagant expectations by many Winnipeggers, especially local academic observers.¹ It was believed at the time that the Residents' Advisory Group would substantially improve citizen involvement in the local government process. This, however, was not to be the case. The performance of the Residents' Advisory Groups in enhancing citizen participation has since been termed a failure. This chapter documents the poor performance of the Residents' Advisory Groups.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance at the annual Community Conferences where advisors are elected has steadily declined since 1972. In 1972 there were several thousand residents in attendance at the Community Conferences. Professor Phil Wichern reported that, in 1975, there were only approximately 730 residents who attended the annual Conference and, in 1978, the attendance figures dropped lower still to approximately 430 residents.² In 1982, there were fewer than 300 residents who turned out to the annual Community Conferences. It appears citizens are becoming less interested in attending the Conferences and thus, as well, in becoming selected as resident advisors. Residents' Advisory Group personnel commented on the difficulty in recent years of attracting "new faces" out to the Conferences.

The Residents' Advisory Groups themselves have also suffered a decline in interest. The decline is felt both in terms of reduced membership and lower attendance at Residents' Advisory Group meetings. Except for the initial year or so of the Residents' Advisory Groups coming into existence they have had difficulty attracting advisors from many of the wards in the city. Only St. James-Assiniboia and Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan currently require an election to be held for the advisory positions and this is the case in only a few of their wards. The other four Residents' Advisory Groups have had a difficult time in filling the available advisory positions (usually six advisory positions per ward).

In 1972, approximately 450 residents were elected as resident advisors. In 1975, the number of advisors had dropped to around 350. As presented in Table 3.1 Residents' Advisory Group membership has continued to decline in recent years. In 1978, there were 222 advisors and by 1982 the membership dropped to a low of 156 advisors. A partial explanation of the membership decline in the Residents' Advisory Groups was the consolidation, in 1977, of twelve Community Committees and Residents' Advisory Groups into six. The 1977 amendment to The City of Winnipeg Act doubled both the geographic area and the population represented by each Community Committee and Residents' Advisory Group, effectively taking away the immediacy and familiarity with local issues that had previously been the Community Committees' and Residents' Advisory Groups' greatest strength.³

The most telling statistic of the problem of sustained interest in the Residents' Advisory Groups is the attendance figures at Residents'

TABLE 3.1

RESIDENTS' ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERSHIP
(# OF MEMBERS)

	<u>1978</u>	<u>1982</u>
St. Boniface-St. Vital	22	19
City Centre-Fort Rouge	36	26
St. James-Assiniboia	20	29
Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan	30	29
East Kildonan-Transcona	62	19
Assiniboine Park-Fort Garry	<u>52</u>	<u>34</u>
Total	<u>222</u>	<u>156</u>

TABLE 3.2

AVERAGE MEMBERSHIP ATTENDANCE
AT RESIDENTS' ADVISORY GROUP MEETINGS

	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>
St. Boniface-St. Vital	9	9	10	11	9
City Centre-Fort Rouge	20	15	16	11	13
St. James-Assiniboia	14	12	12	15	17
Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan	--	--	--	--	--
East Kildonan-Transcona	17	10	11	11	9
Assiniboine Park-Fort Garry	16	12	12	14	9
Total Average Attendance	15	12	12	12	11

Source: Residents' Advisory Group Minutes and Professor Wichern's 1978 Residents' Advisory Group Survey.

Advisory Group meetings. Table 3.2 indicates that the membership attendance at the meetings has been dropping. In 1978, the average attendance at a meeting was fifteen advisors. In 1982, the average attendance had declined to eleven. In the five year period, 1978 - 1982, St. James-Assiniboia was the only Residents' Advisory Group to record an increase in both its membership and membership attendance at meetings.

RESIDENT ADVISORS

The advisors who worked actively on the Residents' Advisory Groups in the early and mid 1970's were observed to be people who cared about their community and who had particular interests in recreation, planning or even business interests.⁴ In the early years of the Act's operation the Residents' Advisory Groups were led in many cases by talented, energetic, young, professional people, with considerable analytical and substantive skills to contribute, particularly in the area of urban planning.⁵ Many of today's advisors, as was the case in the early years, are active because they have a genuine interest in the well-being of their community. They are, however, according to many observers, not of the same calibre of participant as were their predecessors. It has been suggested that many of the more talented advisors have long since dropped out due to frustration with the Residents' Advisory Group system and have been replaced by individuals who possess much less lofty expectations of the system. Matt Kiernan noted in his Ph.D. thesis, entitled, "The Limits of Planning Law Reform: The Case of Winnipeg":

"Current Residents' Advisory Group chairmen exhibit a pervasive complacency and sense of satisfaction with the operation of the Residents' Advisory Group system. Their expectations are infinitely more

modest than those of their predecessors, and therefore of course more readily satisfied. The current chairmen appear quite content with a peripheral and subservient role vis a vis their Community Committee councillors."6

Apart from a core group of today's advisors who are long standing members of the Residents' Advisory Group and who are dedicated and hard-working community workers, many of the newer present-day advisors are much less committed to constructive citizen participation. In response to this study's questionnaire and follow-up interviews, many advisors stated that the only reason they are involved in the Residents' Advisory Group is to act as a "watchdog" on their councillor.

THE OPERATION OF THE RESIDENTS' ADVISORY GROUPS

Winnipeg's six Residents' Advisory Groups are St. James-Assiniboia, Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan, City Centre-Fort Rouge, St. Boniface-St. Vital, East Kildonan-Transcona, and Assiniboine Park-Fort Garry. They function in a similar fashion, with the exception of Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan. The Residents' Advisory Groups, excluding Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan, meet as a whole before each or every second Community Committee meeting. They usually meet a few days in advance of the Community Committee meeting. At the Residents' Advisory Group meeting the resident advisors peruse the agenda of the upcoming Community Committee meeting and make comments on items of interest. They communicate their advice to the Community Committee, through a spokesperson, (usually the Residents' Advisory Group chairperson).

The Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan Residents' Advisory Group does not meet as a whole on a regular basis, but meets only at the call of the

chairperson. The Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan advisors attend the Community Committee meeting where each advisor is allowed to participate. They participate on an individual basis rather than as a group representing a consensus of opinion. The unique operation of the Lord Selkirk-West Kildonan Residents' Advisory Group appears to include both positive and negative aspects. It provides the advisors with the opportunity of becoming involved in the business of the Community Committee and, thereby, the opportunity of developing a close working relationship with the Community Committee. By allowing the advisors to be involved to the extent they are, however, the meeting can become very tedious, long, and drawn out. This is because the advisors tend to concentrate their participation on trivial administrative issues.

All of the Residents' Advisory Groups have a subcommittee structure in place which, depending on the particular Residents' Advisory Group, varies between one and six subcommittees. The majority of these subcommittees, however, rarely meet and, if they do, they are usually poorly attended.

An analysis of the operation of the Residents' Advisory Groups was undertaken through an examination of the minutes of the Residents' Advisory Group meetings. The time period of the examination extended from January 1, 1978 to December 31, 1982. The examination indicated the types of items and issues discussed by the Residents' Advisory Groups, the frequency of such discussions and the origin of the items of interest. Such examination also allowed a comparison to be made of the six Residents' Advisory Groups.

In contrast to the general opinion of the members of the Residents' Advisory Groups, which maintains that every Community Committee area is unique and, therefore, every Residents' Advisory Group operates differently, the analysis showed the many similarities between the individual Residents' Advisory Groups. For instance, according to the minutes of the Residents' Advisory Groups' meetings, all the Residents' Advisory Groups discuss basically the same types of issues. These issues can be grouped into three general types. They are: local issues; city-wide issues; and themselves (i.e., the issue of the improvement of the structure and operation of the Residents' Advisory Groups).

The examination showed that the Residents' Advisory Groups spend the majority of their time, approximately one-half of their meeting time, discussing local issues. Local issues include such things as local streets and transportation issues (i.e., the placement of road signs, traffic lights and pedestrian corridors), minor land use issues, (i.e., zoning variances, conditional uses), and the allocation of Per Capita Grants.

Approximately another one-quarter of the Residents' Advisory Groups meeting time is spent discussing what can be termed "city-wide" issues. Examples are: the Dog By-Law; the Development Plan Review; Library Services; the Airport Study; the Community Centre Study; and other Parks and Recreation studies. On these city-wide issues, the Residents' Advisory Groups usually only participate by commenting on the plan or study after it has been formulated. Their input on these issues cannot be termed substantial.

The third type of issue the Residents' Advisory Groups discuss is themselves. The Residents' Advisory Groups spend an inordinate amount of time, approximately one-quarter of their meeting time, discussing the structure and operation of the Residents' Advisory Groups. Included in the minutes concerning this issue were discussions on the role and responsibilities of the Residents' Advisory Group, the organizational structure of the Residents' Advisory Group, the relationship of the Residents' Advisory Group to the Community Committee, the poor attendance at Residents' Advisory Group meetings and the Residents' Advisory Group's difficulty in securing information. All six groups, on many occasions, pondered the role of the Residents' Advisory Group. They continually proposed new approaches they might undertake or the Community Committee might undertake to improve the Residents' Advisory Group's performance.

The majority of issues discussed by the Residents' Advisory Groups appear, firstly, as items on the Community Committee agenda. The Residents' Advisory Groups peruse the Community Committee agenda to identify issues on which they wish to comment. The Residents' Advisory Groups essentially operate by reacting (most often negatively) to items that appear on the Community Committee agenda. The Residents' Advisory Groups have thus been described, and describe themselves, as "basically a reactor group".

The content of Residents' Advisory Group deliberations is dependent on the business or activity of the local government. The nature and scope of the deliberations of the Residents' Advisory Groups are inseparable from that of the Community Committees. Given that this is the case and that Community Committee business is for the most part,

concentrated on minor administrative issues, it is not surprising that the Residents' Advisory Group deliberations are concentrated on the same local administrative issues.

In Mr. Kiernan's Ph.D. thesis, the Residents' Advisory Groups are identified as being too reactive in their deliberations and too pre-occupied with extremely microscopic, localized planning issues. Kiernan notes that only in a couple of cases, in almost ten years of existence, did the Residents' Advisory Groups move beyond concern with adhoc and extremely localized issues to contribute meaningfully to more forward-looking, comprehensive planning efforts.⁷ In the following statement Kiernan correctly evaluates the Residents' Advisory Groups' performance:

"The Residents' Advisory Groups' role in planning matters is generally confined to making comments on individual development applications...Many of these applications are extremely minor in nature frequently involving miniscule changes to zoning regulations to accomodate modest additions to back porches or garages. The residents' advisory groups spend inordinate amounts of time and energy on such matters, to the detriment of any serious consideration of broader issues."⁸

RESIDENTS' ADVISORY GROUP ACCOMPLISHMENTS

It is a difficult task naming the accomplishments of the Residents' Advisory Groups. The Residents' Advisory Group members who were questioned could name very few accomplishments. Over one-half of the advisors could not recollect the Residents' Advisory Groups' having had any major accomplishment. Some advisors indicated their Residents' Advisory Group accomplished a great deal in areas such as street naming, the placement of stop signs and stop lights, and in recommending Per Capita Grant recipients. No doubt, participation in issues of this sort are

important to local residents. It is, however, questionable whether participation in such minor administrative decisions can be termed significant enough to be labelled a "major accomplishment", given the intent of the legislation concerning Residents' Advisory Groups.

A few of the advisors noted their Residents' Advisory Group's involvement in the development of important studies, such as the Airport Study. Others recalled the Residents' Advisory Group's leading the opposition in fights to halt development. Mr. Kiernan noted that in the area of land use planning only three examples in about ten years of the Residents' Advisory Groups' existence could be found of the groups' contributing to meaningful longterm planning efforts. The three efforts were the Memorial Ward Study, the St. Boniface District Plan and the Assiniboine Park-Fort Garry Draft Plan.⁹

An important, positive by-product of the Residents' Advisory Group system has been the education it has provided the resident advisors. Many of the advisors stated that through their involvement as advisors, their knowledge of Winnipeg's local government system has improved substantially.

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE

The most important responsibilities assigned to Community Committees were to "develop and implement techniques to maintain the closest possible communication between the City and the residents of the community" and "to develop and implement techniques to provide the residents of the community with information concerning existing and potential city policies".¹⁰ There is no evidence that in the twelve years of the Act's

existence a Community Committee has performed these responsibilities. The Community Committees have neglected developing any innovative or exciting new communication or information technique.

Another responsibility of the Community Committee, as outlined in Section 22 of the Act, is in the area of supervision. The Community Committees initially interpreted that their supervisory role included the hiring and firing of City staff and thus, to direct influence over local community program delivery.¹¹ In 1972 the Community Committee's supervisory responsibility was clarified through an amendment to the Act: "Nothing in this Act shall be deemed to authorize a Community Committee to hire, suspend, or dismiss, or to exercise ultimate administrative control over the employees of the City".¹² The redefinition of "supervise" became "to watch, observe, and make qualitative assessment".¹³ The Community Committees thus lost their supervisory powers to the central administration.

The final responsibility assigned to the Community Committees was in planning. They were to formulate plans and to conduct public hearings on planning and zoning matters. To date, the Community Committees have not fulfilled their responsibility of formulating district plans or community plans. (In the 1977 amendments to the Act district plans were amended to community plans.) The Community Committees' responsibility of conducting hearings on planning and zoning matters proved to be limited, due to development decision-making having been given to the central council. The Community Committee's power to permit minor exceptions to zoning by-laws was attenuated by the right to appeal their decisions to a more senior subcommittee of council.¹⁴

The Community Committees are in the position of having very few responsibilities. The only real power the Community Committee has is their ability to allocate an extremely modest (25¢ per capita) block grant from Council to neighbourhood cultural and recreational groups.¹⁵

For the most part Community Committee meetings consist of receiving large quantities of information from the administration and other committees of council, allocating Per Capita Grants and being the "court of first instance" on local transportation and land use planning issues. These local issues are generally administrative in nature and almost always very trivial matters.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY COMMITTEES AND RESIDENTS' ADVISORY GROUPS

If the role of Residents' Advisory Groups is accepted to be an advisory one, as described in the Act, "to advise and assist the members of the Community Committee as to the performance of their function under the Act",¹⁶ it then must be understood that for Residents' Advisory Groups to perform as intended, a constructive working relationship must be developed between the Community Committees and Residents' Advisory Groups. The Community Committees and Residents' Advisory Groups never developed such a relationship.

The relationship between the Community Committees and most Residents' Advisory Groups can be described as one of tolerance. The Community Committees barely recognize the existence of the Residents' Advisory Groups. The odd time they may refer an item to the Residents' Advisory Groups for their comment but that is the extent of their relationship. Communication between the two bodies is definitely lacking.

The Community Committees have never displayed any support, either moral or financial toward the Residents' Advisory Groups.

CONCLUSION

The Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure has not performed as it was intended. The Residents' Advisory Groups did not increase the involvement of citizens in local government policy-making and decision-making. Originally, many Winnipeg residents were interested in the operation of the Residents' Advisory Groups. They soon, however, became frustrated and dropped out. They lost interest because they didn't feel their contribution was worthwhile. They continually complained of not having anything of importance to do.

The resident advisors were unsure of the role the Residents' Advisory Group was to play. The majority of issues dealt with by the Community Committee - issues on which the Residents' Advisory Groups were to advise and assist - were extremely minor local administrative issues. These types of issues do not call for organized formal citizen participation as intended by the creation of the Residents' Advisory Group. The types of issues the Residents' Advisory Groups were intended to address - broader policy issues - have not arisen and thus have not been addressed by the Residents' Advisory Groups. In the Unicity Government's twelve years of existence, policy development or as a process of government, has not occurred.

Footnotes: Chapter Two

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3. Matthew Kiernan and David C. Walker, "Winnipeg" in: Magnusson, Warren and Sancton, Andrew, eds., City Politics in Canada. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), pp. 238-239.
4. Lloyd Axworthy and Jim Cassidy. Unicity: The Transition (Winnipeg: Institute of Urban Studies, 1974), p. 120.
5. Kiernan, "The Limits of Planning Law Reform", p. 122.
6. Kiernan, "The Limits of Planning Law Reform", p. 123.
7. Kiernan, "The Limits of Planning Law Reform", p. 118.
8. Kiernan, "The Limits of Planning Law Reform", p. 121.
9. Kiernan, "The Limits of Planning Law Reform", p. 118.
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11. Kiernan and Walker. "Winnipeg" p. 233.
12. City of Winnipeg Act Statutes of Manitoba amended 1972, Sec. 22.
13. City of Winnipeg Act Statutes of Manitoba amended 1972, Sec. 22.
14. Kiernan and Walker, "Winnipeg", p. 233.
15. Kiernan and Walker, "Winnipeg", p. 232.
16. City of Winnipeg Act Statutes of Manitoba 1971, Subsection 21(4).

CHAPTER THREE

THE CAUSES OF THE RESIDENTS'
ADVISORY GROUPS' INEFFECTIVENESS

CHAPTER THREE

THE CAUSES OF THE RESIDENTS' ADVISORY GROUPS' INEFFECTIVENESS

SYNOPSIS

As described in the previous chapter the Residents' Advisory Groups have not functioned very well. They have been ineffective in enhancing citizen participation. The Residents' Advisory Group's ineffectiveness is, basically, a result of not having anything of importance to do. The underlying cause of such inactivity stems from the traditional nature and function of local government. The limited competence of local government restricts meaningful citizen participation.

Citizen participation in Winnipeg is confined to those few areas in which the City has decision-making authority. That, essentially, restricts citizen involvement to property-related issues. Given this restriction, the consequences of Winnipeg's slow growth rate and accompanying reduced demand for property for development, was to leave the Residents' Advisory Groups in the predicament of having very little in which to participate.

Concomittantly, the uncooperative attitude held by many city councillors towards the Residents' Advisory Group and citizen participation in general (indicative of a traditional housekeeping administrative form of local government) restricted the participatory potential of the Residents' Advisory Groups.

As well, the participation provisions of The City of Winnipeg Act, namely, the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure, are said to have been inadequately articulated in the legislation.

THE LIMITED COMPETENCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The constitutional position of local government in Canada differs substantially from that of the federal or provincial governments. The powers of the federal and provincial governments are specifically set out in the Constitution Act, formerly the British North America Act (BNA). Local or municipal government has no established powers or guaranteed position within the Act. Local government may be established by the provinces who retain the right to do so under the BNA Act. Whether local governments are to be established, what powers and responsibilities they may exercise, and what revenue resources will be assigned to them are all matters which, from a constitutional point of view rest solely within the discretion of each province.¹

In the early years of Canada's history the provinces exercised their constitutional power and began to create municipalities and municipal governments. The development of local government in Canada for the most part took place between Confederation in 1867 and the outbreak of World War I. This was a period of small towns and small cities with stable populations. The provinces created local governments because they felt that certain local services could best be provided by local authorities. The powers conveyed to the local governments were simply those powers needed to provide housekeeping administrative services to these small centres.² The role of the traditional housekeeping form of government has been described as the provision and maintenance of municipal services.

For the most part these municipal services were considered to be services related to property.

The traditional housekeeping role of local government was regarded as being primarily concerned with administration not policy. The principal responsibility of the traditional local government was to ensure the prudent administration of municipal services without unduly burdening the property taxpayers.³ Decision-making on this basis emphasized technical and financial considerations in relation to the delivery of services.⁴ Members of the town or city council were expected to perform a sort of trusteeship role in which politics was felt to play little part.⁵ Having as its only legitimate concern that of the provision of services, traditional local government, understandably was viewed as apolitical. There was no real division of community opinion regarding the delivery of municipal services. Citizens only participated in the local government process when they had a complaint concerning the delivery of services.

The structure of traditional local government was designed to accommodate the administrative, apolitical approach to local governance. For instance, to facilitate efficient decision-making, the government structure was characterized by a small council. As well, many specific local government functions were assigned to special purpose boards and commissions.

The traditional role of local government worked quite well, functioning with little difficulty, until the period of rapid urbanization which followed World War II. The existing form of local government soon proved to be ill-equipped to govern the emerging, dynamic urban centres. Cities

were growing to enormous size at a rapid rate generating countless problems and issues.

The Government of Manitoba, as did the governments of other provinces, attempted to restructure the municipal government system in order to provide better government for the growing urban centres. The City of Winnipeg Act was one such attempt. The underlying intent of the Act, as outlined in Chapter One, was to create the type of local government capable of governing in Canada's urban era. The Act sought to update city government and remove it from the traditional preoccupation with activities of a housekeeping nature.⁶ The new role for Winnipeg's local government was to be one of policy-making and longterm growth management. A requirement of the new government was to indicate policies and programs to actively guide the growth and development of the city.

The City of Winnipeg Act included the necessary features and structures to accomodate an active, forward-looking, policy formulating type of local government. The Government of Manitoba, however, did not assign the new city government any new or increased powers or fiscal resources. The government functions assigned to the Unicity Government were very similar to those in the previous Metro system.⁷ The role of the new government remained the same as Metro's - the provision of services to property. The legislation did not permit the new government to become legitimately involved in any new endeavours. The Provincial Government did not give the City the power or resources to properly address the vast majority of urban problems (i.e., problems of a social or economic nature). Winnipeg's local government's competence (that is, its statutory, legal and financial powers to act on issues of a social or economic

nature, such as industrial development, job creation, unemployment, relief, social welfare, health care, and education, or even on matters of an environmental nature), is extremely limited.⁸ Such matters lie within the sphere of competence of the provinces and the federal government.⁹

By not redefining the position of local government to include increased functional responsibilities and enhanced revenue sources for addressing social and economic concerns the Provincial Government essentially only created a restructured traditional housekeeping form of local government. The Unicity Council had no use for the policy formulating features contained in the legislation, given that its only assigned statutory responsibility was the provision of municipal services. Despite the Act's policy-making reform features, Winnipeg's local government remained primarily concerned with administration not policy.

Policy-making by Winnipeg's local government was also hampered by the election of councillors on a ward basis. Ward elections, as prescribed in The City of Winnipeg Act, encourage local parochialism in the elected political representative. In this type of political structure, parochial views dominate city-wide views. Policy-making or longterm planning priorities for the City are of secondary importance to the councillors.

In an interview with Councillor Helen Promislow, the Councillor noted how the absence of City policy-making affects the Residents' Advisory Group performance. Councillor Promislow stated:

"The City has no social, economic or planning policy so the Residents' Advisory Group doesn't have much to participate in. The Residents' Advisory Group doesn't have much to sink its teeth into."¹⁰

Since Winnipeg's local government is of the traditional housekeeping form and was not accorded extended powers or fiscal resources to be anything more, the Residents' Advisory Groups have been restricted in their participatory functions to the few areas where the local government has authority.

LACK OF DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Just as local government was designed to function over a hundred years ago, the City of Winnipeg continues to be basically the provider of community services. Due to statutory and fiscal restraints, the City's competence is confined to issues affecting the use and servicing of property.¹¹ This being the case, the Residents' Advisory Group (which is to advise and assist on civic government matters) is restricted, as well, to issues related to property. To be more specific, the majority of City business involves the development of land. If, however, due to a very slow growth rate, the requirement of land for development diminishes, the civic government is then left with a much reduced work load and the advisory groups are left with virtually nothing in which to participate.

Winnipeg has been experiencing a reduction of its growth rate for several years now. The declining growth rate is due to the effects of economic decline. Two historical events signaled Winnipeg's economic decline: the opening up of the Panama Canal in 1914; and the discovery of oil in Alberta in 1947. The opening of the canal made it cheaper to ship goods between eastern and western Canadian markets by boat as

opposed to rail through Winnipeg. Thus began the erosion of Winnipeg as the "gateway to the west" and the dominant economic power in the region. The Alberta oil boom further fueled Winnipeg's economic decline by shifting the development energy and investment capital to Alberta markets.¹² Winnipeg's decline as an economic power, which is not expected to be reversed in the near future, has reduced the growth rate to its current low level.

In the decade 1951-1961 Winnipeg's average growth rate was a respectable 3.3% per year.¹³ During the 1960's it averaged a much lower 1.4% per year.¹⁴ Between 1971-1981 the average growth rate dropped to 0.5% per year.¹⁵ The growth of Winnipeg between 1976-1981 was almost negligible. Between 1976-1981 Winnipeg experienced a net population increase of only 3600.¹⁶ The average growth rate for this period was only 0.13% per year. It has been suggested that since 1981, Winnipeg's growth rate has improved somewhat but the rate of growth can only be described as modest at best.

With such a modest growth rate the demand for land for development has been very light. The content analysis of the Residents' Advisory Group meeting's minutes 1978-1982, showed very little evidence of development taking place in Winnipeg. Indications of major or controversial development issues in the Residents' Advisory Group minutes were few and far between. For example, in District #6, Assiniboine Park-Fort Garry, (which has the highest growth rate of the six Community Committee areas) the development activity was minimal. In the last three years, 1980-1983, there were only three development issues that warranted the involvement of the Assiniboine Park-Fort Garry Residents' Advisory

Group. They were: 1. the ongoing backlands residential development in Charleswood; 2. Cairns Homes' Whyte Ridge residential and commercial development; and 3. Westfair's (Super Valu) commercial development. Of these three developments, only Cairns Homes could be termed a major development. (Interestingly, upon the approval of the residential rezoning Cairns Homes promptly closed their Winnipeg office and to date have not proceeded with the development. One of the reasons for their departure from the Winnipeg market was the lack of demand for new housing.)

It is no wonder the Residents' Advisory Group is ineffective - having only three issues in three years (or one issue per year) in which to participate. If it weren't for the ongoing controversy in Charleswood concerning the gravel roads, the Residents' Advisory Group would be lost for something to discuss at their monthly meeting.

THE CITY'S UNCOOPERATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE RESIDENTS' ADVISORY GROUPS

The uncooperative and unenthusiastic attitude held by city councillors and the city administration toward the Residents' Advisory Groups severely constrained the participation potential of the advisory groups. The Residents' Advisory Groups were generally ignored by the Community Committees and seldom given anything on which to advise and assist. For the advisors to remain active in the Residents' Advisory Group, they had to feel their contribution was important, was being listened to, and was being considered in the act of decision-making.¹⁷ From the outset, this has never been the case.

Working under a traditional housekeeping administrative form of local government, Winnipeg city councillors did not perceive a need to utilize the newly established participation provisions. Their approach to governance was apolitical and administrative. City Council decision-making involved only technical and financial considerations, not political expression. Since the resolution of administrative matters does not require political debate, there was no call for active citizen involvement in the local decision-making process. Just as was the case on the former area municipality councils, Unicity councillors were preoccupied with administering municipal services to their wards. The extent of citizen participation required in this form of local government is limited to the councillors' responding to ward residents' complaints and demands concerning municipal services.

Many of the councillors, particularly the Independent Citizens Election Committee (ICEC) councillors, saw the establishment of these participatory provisions as a threat to the traditional representative system of government.¹⁸ The Community Committees had a strong aversion to any reform that would adulterate the councillor's right to make a decision as he/she saw fit.¹⁹ Many councillors had the view that citizen participation should take place only once every three years at the ballot box.²⁰ Their adherence to the trustee model of governance was incompatible with the participation provisions intended by the Act.

Many of the original Unicity councillors gained their political experience on the former area municipal councils. They brought to Unicity from the former area municipal systems the limited view of the role of local government. Their perception of the role of an alderman

as that of a trustee was carried over to the new government. Also, many of the original Unicity councillors who previously were members of the municipal councils and who had actively opposed the passage of The City of Winnipeg Act used every opportunity to prove the new Act and its provisions were unworkable.²¹ These same councillors were members of the provincial Opposition Parties - the Progressive Conservatives and Liberals - and were thus unwilling to assist in the launching of an NDP undertaking.

Evidence of the councillor's uncooperative and unenthusiastic attitude toward the Residents' Advisory Groups and citizen participation in general is in the Community Committees' neglect in carrying out their duty of "developing and implementing techniques to maintain the closest possible communication between the City and the residents of the community".²² There is no evidence of any of the Community Committees attempting to carry out this function or of assisting the Residents' Advisory Groups in carrying out these responsibilities.

Rather than encouraging participation, City Council openly opposed the legislated participatory process. On two occasions, the Council restricted the Residents' Advisory Groups ability to perform their intended participatory function. In 1973, the Federal Government had offered the Council an unconditional grant of \$230,000 to facilitate in the development of the new Residents' Advisory Group structure. The grant was to be used for research purposes and, generally, to upgrade the Residents' Advisory Groups capability of assisting the Community Committee. The grant, however, was turned down by the Council. The refusal to

accept the grant was a blow to the Residents' Advisory Groups from which they have yet to recover.²³

The other occasion when Council limited the Residents' Advisory Groups' ability to function came in 1976 when they went to the extraordinary extent of passing a special resolution expressly prohibiting the Community Committee from allocating any of the Community Committee discretionary funds (Per Capita Grants) to the Residents' Advisory Groups.²⁴ Once again, the funds could have been used to improve the capability of the Residents' Advisory Group in fulfilling their role of assisting the Community Committee. The funds could have gone towards improving communication and the flow of information between ward residents, the Residents' Advisory Group and the Community Committee.

Indications of concern over the lack of participation generated by the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure is widespread in the minutes of the Residents' Advisory Group meetings. The advisory group members are of the view that the poor performance of the Residents' Advisory Group has been largely the fault of the Community Committee and the City administration. The following observation is from the East Kildonan-Transcona Residents' Advisory Group minutes and is indicative of the view held by many advisors.

"The discussions expressed concern with the lack of participation and work undertaken to date. Consensus was that the fault lay in lack of referral of items from the Community Committee and the general disregard they seem to hold for the Residents' Advisory Group. Lack of information distributed to all advisors from the Community Communication Clerk, on which to base decisions, raise questions at Community meetings or undertake programs, was a general complaint...

The meeting agreed that lack of information was one of our greatest problems. That to utilize and maintain an active Residents' Advisory Group, the Community Committee must keep this group informed."²⁵

The East Kildonan-Transcona Residents' Advisory Group concluded the discussion by stating:

"Regardless of what legislation is enacted, the Residents' Advisory Groups can only succeed with the active support of the councillors. Unfortunately to date, whether through intent or lack of initiative, they have merely tolerated rather than utilized the volunteer assistance available to them through the Residents' Advisory Group."²⁶

In questioning the Residents' Advisory Group members as to the effectiveness of the Residents' Advisory Groups in performing their role of advising and assisting the Community Committee, they answered that the performance of the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure could have been much improved had the councillors encouraged the advisors' involvement in the deliberations of the Community Committee. The advisors also felt that participation in the Residents' Advisory Groups declined over the years mainly because of the negative attitude held by the councillors toward the Residents' Advisory Group. One advisor noted of the councillors' attitude:

The councillors have not really made any overtures to the group since I joined and at one point the treatment of the Community Committee towards the Residents' Advisory Group bordered on rudeness."²⁷

A close working relationship between the Community Committee and the Residents' Advisory Group, required for citizen participation to flourish, was plainly never developed. The advisors indicated that they were seldom asked by the Community Committee to advise on anything and in the

event that they were, their opinions did not seem to count for much in the Community Committee's decision-making process. The Residents' Advisory Groups feel that they have been neglected and abandoned by the Community Committees.

Further, for the Residents' Advisory Group to function as intended, a good working relationship with the city administration was required. The City Council, however, failed to issue any clear directives to the administrators to establish decentralized working relationships with the advisory groups and the city administration has not gone out of its way to accommodate the Residents' Advisory Groups. Since the Act's inception the senior city administration has viewed the new group as an impediment to its job.²⁸

The participation potential of the Residents' Advisory Groups having been severely constrained by the attitudes of the councillors and city administration points out the confined nature and function of local government. That is, City Council can function only as prescribed by the Provincial Act which creates the civic government. If the Provincial Government creates a local government system that is limited to traditional housekeeping administrative matters, the political representatives elected to govern under such a system will naturally adopt a complementary approach to governance. The approach adopted by Winnipeg city councillors is termed the trusteeship model and in such a model citizen participation is not something for which there is call.

THE INADEQUACY OF THE PARTICIPATION PROVISIONS

Contributing to the Residents' Advisory Groups' ineffectiveness was the inadequacy of the participation provisions contained in The City of Winnipeg Act. Given that the role of the Residents' Advisory Group was to advise and assist the members of the Community Committee on the performance of their functions under the Act, the functions of the Community Committee dictate, to a certain extent, the advisory functions of the Residents' Advisory Group. As a result of the Community Committees' not being granted any substantial powers or responsibilities, the Residents' Advisory Groups found themselves with very little on which to advise and assist.

When the Provincial Government decided to initiate a review of Metropolitan Winnipeg they did so on the assumption that their chief consultant, Meyer Brownstone, would prepare a plan of municipal amalgamation containing significant elements of citizen participation and political decentralization. Their decision to proceed with the review was based on a memorandum prepared by Brownstone that outlined the underlying assumptions of the review process and some of the key issues to be examined. Contained in the memo was an assumption concerning the need to decentralize the political process:

"A second assumption is that the political (participatory) aspects are highly unsatisfactory at present and that any reorganized form will need to include a meaningful attack on this problem. That is, as part of the proposed new single city structure, it will be necessary to design an effective, acceptable, political decentralization providing for involvement of citizens on a scale and intensity which exceeds by far that which is in existence at present. The significance of this assumption lies in the explicit responsibility visualized for the new government, for specific concern and action regarding its own political system. Tradi-

tionally, this has involved elements such as electoral procedure, galleries for the public, and Council's hearing of briefs. What is assumed here has more to do with community organization, animation, control and advocacy, all of which require not only policies but supportive resources. For this government it can be a contribution of fundamental significance compared with, for example, pious faith in small local government as the true bastion of democracy.²⁹

The Provincial Government was further encouraged to develop a participatory, political relationship in Winnipeg by James Lorimer, a short-term member of the consulting team. In a paper entitled, "The Citizen and the New City Government", Lorimer put forward the idea of local community councils holding the decision-making power on certain local concerns. Lorimer suggested the local councils could be assigned the following four kinds of power:

- "1. The power to draw up and administer a community plan, to control land use densities and development within their locality;
2. The power to influence overall policies regarding other functions of local government;
3. The power to instruct the elected representative sitting on the central city council as to what position to take on any matter coming up in that forum; and
4. Limited fiscal power to establish a mill rate to raise the funds necessary to pay for a limited staff, including social animators whose task would be to reach out into the community for the involvement and participation of a large number of residents in the government of the city."³⁰

Except for a few Ministers who supported the idea of participation, the Provincial Cabinet reacted negatively to Lorimer's proposals and to the very idea of adopting a participative model of government. In the end, participation was confined to an essentially representative model. Due to ideological commitment and a political sense of what was possible and what was not, the Provincial Government opted for citizen participation provisions to be contained within a representative government system.³¹

The Government's choosing the traditional representative form of government placed very real limits on the degree of power which could be devolved to the local Community Committee and thence to their advisory Residents' Advisory Groups.³²

Once having decided that participation would take place in a representative model of government, the Cabinet Committee of the Provincial Government was still required to resolve two major issues of contention concerning the concepts on decentralized political decision-making and citizen participation. The issues were: (1) whether to unify completely or retain the legal existence and powers of the local councils; and, (2) whether to give citizens' groups an active part in the city government via animation.³³ The resolution of these issues was the formation of the Community Committees. The resolution forming the Community Committees represented an uneasy, but calculated, compromise between contending factions within the Provincial Cabinet.³⁴ On the one side were the committed amalgamationists who opposed granting substantial powers to local councils on the ground that this would replicate the two-tiered situation under Metro. On the other side were the suburban members of the NDP Cabinet who were against amalgamation and determined to preserve the separate identities of the suburban municipalities. Ultimately what occurred was the creation of one big council with local area committees retaining the name of the old municipal area.³⁵ This compromise between the two factions explains the lack of any clear definition of the role and responsibilities of the Community Committee. To balance the opposing points of view local committee councils were created but, so as not to recreate the second-tier

authorities, they were given no real power. The Act set the Community Committees up as subcommittees of Council but without clear powers except for the supervision of local services. As indicated in the previous chapter this responsibility was redefined the following year limiting the Community Committees' supervisory powers. In the area of land use planning, the Community Committee's deliberations could be disregarded by City Council. In fact, the majority of the Community Committee's decisions must be reconsidered at City Council and usually by a Committee of Council in between. The Community Committees were thus given no powers of final decision.

In 1971 when the Community Committee concept was unveiled to the public a Winnipeg citizen, Mr. Carson Templeton, offered a prediction on the future performance of the new committee:

"I do not see how any committee can perform any useful work if it has neither a budget, authority, or responsibility to do anything. Such committees will become inoperative in a very short time and hence completely useless.

...If these Community Committees would be given authority and responsibility, I think the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure might be workable. But the Community Committee must be given authority and responsibility for things that matter, not just community centres, local parks, playgrounds, libraries and local recreation facilities."³⁶

As a result of the Community Committees' having no formal jurisdiction, they have been termed powerless committees. The Residents' Advisory Groups, which were advisory bodies to these powerless committees, were in turn assigned no powers and were left searching for something and even anything of substance in which to advise and assist.

It has been suggested by many that for the Residents' Advisory Groups to become effective it is required that the Community Committees assume more authority. The common belief is that if the Community Committees become more responsible for decisions of a local nature, the Residents' Advisory Groups would in turn see an increase in the scope and range of their advisory function. This, however, is not the answer to resolving the Residents' Advisory Groups ineffectiveness. The Residents' Advisory Groups ineffectiveness is due not so much because the citizen participation provisions were inadequately articulated in the legislation, but, because Winnipeg's government remained essentially an administrative form of government, rather than one concerned with the making of policy. Granted, the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure was given no real power, but even if it were delegated substantial powers, the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure would continue to have as its focus minor administrative matters. This is because of the limited competence of traditional local government. And, as indicated earlier in the chapter, the resolution of administrative matters (which are characteristic of the traditional administrative housekeeping form of municipal government) does not call for citizen participation.

CONCLUSION

The Residents' Advisory Groups have mainly been ineffective because they have not been involved in government policy decision-making. The next chapter, chapter four, examines the lack of policy-making undertaken by the Winnipeg government. Chapter four assesses the City Council's performance as the "planner of the city" and based on that assessment indicates the need for citizens' policy advisory groups.

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CHAPTER FOUR
CITY PLANNING AND CITIZEN
PARTICIPATION IN WINNIPEG

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SYNOPSIS

This thesis is not simply a study of the operation of the City of Winnipeg's Residents' Advisory Groups. It is more importantly, an analysis of the city planning function of the Winnipeg government. This is so, because, the prescribed use of the Residents' Advisory Groups is dependent on the fulfillment of the government's city planning responsibility or in other words, the fulfillment of the government's policy-making role as intended by The City of Winnipeg Act. Of significance, is that, the result of the city government undertaking a limited planning role, negates the need for citizens' policy advisory groups.

This chapter, then, provides an analysis of the civic government's city planning function. The chapter begins with a definition of the terms "city planning" and "citizen participation". An understanding of what is meant through the use of these terms is crucial to the thesis. Following from the definitions is an assessment of the Winnipeg government's role as "planner of the city". The chapter is concluded with an analysis of the role of the Residents' Advisory Groups in Winnipeg's local government.

CITY PLANNING AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION DEFINED

In the Introduction the terms "city planning" and "citizen participation" are defined. To reiterate, city planning refers to the formulation and implementation of policy that is undertaken to guide the future

development of the city. The planner of the city is the City Council, ✓
for it is the function of government to make and carry out policy.
Citizen participation refers to the involvement of citizens in City
Council's policy development activities.

The above definition of city planning differs from the more commonly
used definition that describes city planning as what city planners do.
Granted, the work city planners do is an aspect of the city planning
function but is is not the most important aspect of the city planning
function. The work that city planners do - the processing of applications
for development control, and the regulation of land-use, and the enforce-
ment of the zoning by-law and other such activities - are simply
administrative matters that are fixed by an existing set of rules or
policies.¹ It is the setting of policy that is the most important aspect
of the city planning function. That is, the setting of policy to assist
the future development of the city. The responsibility for the formulation
of policy for guiding the development of the city rests with the city
government. The city planning function and the function of the city
government are, thus, one and the same. It is the City Council that is
responsible for planning for the city's future. The intent of The City of
Winnipeg Act was for the city government to be responsible for planning
the city's future. The Unicity Government was to determine policies for
meeting contemporary urban needs. In regard to citizen participation,
the Community Committee - Residents' Advisory Group structure was intended
to be the vehicle that encouraged the involvement of citizens in local
government. Specifically, the Residents' Advisory Groups were intended
to advise and assist the city government in the making of policy.

To properly assess the government's performance as the "maker of policy" the term "policy" must be defined and clearly understood. The need to define policy arises because of the difficulty in discerning policy matters from administrative matters in municipal government decision-making.

Policy is "a course or plan of action". The making of policy is the formulation of a plan for the attainment of certain ends. Whereas the carrying out of the plan is administration. The policy-making process is active or interventionist as opposed to the administrative process which is passive. Policy-making is a forward-looking decision-making process. Administration is a day-to-day, reactive decision-making process. As well, administration deals with specifics while policy-making is comprehensive. A good description of the distinction between policy and administration in municipal government decision-making is contained in the 1976 report of the Committee of Review of The City of Winnipeg Act.

"The essential characteristics of a policy are that it is an expression of the social and developmental goals of the community. It is intended to guide and determine the community's present and future decisions on issues of long-range importance and it is to provide the guidelines for administrative programs and actions. Administration, on the other hand, refers to the specific actions and programs carried out in the daily routine of municipal functions, whose objective is to ensure that the business of government proceeds as smoothly and efficiently as possible and that the policies of the government are carried into effect, thus achieving the stated social and developmental goals."²

The difficulty of discerning policy matters from administrative matters in Winnipeg's local government is due to the fact that almost all matters dealt with by the government are administrative. This is because the very nature of municipal government is confined to adminis-

tration. Much of the deliberation of Winnipeg's government concerns minor housekeeping issues, which are quite clearly administrative in nature, however, it is apparent that even the most important decisions of the government - decisions that may have a major impact on the city - are, as well, essentially administrative in nature. They are administrative decisions because they are reactive in nature. These decisions are made in reaction to a specific problem with the provision or maintenance of a municipal service. Civic government decisions for the most part are, understandably, administrative decisions because the responsibility of providing and maintaining municipal services is essentially an administrative function.

The extent of the Winnipeg Government's deliberations being administrative in nature as opposed to policy-oriented is the subject of the remainder of this chapter. The section to follow provides a synopsis of the recommendations of the first major review of The City of Winnipeg Act (1976) concerning policy-making in Winnipeg's local government.

THE 1976 REVIEW OF THE CITY OF WINNIPEG ACT

In 1975, the Province of Manitoba appointed a Committee of Review to review the operation and activities of the city government as provided under The City of Winnipeg Act. They did so earlier than required because of problems experienced by the Unicity Government. The Committee of Review presented its report, entitled, "Report and Recommendations, Committee of Review, City of Winnipeg Act" in October, 1976. Many of the Committee's recommendations were directed toward the

objective of improving the policy-making function of city government. During the course of the review hearings the tendency of the city government to neglect policy in favour of administrative matters was stressed by many witnesses.³ A majority of the witnesses identified the failure to make city policies as the most significant failure of city government. The Committee of Review concluded:

"It seems to us imperative that the Act be amended in ways which will discourage the present preoccupation of the councillors with the minutiae of administrative detail and encourage council to address itself to matters of policy for the guidance and control of the growth and development of the city."⁴

The Committee of Review recognized that since the end of the Second World War the traditional role of local government - that of being the provider of municipal services - has been less and less effective in meeting the needs of its citizens. Due to urbanization, technological advancements and other twentieth century developments, cities now require policies to guide their development. In order to address the many complex urban problems, the Committee felt that Winnipeg's local government must adopt a more policy-oriented approach to governance.

The Committee of Review prescribed the preparation of district plans and action area plans as the most appropriate instrument for the expression of local policies and programs.⁵ The Committee noted:

"The preparation and implementation of such plans and policies is one of the most important functions of any contemporary urban government. Without them there is no policy context within which urban growth can be guided; and the metropolis can only be governed by ad hoc decisions and short term improvisations."⁶

The Committee's report proposed that the Community Committees be the vehicle charged with the responsibility of developing local plans. The Committee of Review felt that:

"The most appropriate local context within which to focus the activities of the Community Committees is that of the preparation and implementation of city plans and, in particular, the district plans and action area plans. It is in the formulation of these plans that there can be developed the greatest measure of communication between the people and their government; and it is in the guidance and control of development, in accordance with these plans, that there can be developed a sense of local involvement in the control of the local environment."⁷

The Committee recommended:

"That the Act be amended to require the Community Committees to establish district plans for all the community areas in the city and that the Greater Winnipeg Development Plan be reviewed and amended in light of these district plans. Moreover, we recommend that the Act specify dates for the establishment of these plans, and the contingent review of the Development Plan, and that the Community Committees be given a critical role in the formulation and establishment of the plans for their area."⁸

The Committee's report went on to say that suitable plans and policies could not be established without the participation of the people. The process of policy-making could not succeed without citizen participation. The Committee felt that the Community Committee would require some form of citizen's organization to advise and assist them in their proposed planning role.⁹ A suitable organization was seen to be one which was always accessible, which was permanent and whose purpose it was to aid the Community Committees in carrying out their responsibilities.¹⁰ Given that the Residents' Advisory Group already possessed these characteristics, the Committee of Review recommended that the Residents' Advisory Group be the complementary vehicle enabling citizen involvement in the policy-making process.

In order for the Community Committees and Residents' Advisory Groups to properly prepare local plans, the Committee suggested the Community Committees be provided with a planning staff. The recommendation included the opening of local community planning offices to be staffed with a district planner and support staff.

In concluding the report the Committee of Review made the following statements concerning planning and citizen participation:

"...that the most appropriate way in which citizens can participate in the government of the city is through their involvement in the preparation of plans..." and "...that the most effective contribution citizens can make to the policy development process is through their discussion of the issues and the airing of their views on such plans."¹¹

The Committee of Review's recommendations concerning Community Committees and Residents' Advisory Groups were not acted upon by the Province, as was the fate of the majority of the Committee's other recommendations.

THE CITY COUNCIL AS THE "PLANNER OF THE CITY"

Winnipeg's local government in recent years has continued to neglect policy in favour of administrative matters. Winnipeg's City Council views its role in policy development, or in other words, its city planning role, as a limited one. Contrary to the intent of The City of Winnipeg Act the City Council has not undertaken to perform the role of "planner of the city". According to Council, the City's responsibility is to provide municipal services as efficiently as is administratively possible.

The role of the City of Winnipeg, in planning was recently defined by Winnipeg's Commissioner of Environment, Mr. David Henderson, as:

"...the legal responsibility of City Council to produce and review from time to time a long range comprehensive development policy for the total city, a long range fiscal plan and the programs and mechanisms required to assume an orderly and efficient implementation of the objectives of this plan within the resources available to it."¹²

Mr. Henderson noted, however, the City's limited ability to effectively formulate development policies. That is because the City cannot effectively plan and develop policies in the land use, health and social services, recreation and cultural, transportation, finance and works areas in isolation of Federal and Provincial policies and programs.¹³ The formulation of policies to guide the growth and development of the city are viewed by Council to be, to a large extent, beyond the City's mandate and resources. The City Council recognizes that the vast majority of urban issues can only be properly addressed by the higher level governments. The limited competence of local government restricts the planning role City Council may play. The City has, however, formulated a general development plan, called Plan Winnipeg, but the City Council did not appear at all committed to the policy-making process.

The Executive Policy Committee of Council, as its name suggests, was intended by the Act to be the committee responsible for the making of policy. Policy matters initiated at the Community Committees and standing committees were to have been directed to the Executive Policy Committee to be considered before reaching City Council. The Executive Policy Committee was to be responsible for the overall policy formulation of the city. This intended role, however, has not been performed. The

issues deliberated on by the Executive Policy Committee are, in general, very minor administrative matters. The deliberation of the Executive Policy Committee is almost always in reaction to a problem experienced in the day-to-day functioning of the government. Examples of items normally dealt with by the Executive Policy Committee are the closing or opening of public streets, lanes or walkways; street widenings; the sale or purchase of land; land exchanges; tender calls; rezonings; zoning agreement amendments; city grants; and amendments to by-laws. Such issues essentially only pertain to a specific individual ward of the city. These issues are not of interest to the city as a whole. It appears that issues of a city-wide nature are rarely dealt with by the Executive Policy Committee. Overall policy formulation for the City of Winnipeg does not take place at the Executive Policy Committee or elsewhere in Council.

At the district level, the role of the Community Committee is not the making of policy but the administration of local City business. In a paper prepared by the City of Winnipeg's Department of Environmental Planning, entitled "Neighbourhood Management and District Planning", the role of the Community Committee is described as "neighbourhood management". In the Environmental Planning Department's view the responsibility of the Community Committees has evolved into "managing and particularly moderating local issues".¹⁴ The local issues best dealt with by the Community Committee are described in the Department's paper as "issues of a purely local nature, having no impact on the overall or regional operations of the city."¹⁵ These local issues are understandably very trivial, administrative issues. The support provided to the Community

Committee by the Department of Environmental Planning, in the resolution of these local issues, is technical in nature. The planning staff assigned to each Community Committee basically offers technical assistance on development applications such as rezonings, subdivisions, variances and conditional uses.

Since the Community Committees are to act as neighbourhood managers and not policy-makers, charged with the responsibility of preparing community plans, the Residents' Advisory Groups are in the predicament of not having any policy-making activities in which to become involved.

In summary, Winnipeg's City Council functions in an administrative manner as is characteristic of the traditional housekeeping administrative form of government. The making of plans, such is the intended responsibility of the Community Committees according to The City of Winnipeg Act, is not required in this form of government. Winnipeg Councillors, in general, perceive their role to be that of a trustee overseeing the provision of municipal services to their ward. They do not feel that they require assistance, in the form of a citizens' policy advisory group, in carrying out their administrative duties.

THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT'S VIEW ON CITY PLANNING AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN WINNIPEG

The current Provincial Government's view on city planning and citizen participation in Winnipeg is one of concern with the lack of city planning and citizen participation which takes place. In late 1982 the Minister of Urban Affairs, Eugene Kostyra, announced that the Province would soon begin a major review of The City of Winnipeg Act. The

review was to concentrate on the citizen participation aspects of The City of Winnipeg Act. In the announcement, Kostyra said "the review will deal with ways to make city councillors more responsive to people, something they haven't been in the past".¹⁶ Kostyra also said he hoped the results of the review would "make the City of Winnipeg more accessible and more responsive to its people".¹⁷ The Minister felt that it was important that "individuals participate in civic politics and have access to city hall".¹⁸

Kostyra also announced, at the time, the Province's desire for the City to adopt a schedule for the preparation and approval of six community plans to be dealt with at the Community Committee level.¹⁹ In a letter to the City of Winnipeg, February 24, 1983, Kostyra advised:

"My letter of October 27, 1982 affirmed the Province's support for the preparation and adoption of comprehensive plans as required by The City of Winnipeg Act. The Province also requested that the City consider the adoption of a schedule for the preparation and adoption of additional plans and policies including "community plans" for Community Committee areas, as provided for in the City of Winnipeg Act.

As discussed at the last meeting of the City of Winnipeg Official Delegation, the Province is committed to working cooperatively with the City of Winnipeg in assisting with the preparation of community plans. In 1983/84 the Province is prepared to contribute 50% of the cost of initiating the preparation of community plans in two Community Committee areas, up to a maximum provincial contribution of \$75,000.²⁰

The current Minister of Urban Affairs, Mary Beth Dolin, appointed in the spring of 1983, recently reiterated the Province's concern with planning and citizen participation in Winnipeg. In a presentation to an urban politics class at the University of Winnipeg, March 2, 1984, Dolin stated:

"The Department of Urban Affairs has identified urban policy objectives for the City of Winnipeg. These objectives reflect the philosophical orientation of the present provincial government which includes:

- emphasis on citizen participation and decentralized planning, and
- conservation and rehabilitation of inner city areas and historically significant areas and sites."²¹

Dolin, later in the presentation, again commented on the Provincial Government's commitment to the principle that "people should be involved in the planning of their community".²²

Oddly, neither the current Minister of Urban Affairs or her predecessor explained why the Provincial Government believes so strongly in the need for greater citizen participation or that a lack of citizen involvement actually exists. Neither have the Ministers explained the reason why their proposal for enhanced participation in plan-making is required or why it might be workable. They only stated that it is desirable to have citizen participation in city planning.

Thus, the Provincial Government holds the view that the Residents' Advisory Groups, or a similar organization having as its objective that of enhancing citizen participation, in policy decision-making should be encouraged to operate (in an effective manner) in the City's communities.

THE ROLE OF THE RESIDENTS' ADVISORY GROUPS IN WINNIPEG'S LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The 1976 Committee of Review had set out in its report the role of Winnipeg's local government as intended by The City of Winnipeg Act and the role of citizen participation in such a policy-making form of local government. As mentioned earlier in this chapter the Committee's report described the obvious failure of the Unicity Government in performing its

policy-making function. The Committee noted the Unicity Government's neglect of policy in favour of administrative matters. Much of the Committee of Review's recommendations centred on improving the government's ability to make policy. The Committee concluded that the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure could play a key role in the policy-making process of local government.

"We found that the Community Committees and Residents' Advisory Groups are important components of the city and should be retained and made more effective. We believe that they can be made most effective if they have a real responsibility in the policy-making process, which is, in effect, the planning process. At the local level this means a real involvement in the preparation of district plans and action area plans and in citizens advising their councillors on amendments to the development plan."²³

The Committee of Review, however, stipulated that the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure could only succeed in its prescribed role if such policy-making activities actually occur. The Committee of Review stated that the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure would only work if:

"...the activities of formulating policies and incorporating them in city plans and guidelines, and in implementing programs, actually occur. If they do not occur, then, obviously, the communication and exchange of information between the Community Committees and the local citizens will be no different from that which existed previously."²⁴

The Committee of Review's reasoning appears to be very sound and logical. If the Residents' Advisory Groups, having as their objective that of involving citizens in local government policy-making, cannot perform as intended because the local government does not make policy,

then they cannot ever hope to be effective. This has in fact, however, been the case since the inception of the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure. The Unicity Government has not performed its policy-making role as intended by The City of Winnipeg Act and as a result the Residents' Advisory Groups have had nothing of substance in which to become involved.

Winnipeg's local government has not made policy because it is not a policy-making form of government. The Unicity Government, as was intended by the creation of municipal government, is basically a provider of municipal services. The City of Winnipeg Act provided features and structures to enhance the operation of a policy-making form of government but it didn't provide increased functional responsibilities in which to make policy. The Unicity Government was not given the means of tackling the serious contemporary problems of the city. The Unicity Government does not have the scope, nor the resources to tackle the critical issues of urban growth, urban planning, urban transportation, urban economic development, and urban social policy.²⁵ These issues are clearly matters for senior levels of government.

The Provincial Government's recent encouragement of the City to formulate community plans seems to be based solely on the fact that the City of Winnipeg Act states that the City should produce comprehensive plans. An error in the Provincial Government's reasoning is that the nature of the current Winnipeg government bears very little resemblance to the type of government envisioned by The City of Winnipeg Act. The Act intended the government to be an active, interventionist form of government that had as its main responsibility the formulation of policies

to meet contemporary urban needs. The Unicity Government was intended to be a planning-oriented government. The existing Winnipeg government, however, is not the planner of the city. The formulation of community plans or in other words, policy formulation, is not a function of Winnipeg's traditional housekeeping administrative form of government.

For policy formulation to be a meaningful function of government there must exist a political commitment and a financial commitment to plan. Winnipeg's local government cannot make policy to guide the future development of the city because it does not have the competence to make either commitment. It is only in a few limited areas that the local government is in a position of authority to make policy.

The one area that local governments have traditionally been granted authority, that is, in matters related to the development of land, decreased substantially as a function of Winnipeg's government after the early 1970's. As indicated in the previous chapter, after the early 1970's Winnipeg's growth rate declined to a very low level, almost approaching zero. Winnipeg's reduced growth rate brought a reduced demand for land for development which resulted in the Residents' Advisory Groups having very few development issues in which to become involved.

As previously noted, many Winnipeg Councillors hold a limited view of the role of local government. Such a view is appropriate and couldn't be much different, considering the limited competence of local government. As stated by the former Unicity Deputy Mayor, Dick Wankling:

"...the city is providing the services it was set up to handle."²⁶

Despite the intent of The City of Winnipeg Act and the Act's changes to the structure of the government this limited view of city government continues to pervade City Council.

Not only does the City Council and city administration view the Government as a traditional housekeeping administrative form of local government but so do the majority of Winnipeg residents. Residents, for the most part, entrust in their councillor the responsibility of making decisions on civic matters. Residents only involve themselves in the local government process if they perceive that an issue will directly affect them. Individual residents, residents' groups or other interest group organizations become involved in the local government process in traditional ways. They voice their concerns to their councillor by either contacting their councillor by phone, signing a petition, confronting their councillor in person at an informal meeting or making representation at a public hearing. Such traditional means of participation work well under a traditional housekeeping form of government, provided, the residents are made aware of upcoming items of interest. Under this form of government to ensure citizen awareness of issues and citizen access to government, City business must be well publicized.

In summary, a vehicle having as its role that of involving citizens in local government policy-making is not required in a traditional housekeeping administrative form of local government.

CONCLUSION

The Residents' Advisory Groups do not have a role to perform in the current local government and, unless the role of Winnipeg's government is significantly altered by the Provincial Government's current review of The City of Winnipeg Act, then the Residents' Advisory Groups will continue to be inactive participatory vehicles.

Footnotes: Chapter Four

1. Earl Levin, "Urban Planning in Winnipeg: Directions for the 1980's". The Bonnycastle Lecture. Winnipeg, March 19, 1984, p. 3.
2. Committee of Review City of Winnipeg Act, Report and Recommendations, Province of Manitoba, 1976, p. 3.
3. Committee of Review, Report and Recommendations, p. 45.
4. Committee of Review, Report and Recommendations, p. 45.
5. Committee of Review, Report and Recommendations, p. 88.
6. Committee of Review, Report and Recommendations, p. 88.
7. Committee of Review, Report and Recommendations, p. 89.
8. Committee of Review, Report and Recommendations, p. 89.
9. Committee of Review, Report and Recommendations, p. 100.
10. Committee of Review, Report and Recommendations, p. 100.
11. Committee of Review, Report and Recommendations, p. 107.
12. David G. Henderson, "Citizen Participation in Local Planning". Presented to the University in the Inner City Seminar, University of Winnipeg. Winnipeg, 1983, p. 5.
13. Henderson, p. 5.
14. Department of Environmental Planning, City of Winnipeg, "Neighbourhood Management and District Planning". Winnipeg. (Mimeographed), p. 1.
15. Department of Environmental Planning, City of Winnipeg, p. 1.
16. "Province to embark on major review of Winnipeg Act" Winnipeg Free Press, 17 November 1982, p. 3.
17. "Province to embark", Winnipeg Free Press, p. 3.
18. "Province to embark", Winnipeg Free Press, p. 3.
19. "Province to embark", Winnipeg Free Press, p. 3.
20. Province of Manitoba, Minister of Urban Affairs, 1984 Provincial Financial Assistant to the City of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, 1984.
21. Minister for Urban Affairs Mary Beth Dolin. "Provincial/Municipal Relations in Urban Decision-Making". Presented to an urban politics class at the University of Winnipeg. Winnipeg, March 2, 1984, p. 5.

22. Minister for Urban Affairs, Mary Beth Dolin. "Provincial/Municipal Relations", p. 12.
23. Committee of Review, Report and Recommendations, p. 136.
24. Committee of Review, Report and Recommendations, p. 84.
25. Lloyd Axworthy, "Local Government Reform". Occasional paper, Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, 1979, p. 31.
26. P. H. Wichern Jr., "Winnipeg's Unicity After Two Years: Evaluation of an Experiment in Urban Government". Presented to the Canadian Political Science Association Annual Meetings. Toronto, June 3-6, 1974, p. 46.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

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The Residents' Advisory Groups did not fail in their objective of involving citizens in local government because the role of the Community Committee-Residents' Advisory Group structure was limited or unclear or because Unicity councillors were not committed to following the intent of the legislation, as has been put forward by many researchers after having analysed the plight of the Residents' Advisory Groups. Rather, the Residents' Advisory Groups' failure was due to the Unicity Government's limited policy-making responsibility,- indicative of a traditional housekeeping administrative form of government.

The City of Winnipeg Act sought to update local government by creating an active policy-making form of government, complete with legislated citizen participation provisions. The Provincial Government, however, failed to articulate in the legislation all that was required to create such a government. The legislation included a revamped structure to house a policy-making form of government, but, it did not provide the necessary responsibility in which the local government was to make policy. The legislation did not include a new division of authority and power between the Provincial and City governments. It did not address the requirement of the development of a new relationship between the two governments. The City of Winnipeg Act essentially only created a restructured traditional local government.

As long as local government in Winnipeg remains the traditional housekeeping administrative form, then, a citizens' organization to be involved in policy-making is not required. The traditional form of local government, however, is not capable of addressing contemporary urban problems and should be replaced by a government that has the responsibility, power and resources for doing so. A new agreement between the Provincial and City governments, on the functions of an urban government, is required.

The ills of the city, which were to have been effectively addressed by The City of Winnipeg Act, have not been addressed. Tinkering with the machinery of local government, which the Province seems to hold as the answer to urban problems, will not work. What is required is for the Provincial Government to accept that the vast majority of urban problems are of a social and economic nature and are properly the responsibility of the federal and provincial governments. If the Province expects the city government to formulate policies and programs to cope with urban problems, then, it must in turn delegate the appropriate power and resources. It would only be under such a realignment of responsibility that constructive citizen participation in local government could occur.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR RESIDENTS' ADVISORS

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE NO.: _____

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE: _____

1. Why did you join the residents' advisory group?

2. In the City of Winnipeg Act, Section 21(4) the role of a residents' advisory group is defined as, "to advise and assist the members of the community committee for the community at whose conference they were elected". Has this, in fact, been the role of your residents' advisory group?

3. What have been the major accomplishments or successes of your residents' advisory group?

4. Over the years participation in residents' advisory groups has declined. In your opinion what is the reason for this decline?

5. (a) What should the proper role of the residents' advisory group be?

- (b) What changes are necessary in the legislation in order to effectively implement your suggested role of the residents' advisory group?

APPENDIX II

APPENDIX II: PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF PEOPLE WHO GAVE THEIR CONSENT TO BE INTERVIEWED DURING THE COURSE OF THIS STUDY:

1. John Angus
Winnipeg City Councillor
2. Alan Artibise
Director, Institute of Urban Studies
University of Winnipeg
3. Charles Birt
Winnipeg City Councillor
4. Farley Cates
Planning Consultant
5. Peter Diamant
Director, Department of Urban Affairs
Government of Manitoba
6. Al Ducharme
Winnipeg City Councillor
7. Jae Eadie
Winnipeg City Councillor
8. Doug Kalcsics
District Planning Coordinator
City of Winnipeg
9. Matt Kiernan
Assistant General Manager
Winnipeg Core Area Initiative
10. Chris Knoll
District Planner, City of Winnipeg
11. Harold Macdonald
Winnipeg City Councillor
12. Helen Promislow
Winnipeg City Councillor
13. Jim Moore
Winnipeg City Councillor
14. Bill Neville
Winnipeg City Councillor
15. Bill Norrie
Mayor, City of Winnipeg
16. Don Pentland
District Planner, City of Winnipeg
17. Helen Promislow
Winnipeg City Councillor
18. Ruth Rannie
Member, Wolseley Residents Association
19. Evelyne Reese
Winnipeg City Councillor
20. Claudette Toupin
Planner, Department of Urban Affairs
Government of Manitoba
21. Len Vopnfjord
Chief Planner, City of Winnipeg

22. Marilyn Walder

Planner, Department of Urban Affairs,
Government of Manitoba

23. Tom Yauk

Program Coordinator, Housing and
Community Improvement Branch
City of Winnipeg

24. Joe Zuken

Winnipeg City Councillor