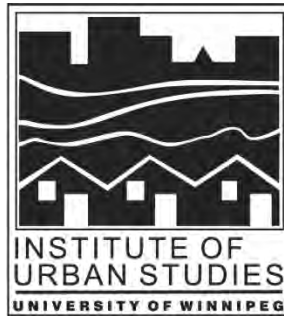


# Urban Issues

Vol. 1, No. 6 (April, 1972)

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The Institute of Urban Studies





THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WINNIPEG

**FOR INFORMATION:**

*The Institute of Urban Studies*

The University of Winnipeg  
599 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg  
phone: 204.982.1140  
fax: 204.943.4695  
general email: [ius@uwinnipeg.ca](mailto:ius@uwinnipeg.ca)

*Mailing Address:*

*The Institute of Urban Studies*

The University of Winnipeg  
515 Portage Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3B 2E9

**URBAN ISSUES**

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The Institute of Urban Studies is an independent research arm of the University of Winnipeg. Since 1969, the IUS has been both an academic and an applied research centre, committed to examining urban development issues in a broad, non-partisan manner. The Institute examines inner city, environmental, Aboriginal and community development issues. In addition to its ongoing involvement in research, IUS brings in visiting scholars, hosts workshops, seminars and conferences, and acts in partnership with other organizations in the community to effect positive change.

**comments on unicity****lloyd axworthy**

Winnipeg seems to be an unlikely place for a grand experiment to involve people in urban government, but the experiment is taking place and people are becoming involved.

If the new system is to work and develop, it will be because the private citizens of the city want it to. It is from the citizens that the demands must come to give resources to the resident advisory boards for experiments in setting up neighbourhood planning boards, develop corporations, joint citizen-councillor committees to administer services. It is the citizens who must exploit the possibilities of the new system and build into the new structures a participatory process.

There are signs that this can happen. But equally there are portents of opposition. Which way the balance shifts depends upon two forces - one internal, the other external. The internal force is the direction of civic politics. Presently within the ranks of the NDP and the ICEC, there are several councillors who appear sympathetic to notions of citizen involvement. If they were to form an alliance and give leadership to the issue then they could act as a focus around which support for citizen involvement could be centered. This could be accompanied by an alliance between different resident advisory groups across this city along with like-minded private citizens to form a civic reform association that would promote the cause of citizen involvement.

An inter-action between citizen-minded councillors and a coalition of private citizens could create a strong political force in the new system and could work towards an improved role for the citizen in city government.

Just as important would be the external force that could be applied by provincial and federal governments. The provincial government has a vested interest in seeing that the new system works. So far they have adopted a very correct hands-off stance with the new city government. But, there is no reason why the provincial government, if it truly is interested in seeing the system perform well could not provide incentives and encouragement. By offering certain financial assistance for transportation programs, public works, urban redevelopment conditional upon the city government utilizing the community committee-resident advisory groups to plan and implement such programs, the provincial government could promote the aims of citizen involvement. As well, the provincial government is scheduled next year to bring forth proposals for reorganizing the boundaries and jurisdictions of the Winnipeg School System. If the proposals are also designed around the principles of decentralization of administration and integrated with the community committee ward arrangements, then that would bolster the possibilities of greater participation.

The federal government can also play a critical role. It, in recent years, has provided major funding to citizen groups in Winnipeg. This has been a major factor in the activation of citizen group activity. If the funding continues, then the citizens are in a position to work with and use the new structures of local government. If the funding stops the structures may wither because groups do not have the wherewithal to continue activity and use the structures.

Equally as important will be the design of the proposed federal legislation for neighbourhood improvement. If it contains conditions that city governments must demonstrate support and involvement by residents for any plan of neighbourhood reconstruction, then that becomes a very

## st. andrews project

St. Andrews Church located in Urban Renewal Area No. 2 has historically played an important role in the life of central Winnipeg residents. It was both a place of worship and a centre offering leadership in social and community services. But, as the area began to change the Church began to realize the need for questioning the usefulness of the traditional functions of a neighbourhood church.

The fire which destroyed the old building in 1969 provided an opportunity for the Church, both as a congregation and as a wider body, to redefine its role and assess how its property and resources could be used in the area.

Any redefinition of the Church's role requires the involvement of three separate elements; the Church Governing Structure, the congregation and the community. It would also be necessary to have a resource team which would be acceptable to all three elements and which could provide the essential links between them. The minister of St. Andrews invited Lloyd Axworthy, Director of the Institute of Urban Studies, to assist the church.

The first task that the Institute performed was the preparation of a proposed plan of action working with members of the church - a policy statement was prepared. One of the most important proposals was the one for the creation of a multi-purpose facility that would supply a variety of needs, including housing, indoor recreation, resource facilities, community space and church.

To put the plan into action a Special Planning Board composed of church members, community people, and representatives of IUS was formed to be jointly responsible for coordinating the planning process.

In May of 1971 the Urban Church Council hired Reverend Tim Sale to be responsible for planning and research. Rev. Sale spent the spring and summer of 1971 communicating with the people of the area. Following this, steps were taken to coordinate the various groups who had an interest in the project.

After several meetings it became apparent that the job of reaching the

community and informing them of the project had not been as successful as had been hoped. As a result, more effort was put into that aspect and students were enlisted to help in the process.

A canvass was conducted in the community, residents using the St. Andrews Thrift Shop were polled on their priorities, and discussions were held with community groups. The result was an initial indication of possible functions that could be provided by the centre.

After many meetings and much discussion among the church committee, Urban Church Council and IUS staff, a list of possible components for the facility was established and a permanent building committee was struck.

A large step forward was made when the congregation of St. Andrews announced that it was prepared to share 50% of the seats on the Board of Directors of the facility with non-congregational people.

At the meeting immediately following this announcement, a final set of priorities for the multi-purpose building were established. The complex is to include:

- senior citizen housing
- church space
- multi-use community space
- day nursery
- space for legal & health clinic
- food service facility

The idea was to create a community "place", a set of facilities where people could meet, draw upon relevant community services, hold different meetings and assemblies. In effect, it is an attempt to provide a form of town square in the middle of a downtown inner city neighbourhood.

This concept was presented to the Winnipeg Presbytery in early April. They gave their approval and the project has now moved from the conceptual stage into the implementation stage.

An architectural firm was engaged and blueprints drawn up and presented to the building committee. The building committee is now engaged in seeking clients for the complex and working towards a greater degree of community involvement in the process, including the appointment of three citizens to the building committee.

In addition, contact has been made with government agencies to discuss financing and the legal requirements of a joint community church corporation to

run the complex are being studied.

A great many things must be finalized, however, before the project becomes a reality. The building committee must accept the blueprints, clients for the facilities must be found, zoning changes must be made, financial arrangements must be finalized and more community involvement must be forthcoming.

Once all of this has been accomplished it will represent an important step in the process of redefining the role of the church in the community, and of providing an important development in the improvement of Winnipeg's inner city.

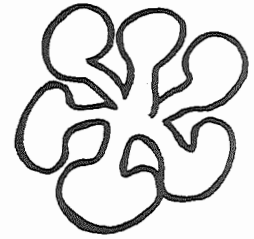
## urban forum

The Institute will shortly be beginning an investigation into the possibility of creating an urban forum in Winnipeg.

The objective of this project will be to design, establish and implement a system of two-way information flow which will enable policy-makers in government to understand the perceptions and reactions of people on a range of policy proposals and programs and to provide, through improved information, greater use and effectiveness of government programs, as well as transmitting to government the needs and concerns of people attempting to cope with a changing urban environment. Built into this system will be mechanisms to ensure co-operation between the different jurisdictions of government and a means of developing consultation. It is felt that the urban forum concept properly designed and implemented would lead to more effective programs and policies by means of greater citizen, group and tri-level involvement, in the formulation and acceptance of programs and policies.

Building on its experience, the Institute will undertake to develop an experimental pilot project which will demonstrate how government and people might become more intricately connected in the formulation of urban policy using modern means of communication, and tied to efforts of community organizations. This program will show how citizens can aid government policy-makers by providing them with clearer, undistorted information on citizen needs and how the citizen can come to understand government policies and react to them more efficiently.

## COMMENT CONTD



very good reason for Winnipeg officials and politicians to see that the resident advisory groups flourish and that major planning responsibilities be shared with neighbourhood people. In fact, a federal program of neighbourhood improvement predicated upon citizen involvement may by itself be enough to insure some exciting developments in new forms of citizen involvement in the City of Winnipeg. But, like the many other factors just mentioned, it is still a matter of conjecture.

In fact, there is a good many unknowns surrounding the Winnipeg experiment in local government. We have learned enough in the past several decades about how irrelevant structural reform can be if there is no corresponding change in political attitudes behaviour, and power relationships.

If the new system does take hold and citizens do become involved, then there will still be two other important considerations. First, will the system go beyond its initial objectives of simply making the representative system work better to begin forming vehicles for the sharing of power, and the developing of new institutions of participatory democracy. And, second, can these developments in citizen involvement and ultimately participation occur without destroying the capacity of the city to provide efficient services and effective administration.

There are many questions to be answered in the Winnipeg experiment and many unknowns that only time will reveal. This is an important experiment, bearing a close watch by city dwellers across the North American continent. Winnipeggers are launched on one of the most difficult, yet critical tasks of modern people - seeing if ways can be found to govern a city effectively and democratically. The success or failure of their task will tell us all a good deal about our capacity to cope with an urban age while retaining our democratic ideals.

# WCCI

Winnipeg Community Communications, a non-profit corporation established in 1971 to work for the provision of citizen access to all forms of media has recently put out a publication entitled:

"Everything you always wanted to know about media

\*but were afraid to ask.

This 20 page booklet deals with such things as:

- Why is Citizen Access to Media Important
- Community Radio
- Microphones
- How to Prepare Radio Programs
- Multi Media
- Community Communications
- Tips for Using Portable Half-Inch Video Equipment
- How to Make a Video-Tape
- Writing a News Story
- Getting your publication printed

50¢ per copy from Winnipeg Community Communications, c/o Urban Issues.

The Institute of Urban Studies

University of Winnipeg

515 Portage Ave., Winnipeg.

Manitoba. CANADA.

Director - Lloyd Axworthy

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