

RED TAPE REDUCTION INITIATIVE

Stakeholder Engagement Summary

November 2019

Background

On January 22, 2019, The Executive Policy Committee directed the Office of Public Engagement work directly with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, business owners, and other stakeholders to identify a list of the top ten outdated by-laws or regulations Council could update or eliminate to make doing business in the city more efficient, and report back in 180 days.

Winnipeg's economy is growing and a strong economy requires ongoing evaluation to improve efficiency and access to services. The City of Winnipeg (City) worked with businesses and business organizations to learn more about the challenges they have experienced when interacting with the City of Winnipeg, and will develop a list of top 10 outdated by-laws or regulations that could be eliminated or streamlined to make doing business with the City more efficient.

Engagement

Stakeholders were asked to provide feedback through an open call for red tape and through sector-specific stakeholder meetings. Details are available in the table below.

Stakeholder feedback was sought to help answer:

- What challenges have you experienced when doing business with the City of Winnipeg?
- Which by-laws or regulations have caused challenges for you when doing business with the City of Winnipeg?
- Which of the by-laws or regulations should be the highest priority for streamlining or elimination?

Promotion

Stakeholder engagement opportunities were promoted using the following methods:

- City of Winnipeg website;

- Business tax bill insert – sent to 15,000 businesses;
- Requests to stakeholder to distribute within their networks;
- Facebook and Twitter posts;
- City of Winnipeg public engagement newsletter with over 5,300 recipients.

Key Findings

- Participants noted the importance of rules and regulations but stressed the need for clarity and ensuring the goals of regulations are reflected in the implementation.
- Respondents were asked to describe their red tape experience and most identified 'unfair' experiences (50 of 85 submissions).
- Most red tape submissions were related to permits (43 of 85)
- Improved customer service was a common topic in red tape submissions (31 of 85) and stakeholder meetings.
- Stakeholders suggested reducing duplicated work and reviewing arbitrary regulations to reduce red tape (among other suggestions; see Appendix D).

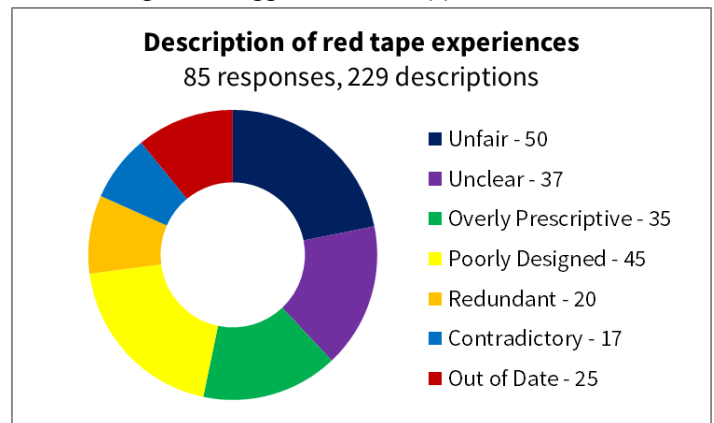


Figure 1 Pie chart: Description of red tape experiences. More than one description could be selected per submission

Date	Activity	Details
May 16 to June 2, 2019	Open call for red tape	85 submissions. In addition, four written submissions submitted through email.
August 6 to 9, 2019	Stakeholder meetings	Four meetings held with industry stakeholders. Topics were signage, outdoor renovations, home-based businesses, and occupancy permits.



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Red tape items	Stakeholder proposed solution	Department and department response/follow-up actions
<p>1. The City reviews drawings/work after a technical expert has signed off.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City should limit the scope of their review when an engineer has approved. The review should ensure the work is to municipal code and by-laws and not re-engineer the design. All technical experts have signed off, so drawing/work should not require additional review. 	<p>Planning, Property & Development: The City of Winnipeg Charter mandates that plans are reviewed; The City's review of permit drawings is only with respect to code compliance. It is not uncommon that submissions under seal are not code compliant, and require further instruction from the Plan Examiner.</p> <p>If a review of engineered plans indicates that the design does not comply, the engineer must provide revisions, or submit evidence that the design is compliant to the objectives of the code. If the engineer feels aggrieved by a plan examiner's decision, they can escalate the concern to a supervisor, or alternatively submit an appeal to the Winnipeg Building Commission: https://winnipeg.ca/clerks/boards/pdfs/WinnipegBuildingCommission.pdf</p> <p>The City works closely with Engineers and Architects to facilitate "alternative solutions" to prescriptive building code requirements, and offers expedited services through Design Coordinated Application Plan Submissions (DCA): https://winnipeg.ca/ppd/Documents/Brochures/Design-Coordinated-Application.pdf</p> <p>The City has also created mechanisms by which small-scale projects may be eligible for electronic reporting of compliance using photo and video submissions.</p>
<p>2. Applicants are required to obtain multiple permits related to the use of the street for one job.</p>	<p>Revise permits so there is one blanket permit that covers all work under one permit.</p>	<p>Public Works: In the past year, changes have been made to streamline the Use of Streets permit process. One form now collects all information. In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The City plans to combine regional streets approval and draft permit in one communication. As well, the City is updating the Manual of Temporary Traffic Control in winter 2019/2020 which will capture current practices, including formally removing the requirement for applicants to contact Winnipeg Transit and Winnipeg Parking Authority. The City will update Permits page to provide clearer instructions and information: https://winnipeg.ca/publicworks/permitsApprovals/permits/default.stm The City will work towards an online payment system to further streamline process.
<p>3. The City does not remind</p>	<p>A mechanism should be in place to remind businesses when it is time to renew their conditional</p>	<p>Planning, Property & Development: This City is in the process of developing an automated reminder tracking system, so that business owners can be contacted well</p>



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home-based businesses when their conditional use order is up for renewal.	use order.	before the conditional use expiry date.
4. The expiration date for conditional use orders for home-based businesses is arbitrary and not necessarily related to the nature of the business.	The expiration date for conditional use orders should be longer (provision 59.3.c) and should not be applied to all types of businesses. The by-law does not need to be amended for the City not to apply an expiration date for conditional use orders.	Planning, Property & Development: Minor home-based businesses typically do not have an expiry date on their approvals. First time major home-based businesses are approved for two years to allow a time to see if the impact on the neighbourhood remains minimal and the business is meeting the expectations of the approval. Subsequent renewals on major home-based businesses are for a longer period (most are 5 years).
5. Conditional use application system is hard copy.	Conditional use order applications should be digital and available online.	Planning, Property & Development: The City is actively developing online application tools, prioritizing based on a variety of factors such as volume and complexity. The City will pursue this suggestion.
6. Occupancy permit information is unclear and difficult to understand.	Provide clear, concise communication of what is contained in the by-law and what is required of permit applicants.	Planning, Property & Development: The City has a new website section dedicated to occupancy permits: winnipeg.ca/occupancypermits . This web page includes a new video explaining the occupancy permit process.
7. Requirements to bring existing buildings to current code are too expensive and investment is going to brand new buildings instead.	The industry and the City should explore how permits could have different standards for new buildings versus renovated buildings.	Planning, Property & Development: Not all existing buildings are required to be brought to current code standards. While new construction work must comply to current code, existing buildings can maintain compliance features that were constructed under previous codes, as long as they are not changing occupancy classification. This issue is based in the Manitoba Building Code and is under provincial jurisdiction, and the City continues to have discussions with the Province to address Manitoba Building Code requirements for existing buildings.
8. It is unclear when an engineering drawing is required for a signage permit.	Provide written guidelines for when the City will require an engineer review of drawing.	Planning, Property & Development: Written guidelines are available for when an engineering review of a signage drawing is required. More information is available here: https://winnipeg.ca/ppd/Documents/Brochures/Free-Standing-Signs-Structural-Requirements.pdf
9. Lack of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need an easier process to resolve disputes with 	Planning, Property & Development: The City has an obligation to review and inspect all proposed



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<p>transparency and consistency with regards to inspections. Inspectors have too much authority. They can put a stop to any project; rules and enforcement are inconsistent.</p>	<p>permits. Could be a quick peer review by 3 independent professionals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve training for inspectors to improve consistency.• The record on the inspection has to be respected. A new inspector cannot bring up new issues that were not noted previously.• If the delay is due to the City, the business should not have to pay.	<p>developments and building construction and alteration in the city, under the City of Winnipeg Charter Act. As projects progress, Inspectors have a duty to address any issues of non-compliance that they observe, which may include pausing a project where deficiencies must be addressed before proceeding further. For complex projects, there are multiple steps in the inspection process.</p> <p>The City is committed to consistency and transparency within its permit and inspection processes. The City has standards and training for Inspectors, and works to provide interpretation and clarity of Manitoba's building codes to industry and stakeholders. This helps to ensure that standards and interpretations are understood and applied consistently. A number of new operational programs have been created to ensure consistency and enforcement is clearly reflected in our service delivery.</p> <p>The City has a Winnipeg Building Commission comprised of external experts for dispute settlement: https://winnipeg.ca/clerks/boards/pdfs/WinnipegBuildingCommission.pdf</p> <p>Fees imposed during the development process ensure effective use of staff resources, and explanations are provided to the recipient. Fees are never imposed for delays that are the responsibility of the City. Questions and/or disputes regarding fees can often be resolved within the Department, but may also be heard at Standing Policy Committee.</p>
<p>10. Booking inspections for occupancy permits is difficult.</p>	<p>Should be able to book inspections in advance – booking on the day of is not a good system. Would gladly pay a fine if we're unable to comply or meet that date.</p>	<p>Planning, Property & Development: The City is moving to scheduled inspections for occupancy permits. We have added an inspection intake system to address the issue of booking inspections. This system is available throughout the day for commercial inspection requests. For housing inspections, the City introduced an online scheduled inspection form to ensure all requests are being processed as efficiently as possible.</p>

*Full stakeholder red tape comments and suggested solutions in Appendix D. Recommended changes to address red tape require Executive Policy and Council review.

Next Steps

The top ten list of outdated by-laws or regulations Council could update or eliminate to make doing business in the city more efficient will go forward for Executive Policy Committee and Council consideration along with actions to address each of them.

Those who subscribed for updates will receive notice when the report goes forward to Executive Policy Committee in the fall.



Appendices can be found on the [Documents tab](#).

Appendix A – Promotional materials

Appendix B – Open call for red tape responses

Appendix C – Stakeholder meeting notes

Appendix D – Responses to red tape concerns and suggested solutions

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