

DRAFT DOWNTOWN WINNIPEG ZONING BY-LAW DOWNTOWN STAKEHOLDER FORUMS

Summary of Comments:

Dates: 5:00 pm, November 27/02 (19 participants)

8:30 am, November 28/02 (24 participants)

Location: Delta Winnipeg Hotel

The following is a summary of downtown stakeholder participants' comments, organized by topic. The majority of questions, comments, and concerns with the draft zoning by-law relate to three topics: the sector-basis for zoning regulation organization, bulk/built form regulations, and parking space-to-use ratio regulations.

Sector-based Regulations:

- separating the downtown into 5 different areas isolates them – doesn't encourage cohesion, promotes diversity, and precludes connectivity
- might be an impediment to having natural linkages between areas
- make Main St. two distinct areas
- "North Main" Sub-sector is distinct from the "CBD" Sector – What are we trying to protect and how does it relate to the "CBD"?
- need rationale for the division into sectors
- do sector boundaries extend to the rivers? If so, seems restrictive
- sub-sector hierarchy is too complex--perhaps increase the number of sectors instead of having sub-sectors

Bulk/Built Form Regulations:

- price of land will dictate minimum heights--don't need regulations
- objection to minimum building heights – 1-storey building and activity at street level instead of surface parking lots would be an improvement. We should encourage any building downtown
- 8-storey height maximum in Exchange District will destroy the character of the area – should be 6-storey maximum
- no height limits in "Portage & Main" Sub-sector seems too loose--safety a concern (e.g. World Trade Center)
- need a rationale for height maximums and minimums so people understand why the regulation is being put in place
- concern re: sub-sector regulations. Land assembly would be impeded by the sub-sectors with different regulations affecting different areas. Instead, simplify the sectors and don't separate by sub-sector bulk regulations

- by-law contains wind impact references, but very general – should look at wind impact more closely, or abandon

Parking and Loading requirements:

- market will drive parking requirements/provisions – including parking space-to-use ratios, location, and development standards (form)
- shouldn't have any parking requirements downtown--they are the wrong thing to do
- accessory parking requirement of within 400 ft. of building is too restrictive – should accommodate further separation of parking from use
- would like to see greater level of administrative flexibility on underground/constrained site parking dimensions and standards, rather than having to go back to the Board of Adjustment or Downtown Design Board again and again

While most comments concerned the sectors, bulk regulations, and parking regulations, the following topics also garnered attention at the forums.

Permitted and Prohibited Use Restrictions:

- restricted use zoning approach is declining in North America – list of prohibited uses should be short; only truly noxious uses
- consider performance-based approach

Urban Design Guidelines:

- 80% of the regulations are to govern façade materials – materials change faster than the regulations, so why put them in?

Signs:

- don't need regulations – companies know what they need

“Downtown Living” Sector Regulations (e.g. South Broadway):

- regulations cater to developers – residents won't have say on developments if they are permitted uses (no Board of Adjustment hearing)
- is City siding with developers over residents in this area to promote commercialization of an established residential neighbourhood?

Development Review and Approval Processes:

- attempts are being made to streamline the process
- too many by-laws affecting developments, need to combine them (not just zoning by-law regulations)
- e.g. would like to see Private Approaches By-law on Portage Avenue and Main Street amended

- number of committees that developments have to go through is too clumsy and time-consuming
- most important thing is to have public input on decisions
- process/zoning are not separate problems – changes should be looked at together

Other Comments:

- “keep regulations to an absolute minimum. By-laws say builders don’t know what they’re doing – trust the builders”.
- “zoning regulations are primarily aesthetic – be cautious with the rules”
- need areas to have transit nodes to promote transit and restrict use of cars. What about some inducements for transit usage?
- expanding downtown zoning by-law boundaries to correspond to CentreVenture boundaries promotes dispersion of downtown instead of cohesiveness, densification
- by-law approval timeline may be a problem--won’t know which by-law will be in place as development proposals evolve (e.g. Manitoba Hydro proposal call)
- “too many overlapping regulations--what’s being done to streamline this?”
- need to establish a single design review process instead of the present system
- people favour a single review process over current methods
- concern that regulations aren’t clear enough to keep “undesirables” out of some areas (e.g. “Enterprise Zone”)
- “will people attending forums be notified when by-law goes to public hearing?”