



The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce

**Presentation To The
Regional Planning Advisory
Committee For Manitoba's
Capital Region
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INTRODUCTION:

The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, (hereinafter referred to as the MCC), wishes to thank the Regional Planning Advisory Committee For Manitoba's Capital Region, (hereinafter referred to as the RPAC), for the opportunity to respond to its public discussion paper, "Strengthening Manitoba's Capital Region: General Principles and Policy Directions", (hereinafter referred to as the RPAC discussion paper).

The MCC is the umbrella organization for Manitoba's chamber movement. We are unique in a number of respects. Consisting of direct corporate members as well as local chambers, we represent 74 communities and over 10,000 businesses across Manitoba. As such we are the largest business lobby in Manitoba. We are also unique as a business association in that our membership is not restricted to a particular area within Manitoba, a particular size of business, or a particular sector of industry.

Given this diversity, it is not surprising that many of the challenges that our members ask us to help address are often the very issues that confront those that live within the Capital Region. For example, at our last Annual General Meeting, which was held from April 12 to the 14th of 2002, our membership adopted Resolutions in relation to Clusters (Economic Development), infrastructure funding for crop diversification, the intensive livestock application process, urban development, and tax sharing within municipal areas.¹ Each of these Resolutions touches upon issues that have been raised in the RPAC discussion paper.

While it is therefore tempting to rush to comment on these specific issues, the MCC feels that it is more important to 'step back' and emphasize the distinction between the specific issues that are facing those within the Capital Region and the Capital Region as a concept. Perhaps this distinction is best understood as follows:

In seeking to strengthen our Capital Region the ultimate goal is not to equip the Region so that it can respond to a **specific** issue (e.g. intensive livestock operations, tax-sharing etc.). The ultimate goal is to create a Capital Region that has the level of cooperation, the dynamic, that can respond to **any** issue that may arise.

The MCC has always supported the Capital Region as a concept. However, in doing so it has always worked to assist those within the Region to develop their own consensus as to how they can work together, and consciously avoided a process that simply imposed the MCC's views as to the specific plan that the Region should embrace.

Unfortunately, the MCC is very concerned that the provincial government, as well as the RPAC which it created, are losing sight of this crucial distinction. For this reason, rather than addressing the specific issues raised in the RPAC discussion paper, our submission will largely focus on the two general points that we feel must be addressed if the Capital Region is ever going to attain the dynamic that it so desperately needs: 'Facilitating Inter-Municipal Cooperation Within The Capital Region' and 'Building An Economic Vision'.

¹ These Resolutions are attached as an Appendix to this submission.

Over the last two years the MCC has held a number of meetings in relation to the Capital Region. These meetings have taken place throughout the Capital Region and have involved representatives from the Chambers within the Capital Region (Winnipeg, St. Boniface, Headingly, Assiniboia, Selkirk, Landmark, and Stonewall), members of the private sector, and members of the public sector (including representatives of Intergovernmental Affairs and Economic Development Winnipeg).

The last meeting of chambers of the Capital Region occurred on May 14, 2002. This meeting was specifically prompted by the release of the RPAC discussion document. It should be noted that during the meeting of May 14 the local chambers endorsed the views contained herein and requested the MCC to make this submission to RPAC.

FACILITATING INTER-MUNICIPAL COOPERATION WITHIN THE CAPITAL REGION:

The first step in facilitating inter-municipal cooperation within the Capital Region is to recognize that its history has produced a certain mindset within the Region that, if not pervasive, is certainly predominant. This mindset was most recently noted by the RPAC when it stated, “The RPAC has heard from a number of rural municipalities that one of their primary regional concerns is their relationship with the City of Winnipeg. The City, on the other hand, expressed concerns related to development issues on its fringe. Missed opportunities for sharing of services as well as poor communications among neighbouring municipalities were cited as examples.”²

Lack of communication and mistrust often emerge as themes in studies relating to the Capital Region. Yet, to date, little has been done to address this challenge in a meaningful way. For example, the RPAC discussion paper attempts to address this issue under the heading “Talking To Each Other”.³ “Talking To Each Other” seems to focus on increasing the level of communication within the Region. However, while the quantity of communication may be important, it is the quality that is crucial.

Simply increasing the amount of dialogue will accomplish little if the underlying attitudes of those who are engaging in the dialogue are not addressed. That is why “The Final Report of the Capital Region Review Panel”, which we regard as the seminal study of the Region, stated as follows:

As important as Regional land use planning may be – particularly in the strategic context suggested in our Interim Report (Part 1 Interim Report, section 1.5.2, p. 35) – it would most effectively be instituted in a cooperative context. In the present circumstances, it is the Panel’s view that Regional thinking would be better served by development of a more effective **Regional framework or structure** rather than by the imposition of a **Regional plan**.⁴ [emphasis added]

The MCC is concerned that the RPAC discussion paper seems to focus on a ‘Regional plan’ as opposed to a ‘Regional framework’. What is the difference? A ‘Regional framework’ brings together the key

² See the RPAC discussion paper at p.8.

³ See the RPAC discussion paper at p.9.

⁴ “The Final Report of the Capital Region Review Panel”, December 1999, at p.53.

entities of the region in a manner that empowers them so that they can solve the challenges facing the region in a cooperative and effective manner. A ‘Regional plan’ is the actual strategy for the region.

Ideally, the ‘Regional plan’ arises from the dialogue that is facilitated through the ‘Regional framework’. In fact, if the ‘Regional plan’ is to be embraced by the members of the region in any meaningful way, it should be left to arise from the ‘Regional framework’. In essence it is the difference between the members of a region determining their own plan as opposed to it being dictated to them.

Here it is also useful to note the typical manner in which a ‘Regional framework’ leads to a ‘Regional plan’. Specifically, the plan cannot be rushed. First the ‘Regional framework’ must be allowed to generate goodwill and trust within the region. In turn, that goodwill and trust generates the truly open, cooperative and effective dialogue that is necessary in order to develop an effective ‘Regional plan’. In the words of “The Final Report of the Capital Region Review Panel”:

We have observed that most regional associations begin essentially as a forum for discussion of regional issues. As mutual trust develops, the member governments, over the years, tend to give the regional association successive increments of authority to deal with specific boundary issues as they arise.

A classic international example at another level is the European Union, a regional association formed more than 40 years ago by nations some of which had recently been at war. In the early years, establishing a level of trust and a sense of regional unity was the primary objective. The EU today represents more than 40 years of evolution. The same pattern of evolution is evident in regional associations of municipal governments in North America. Regional associations tend to walk before they run.⁵

While one may argue that the associations within the Capital Region have had a chance to ‘walk’ and now they are ready to ‘run’, the dynamics of mistrust and animosity identified by the RPAC discussion paper confirm that this is not the case.

In any event, there has not been any attempt to build upon, in any meaningful way, the legacy of cooperation, such as it is, that has occurred within the Region. For example, the RPAC discussion paper identifies three associations that have formed within the Capital Region: the Association of Regional Municipalities, the Capital Region Committee, and the Mayors and Reeves of the Capital Region.⁶ Yet there appears to be no effort to draw from these experiences – there is no analysis of what has worked, what has not, what the barriers have been, what has been gained, and how these efforts can be built upon.

First and foremost the Provincial Government must inspire and empower cooperation among those within the Capital Region. It will not do so by providing a ‘Regional plan’. It will do so by facilitating a ‘Regional framework’ whereby the members of the Region can, on an ongoing basis, set their own ‘Regional plan’.

⁵ Ibid at p. 72.

⁶ pp. 3-4.

In addition to establishing this 'Regional Framework', the provincial government must inspire and empower cooperation among those within the Capital Region by promoting the idea that, in the era of globalization, those within the Capital Region will only thrive if they work, and compete globally, as a unit. Further, the provincial government must also take the lead in entrenching within the Region, once and for all, the idea that when one part of the Capital Region prospers it benefits all parts of the Region.

These principles seem to be missing from the RPAC discussion document. Indeed, the MCC is very concerned that the RPAC discussion document may actually detract from these principles (i.e. divide rather than unite the Region). An example in this regard is the document's discussion of population growth within the Capital Region.

The discussion paper first mentions the issue of population growth in a 'Did You Know' that contrasts a decade of population growth inside Winnipeg, (0.07% annually), with the population growth for the Capital Region outside of Winnipeg, (1.3% annually).⁷ One could interpret this as supporting the idea that the Region outside of Winnipeg is draining Winnipeg of its population. While these numbers occur on page 2 of the RPAC discussion paper, it is not until halfway into the paper where it is noted:

It would be unfair however, to assume that development outside of Winnipeg's limits has been the principal cause of the City's slow growth.

The issue of Winnipeg's inner city decline is complex and controversial. Most cities in North America have suffered similarly to greater or lesser degree. The current evidence and understanding of the regional growth process suggests that the decline has been accelerated more by residential and commercial development within the city's boundaries than anything that has occurred in the surrounding Capital Region municipalities.⁸

This point is well taken. However, two pages later we are provided with "A Capital Region Reality Check" where we are told:

Myth: 'Urban sprawl in the rural areas of the Capital Region is not a problem because, compared to some other cities, it is only a relatively small amount of growth.

Reality: Because Winnipeg is a slow-growth city, peripheral development can actually be more of an issue than in cities that are growing rapidly.⁹

There are a number of concerns regarding this line of reasoning. First, suggesting that one area is bleeding another of population betrays the idea that when one area prospers the entire region prospers. Secondly, this line of reasoning simply serves to fuel a mentality that has proved to be a barrier to cooperation in the past, i.e. an 'us' versus 'them' (Winnipeg versus the rest of the Capital Region) attitude when it comes to population growth.

⁷ Ibid p. 2.

⁸ Ibid p. 14.

⁹ Ibid p. 16.

Thirdly, drawing attention to the population issue in the manner in which it was raised will not lead to any satisfactory resolution for, as was noted in the “The Final Report of the Capital Region Review Panel”, “... personal preference is not readily legislated or regulated. It would be as futile to argue that Winnipeg residents should not be permitted to move to Saskatoon as to suggest that they should not be free to move to Stonewall.”¹⁰

Fourthly, simply providing numbers regarding population growth does not assist in determining the true nature of the problem. For example, how many people is Winnipeg losing to international migration as opposed to migration to the other areas within the Capital Regions? How many people is Winnipeg losing to interprovincial migration as opposed to migration to the other areas within the Capital Regions?

There are two basic types of migration, interprovincial migration and international migration. From 1991 to 2001 Manitoba’s total net migration, (i.e. the number of people leaving minus the amount of people coming in), amounted to a loss of 20,116 people – an average net loss of 1,829 Manitobans a year.¹¹

The ‘Did You Know’ of the RPAC discussion paper talks in terms of 10 years where Winnipeg’s population grew by 4,330 and the rest of the Capital Region’s population grew by 10,560. From 1991 to 2001 a total of **218,731** Manitobans left our province – an average loss of 21,824 Manitobans a year.

In 2001 Manitoba had a total net migration loss of 2,809 people – more than five times the loss in 2000. This was the largest loss in 4 years, in fact, if you do not include the exodus in 1997, the year of the Flood of the Century, 2000 marked the largest net loss in 8 years. The bright spots were Saskatchewan, where we had a net gain of 410 people (up 74 from 2000), and Ontario, where we only had a net loss of 861 people (down by 416 compared to 2000).

However, in 2001 we had a net loss to Alberta of 3,122 Manitobans. That is 1,100 more than in 2000 and a 5-year high. In fact, if you exclude the year of the flood, it is the highest loss to Alberta for the period covered (the numbers provided go back to 1991). 2001 saw a net loss to British Columbia of 967, (up 579 from 2000) - the highest net loss to British Columbia since 1997.

It is clear that the true challenge facing the Capital Region is not Winnipeg’s loss of people to the other areas in the Capital Region – in fact, when you look at the hemorrhaging of our talent to other jurisdictions we should be grateful that we keep Manitobans any way we can. The real problem is the Capital Region’s loss of talent to other jurisdictions.

Note that when this issue is presented in its proper context it becomes a challenge for the Region and, once again, we are on the track of ‘what helps one area in the Region helps the entire Region’. However, with respect, the RPAC discussion paper does not put the challenge in this light. Instead, it chose to put the challenge in a context that pits one area of the Capital Region against the other. This is perhaps the best illustration of what we mean when we say that we are concerned that the RPAC discussion paper may lead us down a path that divides more than it unites.

¹⁰ p. 44.

¹¹ All numbers regarding migration are sourced from the Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, “Quarterly Population Statistics Report”, January 2002, Table 1.

As indicated, we feel that the RPAC is focusing on setting up a 'Regional plan' as opposed to a 'Regional framework' that will lead to the production of a consensual 'Regional plan'. As a result, the RPAC discussion document is moving the dialogue away from a discussion of how we can set up a cooperative framework to what the plan should be. This is dangerous for two reasons. Without the insurance of a genuinely cooperative mechanism many will regard the plan that is proposed with suspicion or skepticism.

Secondly, even if a consensus emerges as to the plan proposed by the RPAC, a cooperative mechanism/framework will still be necessary in order to figure out how the plan should be implemented. Some examples from the RPAC discussion paper illustrate this point:

- Sub-paragraph 2.4.3 m) states, in part, "The renewal and revitalization of the inner city of Winnipeg should be a **priority**."¹² [Emphasis added]: How will this affect the importance of the other areas in the Capital Region? How will it affect the importance of other areas in the city of Winnipeg? When is one permitted to move away from this 'priority'? Should we be discussing these issues, can we effectively discuss these issues, before we set up a cooperative 'Regional framework' that we have confidence in?
- Sub-paragraph 2.4.3 e) states "Developments that would **significantly** detract from or weaken downtowns should be discouraged due to significant public infrastructure investment already in place, as well as the social and historical significance of these downtowns."¹³ [Emphasis added]: Even if the RPAC hearings reveal that there is consensus on this general principle it will mean nothing until "significantly" is defined. We will need a 'Regional framework' that can flesh out this phrase in a cooperative/productive manner.
- Sub-paragraph 2.4.3 k) states "The **priority** for development in urban centers should take place in the following order..."¹⁴ [Emphasis added]: Again, even if the RPAC hearings reveal that there is consensus on this general principle it will mean nothing until the standard that permits moving from one priority to another is defined. We will need a 'Regional framework' that can flesh out this phrase in a cooperative/productive manner.

The Capital Region will always face a myriad of challenges and opportunities. Specific challenges and opportunities will ebb and flow. Some will remain but their nature will change over time. In order to respond to this constant flux the Capital Region needs a framework that will help it respond to **any issue** as opposed to a directive that sets in place how it should respond to **specific** issues. The key is to create the underlying dynamic that will allow the Region to respond to any issue in a unified, informed and cooperative fashion. Without this basic regional framework we are simply debating words that will go no nowhere.

Consider in this regard the 1996 Capital Region Strategy released by the provincial government of the day. That process led to the identification of 5 policy areas, 30 policies and 200 actions to guide

¹² RPAC discussion paper p. 20.

¹³ Ibid p. 19.

¹⁴ Ibid p. 19.

regional decision-making. The result? In the words of “Planning Manitoba’s Capital Region: NEXT STEPS”, (hereinafter referred to as Next Steps), “But while it was adopted in principle by the Province, the Strategy was not implemented in any significant or formal way.”¹⁵

If RPAC, as well as the provincial government, insist on moving towards a ‘Regional plan’ as opposed to a ‘Regional framework’, - again, this is a course of action that we strongly recommend against - there are some concerns as to the lack of progress in relation to certain specific issues relating to the ‘Regional plan’. For example:

- Tax-Sharing: This issue was identified in 1999 in “The Final Report of the Capital Region Review Panel”¹⁶ It was also identified in January of 2001 in “Next Steps” as follows: “The Province will work with the municipalities in the Capital Region towards developing tax-sharing models that are mutually beneficial.”¹⁷

The RPAC:

- began its deliberations in late September of 2001;
- met individually with 15 of the Capital Region Municipalities;
- met with a number of non-government and government experts in related fields;
- reviewed a number of reports from Manitoba on various issues relating to the Capital Region; and
- reviewed numerous other reports, documents and studies related to regional planning, including models in locations such as Alberta, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Minnesota, Colorado, Maryland, Wisconsin, Ohio, New York¹⁸.

As a result of these initiatives RPAC released its discussion paper in April of 2002. The discussion paper had this to say about the issue of tax-sharing:

- a) Some form of inter-municipal tax-sharing may be appropriate for the Capital Region. The provincial government should continue to investigate inter-municipal tax-sharing models.
- b) If an appropriate tax-sharing model is developed, it could be considered for adoption by municipalities in the Capital Region. Any such model should take into account the costs and benefits to all municipalities and the region as a whole.¹⁹

With respect, to pursue this issue with so little progress after three years, and after such commitment and such effort, is very troubling.

¹⁵ Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs, January 2001, Appendix C, p. C 8.

¹⁶ p. 47.

¹⁷ p. iii Action item 8.

¹⁸ RPAC discussion paper p. 3.

¹⁹ Ibid p. 10.

Similar points may be raised regarding the issues of the sharing of services²⁰, consistency of planning legislation²¹, and the mediation of inter-regional disputes.²²

We are also concerned that there appears to have been no follow-up on the recommendation of “The Final Report of the Capital Region Review Panel” that “A process is required to measure the regional impact and to decide when a project deserves regional review.”²³

If the ideas that a) the Region will only thrive if we all work together; and b) when one part of the Region prospers it enhances all parts of the Region, are the necessary pillars to cooperation within the Capital Region, the ultimate incentive to work towards this goal of cooperation comes from a sound economic vision for the Region – a vision whereby each member can see, **in a concrete way**, how working together in a cooperative manner will enhance their own vitality as well as the vitality of the Region.

BUILDING AN ECONOMIC VISION:

At the end of the day the ultimate spur to cooperation will be the power of the economic vision that is developed for the Capital Region. In essence, the economic vision is the hub on which everything revolves. In the words of the “The Final Report of the Capital Region Review Panel”, “Because this may be a gradual process, we suggest that first priority be given to Provincial interest and involvement in economic development.”²⁴

To our minds the Interim and Final Reports of the Capital Region Review Panel suggested that the history of the Capital Region had not generated sufficient ‘good will’ within the Region to enable the region to address, in a cooperative way, the more difficult issues such as the sharing of services and taxes. We saw the Capital Region Review Panel as recommending that the Region focus on economic issues as a challenge that could unite the Region. Then, once success in that area generated some rapport and good will, the Region could move on to dealing with the more difficult issues.

The MCC held a number of consultations following the release of “The Final Report of the Capital Region Review Panel”. Our first meeting, which occurred on February 16, 2000 in Headingly, gathered 41 representatives from throughout the Capital Region. The most common themes that arose from that meeting were concerns as to a lack of vision for the area and an underlying feeling of mistrust - particularly when issues like the sharing of services or taxes arose. (The feelings of mistrust were expressed in a number of ways, e.g. “Perimeter vision”, “Winnipeg wants to stifle growth outside the

²⁰ Compare p. 31 of the 1999 Report, the general tone of “Next Steps”, and the RPAC discussion paper at p. 10.

²¹ Compare p. 74, 5.3.1 ‘Statutory Consistency’ of the 1999 Report, p. iii Action item 5 of “Next Steps” and p. 10 paragraph 2.2.3 b) of the RPAC discussion paper.

²² Compare p. 74, 2.3.4 ‘No Effective Structure for Discussion and Mediation’ of the 1999 Report, p. iii Action item 10 of “Next Steps” and p. 7 paragraph 2.1.6 d) of the RPAC discussion paper.

²³ p. 35.

²⁴ p. 75.

city” etc.). The representatives of the MCC had a substantial concern that it would never be possible to get everyone past that level of mistrust and onto the same page.

For the next MCC Capital Region meeting we decided to focus on economic development, specifically, the concept of ‘Clusters’ as a means of promoting economic development. We have since held meetings in Selkirk, Steinbach, again in Headingley, and Assiniboia between 2000 and 2001. In each of those meetings the attendees embraced the need for an economic vision for the Region. Because issues such as inter-region migration, service-sharing and tax-sharing were not raised, the attendees did not express feelings of mistrust, in fact the cooperative dynamic generated at each of the meetings was quite remarkable.

The provincial government must take the lead in developing the economic vision for the Capital Region. It must assist each element of the Region to formulate its own vision and then connect these visions to produce one encompassing vision for the whole Region. This vision must be proactive rather than reactive. It must stamp the Region with a genuinely entrepreneurial attitude and brand it, locally as well as globally, with this economic vision.

On occasion when representatives of the MCC speak to our members about the Capital Region the question will arise, “What about a ‘stick’, don’t you need a mechanism to make sure that those within the Region will cooperate?” The answer is that you cannot force cooperation. In fact, if you are at the point where you need to force cooperation chances are it is because you have not created the proper environment for cooperation. If a proper ‘Regional framework’ is created; if you properly ‘sell’ the idea that the Region will only thrive if it works in unison; if you properly ‘sell’ the idea that where one member of the Region prospers it is good for the whole Region; and if you develop an economic vision that inspires and excites the Region, the desire and commitment to cooperate will emerge.

The RPAC discussion document lists the number of instances where this has happened within pockets of the Capital Region. It worked without coercion because, when it is set up properly, coercion isn’t necessary.

THE BOUNDARIES OF THE CAPITAL REGION:

While we are open to changing the boundaries of the Capital Region, and the commutershed seems the most logical boundary, we feel it is more important to first create the dynamic of cooperation and the economic vision for the current Capital Region. Until these principles are achieved no change in boundaries will advance the prospect of cooperation that is necessary for a vital Region. Further, once the Region gains momentum through that cooperation and economic vision we anticipate that other areas will be more open to joining the Capital Region.

CONCLUSION:

As indicated, the MCC has been working with the theory of ‘clusters’ as a basis for economic development planning.²⁵ In reading a number of studies about ‘clusters’ and how regions compete to attract or retain industry in a global economy an interesting pattern emerged. It seems that there is a growing consensus that the key factor in this regard is a region's capability to have its constituents, (government, business, labour and education) work together in a cooperative and effective way:

[T]he enduring competitive advantages in a global economy lie increasingly in local things – knowledge, relationships, motivation – that distant rivals cannot match.²⁶

If Manitoba's Capital Region is to thrive it must build a Regional Framework that empowers this dynamic.

Accordingly, and in summary, the MCC recommends that:

- 1) The Provincial Government must take the lead in building a ‘Regional framework’ rather than a ‘Regional plan’. The key is not to respond to specific issues, the key is to create a partnership within the Capital Region that can respond to any issue.
- 2) In addition to this ‘Regional framework’ the Provincial Government must work to instill within the Region the realization that:
 - those within the Region will only truly prosper if they compete as a Region rather than individually; and
 - when one part of the Region prospers the entire Region benefits.

In essence the Provincial Government must create an atmosphere where Capital Region sees itself as an ‘economic buffet’ - a variety of flavours for any business that wishes to remain or locate within the Region - rather than a series of competing restaurants.

- 3) The Provincial Government must take the lead in helping each member of the Region develop its own economic vision. In conjunction with this effort the Provincial Government must work to develop an economic vision for the entire Region.
- 4) Specific issues such as tax sharing, the need for a secretariat or various water strategies must, where at all practicable, be postponed until a ‘Regional framework’ has been developed that can address these issues in a cooperative and effective manner. The RPAC as well as the Provincial Government must avoid the temptation of ‘leap frogging’ this process by collecting individual opinions on these issues and then identify the apparent consensus. Instead, the RPAC and the government should build a framework that brings individuals together so that those individuals can develop the consensus for the Region.

²⁵ The MCC has prepared a paper that attempts to explain the concept of ‘clusters’. This paper is available by contacting Dan Overall at 948-0103.

²⁶ Michael E. Porter, (1998) “Clusters and the New Economics of Competition”, Harvard Business Review November-December 1998, p. 78.

- 5) The Provincial Government must also work to ensure that the various economic development agencies within the Region work together in a way that recognizes the importance of planning on a regional scale.²⁷

Once again, the MCC would like to thank the RPAC for the opportunity to present its views on Manitoba's Capital Region.

²⁷ See in this regard the comments of the "The Final Report of the Capital Region Review Panel" at p. 55.

APPENDIX

RESOLUTION: CLUSTERS

Preamble: The cluster concept continues to gain renown as a tool for creating a successful long-term economic development strategy. In its background paper to the Manitoba Century Summit of March 2000 the Provincial Government stated as follows:

Globalization, management of information, communications infrastructure, innovation, timely investments and a highly skilled workforce characterize the new economy. To be successful in this environment regions should:

- Develop an economic community in which there is collaboration among business, government, education, and community leaders to address challenges and opportunities.
- Develop niches or **key clusters**.
- Concentrate on value added activities
(Emphasis Added)

On February 12, 2002, the Federal Government released Achieving Excellence: Investing In People, Knowledge And Opportunity. Heralded as the economic cornerstone to the Federal Government's innovation agenda, Achieving Excellence sets out a number of priorities for the Federal Government. One of the identified priorities is to, "Support the development of globally competitive **industrial** clusters." (Emphasis Added)

Resolution: That the Government of Manitoba collaborate with business, education, labour, and community leaders to develop a long-term economic development strategy for Manitoba. Further, that this collaborative process should utilize the cluster concept wherever possible.

RESOLUTION: INTENSIVE LIVESTOCK APPLICATION PROCESS

Preamble: Agriculture remains a major component of Manitoba's growing economy. As declining grain markets put the squeeze on our prairie farmers, many responded by expanding and diversifying their businesses to include beef cattle and hog operations.

Manitoba hog farmers have quickly developed an international reputation for being among the best in the business, excelling at many industry measurables like quality of meat, site management, profitability and overall environmental sensitivity.

The current processing of Intensive Livestock Applications by Municipal Councils has proven to be largely ineffective. Many applications are delayed, derailed or even denied due to protesting local interest groups and/or inconsistent by-laws, even though the applications meet or exceed all current legislated requirements. Facing similar challenges, the Government of Alberta has moved to resolve this issue by assuming authority over the citing of Intensive Livestock Operations.

Resolution: That the Provincial Government take responsibility for administering the Intensive Livestock Applications by creating a provincial approval process that establishes and oversees enforceable and consistent regulations regarding environmental matters including the manure management handling process and determines the siting of Intensive Livestock Operations. This approval process should provide a key, but not determinative, role for municipalities so as to utilize municipal expertise and recommendations in relation to the siting. Further, that the Provincial Government, in setting up its own process, have due regard to the provincial approval process set up in Alberta.

RESOLUTION: INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING FOR CROP DIVERSIFICATION

Preamble: Agriculture has a significant impact upon Manitoba's economy. It is therefore vital that we ensure this sector remains healthy. The current financial pressures that many farming operations are facing can be mitigated by a business plan that includes diversification. As an example, irrigation of high-value crops is required and needs to be further developed and supported.

Resolution: That the Government of Manitoba establish, with or without Federal Government participation, a Capital Funding Program to assist infrastructure development to promote crop diversification and the production of high valued crops.

RESOLUTION: URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Preamble: At Confederation, provinces were given exclusive authority to determine the structure and powers of civic governments. In 1871, 1 in 5 Canadians lived in an incorporated urban centre.

Today, 86% of Canadians live in cities,²⁸ transforming urban centres into Canada's economic engines. While globalization has heightened competition, the battles are being waged not among nations but among city- regions or urban economic units.

Currently though, cities face many obstacles that impede their growth and prosperity. They include an over-reliance upon property tax, prescriptive provincial legislation that restricts the type of revenue models and taxes cities may utilize, and the downloading of responsibilities and services, most notably in the areas of transportation and infrastructure, from other levels of government.

The federal government, in concert with provincial governments, must take steps now to properly equip its urban centers with the tools to compete successfully.

²⁸ Statistics Canada; Canada West Foundation, 1999

Resolution: That the Federal Government:

- a) implement an urban development strategy that addresses the critical role and importance of cities in advancing economic prosperity and an exceptional quality of life for citizens nation-wide;
- b) expand their financial commitment and involvement in civic development, particularly within downtown revitalization, infrastructure, and transportation; and
- c) promote among provincial governments the need for cities to have the legislative flexibility to adjust civic revenue models to better link revenue to economic performance, without increasing the tax burden borne by citizens nation-wide.

RESOLUTION: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Preamble: Sustained economic development whether it is commercial, industrial or agricultural, continues to be a challenge for most Manitoba communities. The City of Portage la Prairie and the Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie have afforded themselves a decided advantage in the search for new businesses to relocate into their area. Both parties recognized that there are significant opportunities to promote and enhance economic development by working in a co-operative manner. To this end, they have entered into a tax-sharing agreement.

Resolution: That each Municipal Government assist economic development in their respective areas by adopting tax sharing agreements similar to that demonstrated by the City and Rural Municipality of Portage la Prairie.