The Politics of Accommodation in Winnipeg: The Dynamics Involved in Developing a Policy of Aboriginal Inclusion

(draft – not for attribution)

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The new partnership we envision is much more than a political or institutional one. It must be a heartfelt commitment among peoples to live together in peace, harmony and mutual respect.[1]

Abstract/Introduction

This paper will elaborate upon the City of Winnipeg's recent attempts to develop a policy of accommodation stressing the foundation of partnerships with municipal Aboriginal[2] organizations to encourage sustainable community development. Aboriginal urbanization has occurred in Winnipeg and Aboriginal community leaders are now demanding municipal government accountability. The City of Winnipeg responded by embracing Mayor Glen Murray's collaborative partnership model, an approach he claimed would necessitate Aboriginal participation in the development of an urban Aboriginal initiative. This protracted process begun in 2000 has yielded limited results, due in part to Murray's 2004 resignation, resulting in the loss of the plan's most

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[1] Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). Quoted in *First Steps: Municipal Aboriginal Pathways*. (Winnipeg: 2003), p. 1.

[2] The term Aboriginal will be used exclusively throughout this paper. Its usage will conform to the section 35(2), *Constitution Act, 1982*, definition whereby Aboriginal represents Indians, Inuit, and Métis, unless otherwise indicated. The term Indian is used in legislation or policy and hence in discussions concerning such legislation or policy; and in its historical context whereby Native and Aboriginal people were described within the popular and academic literature as Indians; and in such cases where it is used in quotations from other sources. First Nations is used to signify an organized Aboriginal group or community, specifically a band officially recognized by the Canadian government.

influential advocate. Even so, a handful of city councillors maintain that they are working towards finalizing the process of implementation of the municipal Aboriginal policy. This paper will chronicle and evaluate the policy process while evaluating how in this context the mayor and council envisaged the concept of collaborative partnership.

Overview/Policy Environment

On 11 January 2005, City of Winnipeg (hereinafter the City) Mayor Sam Katz announced that a collaborative Aboriginal Employment partnership and memorandum of understanding (MOU) had been reached between the City, the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), and the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC). The stated objective was to develop a strategy for the recruitment, training, and retention of Aboriginal employees with the City. The growing municipal Aboriginal population and the anticipated high retirement rate of 'baby-boom' civil servants during the next decade guided the strategy's evolution. AMC grand Chief Dennis White Bird hails the MOU as an opportunity to "build capacity within our First Nation population, as well as create economic growth and increase prosperity for Winnipeg's economy."[3] MMF President David Chartrand expressed his satisfaction with what he considers to be a partnership that "will help address our recruitment needs for the future and leads to a workforce more reflective of the Aboriginal population we serve."[4] What began as a policy directive from the Mayor's office in 2002 quickly snowballed into multi-pronged approach aimed at promoting the inclusion of Aboriginal leaders and their expertise in the creation and development of policies. The intended goal: to improve the quality of life for both Aboriginal and non-

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[3] Winnipeg: News and Highlights. "Joint Employment Partnership announced." 11 January 2005. [online] http://www.winnipeg.ca/cao/media/news/nr_2005/nr_20050111.stm. Last accessed 17 March 2005.
[4] Ibid.

Aboriginal people in Winnipeg. Although the MOU in this case is strictly symbolic, for no monetary provisions were incorporated, this is the first agreement to result from the mayoral directive insisting upon Aboriginal involvement in municipal politics.

The actions taken by Winnipeg's mayor and council in 2002 were unprecedented in Manitoba. Furthermore, it appears as though to date no other provincial municipality in Canada has established a policy endorsing the creation of partnerships with Aboriginal community leaders and their organizations. The proposal it turns out was also timely. Research commissioned in 1999 by then-Mayor Glen Murray (1998-2004) identified that urban Aboriginal programming directed by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (DIAND) was, at best, substandard. The central issue: the federal government's determined refusal to fashion and implement policies for non-status Indians living off reserve.[5] Citing the Indian Act as the basis for this bias, federal officials maintain that they are mandated specifically to provide services to registered or status Indians as defined by the Act and that few urban Indians fit these criteria. Officials also posit that the provincial governments are responsible for developing social policies for all provincial residents, including off-reserve Aboriginal populations. This despite the fact that Canada's Constitution accords responsibility for "Indians and lands reserved for Indians" to the federal Parliament.[6] As such, urban Indians fall into what the final report

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[5] See Calvin Hanselmann. *Urban Aboriginal People in Western Canada: Realities and Policies*. (Calgary: Canada West Foundation, 2001); off-reserve Aboriginal people include "Non-status" Indian people; including children of Bill C-31Off-reserve First Nations people, Inuit, and Métis people who are unable to access funds from their home community; First Nations, Inuit, Métis and non-status people who reside in a different province other than the province that their reserve or home community may be located; and First Nations, Métis or Inuit who may not be able to find an appropriate contact point, or may prefer accessing pan-Aboriginal services.
[6] *British North American Act, 1867*, specifically section 91(24).

of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) depicted as a "policy vacuum," resulting in limited federal or provincial services for Aboriginal people.[7]

The RCAP noted that this situation is "the most critical issue facing urban Aboriginal people," going on to further state:

> Wrangling over jurisdiction has impeded urban Aboriginal people's access to services. Intergovernmental disputes, federal and provincial offloading, lack of program coordination, exclusion of municipal governments and urban groups from discussions and negotiations on policy and jurisdictional issues, and confusion regarding the political representation of Aboriginal people in cities have all contributed to a situation that has had serious adverse effects on the ability of Aboriginal people to gain access to appropriate services in urban centres.[8]

Further analysis has established three facets to the problem: (1) urban Aboriginal people are not privy to the same level of services available on reserve or in their communities; (2) they find it increasingly difficult to obtain access to provincial programs available to all urban residents; and, (3) there is a lack of culturally appropriate programming in urban centres.[9] Political analyst Calvin Hanselmann has further identified variability in policy formulation, overlap and gaps in policy areas in different cities, and a mismatch between policy areas and community needs of urban Aboriginal peoples as critical deficiencies in government policies directed at urban Aboriginal people. Most of the existing programs, Hanselmann observed, were produced in the absence of policy, suggesting that they were little more than ad hoc measures.[10] He concluded, "This has resulted in urban Aboriginal

[7] Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). *Perspectives and Realities, Vol. 4*, [CD-ROM]. (Ottawa: Libraxus, 1997), p. 542.
[8] RCAP, *Perspectives and Realities*, p. 551
[9] Ibid., p. 538.
[10] See Hanselmann, *Urban Aboriginal People in Western Canada.*

programming that is largely disjointed and at times incoherent."[11] And as Katherine

Graham and Evelyn Peters have pointed out, despite federal acknowledgement of a need

for coordination and collaboration between different levels of government to ameliorate

the difficulties being experienced by urban Aboriginal populations, "there is no sign that

basic issues of jurisdiction and responsibility are being addressed."[12]

The authors of the report, *Delivery of the Aboriginal Human Resources*

Development Strategy in Urban Canada, further highlight this inequality:

> To illustrate the need for urban Aboriginal policy, one needs only to examine the expenditures of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. As noted in the section on demographics, 30% of Canada's Aboriginal population are registered Indians, and of those, approximately half live off reserve, or 15%. DIAND spends nearly $7 billion a year servicing almost entirely, First Nations on reserves, while HRSDC, through the AHRDS agreement, spends approximately $320 million a year for people who live both on and off reserves. Based on these figures, approximately 81% of this funding for Aboriginal people is going to 15% of the total Aboriginal population, which demonstrates a significant misallocation of funds and further demonstrates a need for the development of policy frameworks for urban Aboriginal people.[13]

The report concluded that in provinces "such as Manitoba and Saskatchewan, with the

highest percentages of urban Aboriginal population in Canada, these funding disparities

will continue to be negatively manifested in many of the critical social indices such as

educational attainment and labour force participation rates."[14] Murray and the City

identified this "policy vacuum" and endeavoured to amend the situation by establishing

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[11] Calvin Hanselmann. *Uncommon Sense: promising Practices in Urban Aboriginal Policy-Making and Programming*. (Calgary: Canada West Foundation, 2002), p. 11; see also his *Enhanced Aboriginal Programming in Western Canada*. (Calgary: Canada West Foundation, 2002).

[12] Katherine A.H. Graham & Evelyn Peters. *Aboriginal Communities and Urban Sustainability*. (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2002), p. 18.

[13] Paper of a Caucus of Urban AHRDA Holders. *Delivery of the Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy in Urban Canada.* (Winnipeg: 2002), p. 7.

[14] Ibid., p. 7.

collaborative relationships with urban Aboriginal organizations, their intent being the creation and implementation of an urban policy aimed at improving Aboriginal socio-economic conditions.

Promoting Aboriginal Inclusion in Winnipeg

The catalyst driving Murray's decision to more aggressively champion the creation of collaborative relationships with Winnipeg's Aboriginal leaders was the 2002 North American Indigenous Games (NAIG)(25 July-4 August). Since his 1998 election to office, Murray had an established agenda to improve inner-city Aboriginal socio-economic conditions, and the NAIG's success was stimulating. In total, the Games attracted 6,757 athletes and 2,678 spectators to Winnipeg, generating $16.614 million in revenue for the City.[15] To city councillors, the event "emerged as a powerful symbol of the renaissance occurring in Aboriginal communities across the continent."[16] According to city officials, the NAIG was "an organizational success" as well as "an inspirational sign of cultural rebirth and renewal."[17] Despite the Mayor's call to end racism and his public proclamation before the NAIG audience that Winnipeg's future lay with the City's Aboriginal youth,[18] both he and city councillors were forced also to concede that the positive image of the games was countered by what was described as the "grim reality in Winnipeg's core area where member's of the city's Aboriginal community struggle with the consequences of addiction, poverty, and homelessness."[19] Admittedly, "if the image

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[15] Paradigm Consulting Group. *Economic Impact Analysis of the 2002 North American Indigenous Games.* (Winnipeg: 2002).

[16] *Municipal Aboriginal Pathways*, p. 1.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Paul McKie. "'Awesome!' Native pride on parade as Indigenous Games begin." *Winnipeg Free Press*. 29 July 2002.

[19] *Municipal Aboriginal Pathways*, p. 1.

of the NAIG represents a future filled with hope and promise, then the desperate face of despair on the streets of downtown Winnipeg offers a sad reminder of past wrongs and missed opportunities."[20]

Murray and the city council had for some time known about the poor state of Aboriginal living conditions in Winnipeg. In 2000, for instance, the City adopted the Maskwachees Declaration, which was the result of a national effort to identify programs and services aimed at improving Aboriginal access to recreational services in an attempt to improve overall Aboriginal health standards. Supported by twenty-two Canadian organizations, including universities, medical associations, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health and sports organizations, the Declaration was announced at the Four Nations Reserve in Hobbema, Alberta, in February 2000. The more than 100 delegates on hand representing Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations and various levels of government all agreed to use the Declaration as an educational tool to inform non-Aboriginal people of the need to work together to build sustainable communities by improving the health and living conditions of Aboriginal people. The implicit message: your community will grow stronger and healthier only when the living conditions of Aboriginal people in the community also improve.[21]

Murray sought to do more than simply improve Aboriginal health standards. He envisioned an urban Aboriginal initiative that would result in partnerships being established between the City and municipal Aboriginal leaders. These partnerships would lead naturally to the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives in the policy process. He enlisted the assistance of Councillor's Dan Vandal (Métis) and Jenny Gerbasi, and

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[20] *Municipal Aboriginal Pathways*, p. 1.
[21] See *NAHO Network News*. "Maskwachees declaration calls for support and action in Aboriginal sport and recreation." Spring 2002; 1, 2.

commissioned research focusing on contemporary urban Aboriginal socio-economic conditions. A cursory investigation led councillors to conclude that Aboriginal people were seeking employment opportunities and improved access to education, improved housing, and a more accountable justice system. This comprehensive list had many councillors questioning whether the City was mandated to deal with these and other similar issues.

Additional studies illustrated that the City of Winnipeg was also facing a thirty per cent eligible retirement rate during a period in which the municipal Aboriginal population was expected to boom.[22] The city population was expected to increase by fourteen per cent by the year 2020, resulting in an additional 87,000 residents living in Winnipeg and a total municipal population of 715,000.[23] Murray and most city councillors were stunned by these conclusions. According to Lorraine Desjarlais, then-Aboriginal Policy Coordinator of the Executive Policy Committee Secretariat, this is the point when an urban Aboriginal initiative began to take shape: "How can we get a representative work force? What is best for the city of Winnipeg? The best thing is training the population that we have; getting young skilled, talented workers in the city of Winnipeg is our goals."[24]

The City of Winnipeg boasts the highest Aboriginal population of any other Canadian city, totalling 55,755; this population is also growing six times faster than the

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[22] City of Winnipeg. *Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision: A Long Range Policy Plan for City Council*. (Winnipeg), 7, 8; *Municipal Aboriginal Pathways*, p. 6. Statistical analysis indicated that thirty per cent of the Winnipeg work force would be eligible to retire by 2005, and that fifty per cent would be eligible by 2010.

[23] *Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision*, p. 7.

[24] Personal telephone interview with Loraine Desjarlais, Aboriginal policy Coordinator of the Executive Policy Committee Secretariat. (28 October 2003).

non-Aboriginal population.[25] For instance, in 1981, Winnipeg's Aboriginal population was 16,575, a total that has increased by 39,180 during the last two decades. Today, Aboriginal people make up 8.4 per cent of Winnipeg's total population of 661,730.[26] Projections indicate that this upward trend will continue unabated and that by 2020, Winnipeg's anticipated Aboriginal population will be over 100,000.[27] This total will represent more than forty per cent of the provincial Aboriginal population (the overall reserve population will be twenty-three per cent).[28] The Aboriginal population is notably younger than the non-Aboriginal population and will remain so into the foreseeable future. Nineteen per cent of the 55,755 Aboriginal people living in Winnipeg (10,585) are between fifteen and twenty-four years of age. Whereas the average age for Canadians is 37.7 years, the average age of the provincial Aboriginal population is under twenty-three years of age.[29] Current trends suggest that this group will remain relatively young in comparison to the Canadian non-Aboriginal population. In all, fifty-seven per cent of the urban Aboriginal population is under the age of twenty-four, suggesting that Aboriginal youth are quickly becoming an important demographic group.

The 2001 Canadian Census also demonstrated that nearly half (49%) of the people who self-identified as Aboriginal lived in urban areas, up two per cent from 1996. Approximately 68.5 per cent of the Aboriginal population lives off-reserve in urban and rural communities, and from 1996-2001, the proportion of Aboriginal people who lived

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[25] Statistics Canada. *Aboriginal Peoples of Canada: A Demographic Profile*. 2001 Census: analysis series, vol. 96F0030XIE2001007. (Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2003), p. 23.

[26] Ibid., p. 23.

[27] *Municipal Aboriginal Pathway*, p. 1.

[28] Manitoba Bureau of Statistics. *Manitoba Aboriginal Persons: A Statistical Profile 1996*. (Winnipeg: Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, 1998).

[29] Statistics Canada. *Aboriginal Origin (10), Age Groups (11B) and sex (3) for Population, for Canada, Provinces and Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 2001 Census*. 2001 Census of Canada, vol. 97F0011XCB01004. (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2003). This cohort also accounts for thirty-eight per cent of the provincial Aboriginal population under the age of fourteen.

on reserves dropped from thirty-three to thirty-one per cent. These data indicate that nearly eighty-five per cent of Canada's Aboriginal population does not live on reserve lands.[30] Contributing factors to increased urban migration include the need for increased economic and employment opportunities, better standards of living, improved access to both health and educational services, and the desire to leave behind the socio-economic problems being experienced on reserves.

From the beginning of the process, Murray intended to promote a dialogue between the City and Aboriginal organizations. Even though Murray and the city council acknowledged that Aboriginal people were technically the responsibility of the federal government, all agreed that while it "may not be our problem," action was warranted in order to improve the current urban Aboriginal situation. The Winnipeg community's positive reaction to the NAIG prompted Murray, Vandal, and Gerbasi to consider the situation as "an opportunity" to bring "the issue . . . to the forefront." Desjarlais also stated that Murray, Vandal, and Gerbasi were equally impressed with the demonstrated level of Aboriginal capacity building fostered by Aboriginal organizations such as the AMC and the MMF, as well as the several municipal Aboriginal grassroots organizations. Desjarlais asserted that "consistently the Aboriginal community and Aboriginal organizations have been building their capacities and evolving; the migration rates have boomed; it is a number of variables that pointed toward the city of Winnipeg developing a strategy that could benefit everybody involved in a positive way."[31]

The next step taken was to establish the Mayor's Task Force on Diversity 1 January 2000. Created to investigate civic practices, policies, procedures, and services as

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[30] Statistics Canada. *Aboriginal peoples of Canada: A demographic profile, 2001 Census.* 2001 Census of Canada, vol. 96F0030XIE2001007. (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2003).
[31] Desjarlais, telephone interview.

they related to women, Aboriginal people, the disabled, and visible minorities, all of which comprised the umbrella category 'disadvantaged groups', the Task Force was mandated to determine whether these disadvantaged groups were being encouraged or discouraged from participating in Winnipeg's political culture.[32] Later that November, a review of more than 100 research reports had been completed, interviews with forty representatives of various organizations and grassroots groups were concluded, and 100 individual commentaries solicited for review. Two public forums were held to garner additional community commentary.[33] According to Murray, "Our city has continued to work to identify and remove those barriers that keep individuals and groups from fully participating in the life and opportunities available to the people in Winnipeg, *but we have not succeeded.*"[34] The Task Force identified in its final report released in March 2001 that while some barriers were physical, and as such penetrable once identified, "many are more insidious and systematic, ingrained in our institutions, and in the minds of individuals."[35] Admittedly, while many of the identified barriers were "not unique to Winnipeg," they were nevertheless considered "difficult to remove."[36] The Mayor and council concluded that "collective and political will to continue the evolution toward positive change" was required.[37]

The Task Force's plan was multi-faceted, and advanced two primary goals. The first was to promote the creation of self-reliant urban Aboriginal communities, which could be accomplished one of three ways: (1) by supporting the creation of links between

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[32] Winnipeg. *Mayor's Task Force on Diversity: Final Report.* (March 2001), p. 3.
[33] Ibid., p. 8.
[34] Ibid., p. 9, emphasis in original.
[35] Ibid., p. 9.
[36] Ibid., p. 9.
[37] Ibid., p. 9.

the City of Winnipeg and Aboriginal communities to ensure appropriateness of services and to increase Aboriginal participation in City affairs; (2) by identifying and pursuing joint ventures between the City and the private sector or non-governmental organizations to increase or enhance job opportunities and economic development for urban Aboriginal people; and (3) by increasing awareness among Winnipeggers and visitors of the city's striking Aboriginal cultural communities.[38] The second goal was to increase urban Aboriginal employment by producing a more highly educated workforce. The process would involve the City promoting to other levels of government, industry, the not-for-profit sector, Aboriginal communities, and the small business community, of the need to: (1) provide employment opportunities that help to retain recent graduates; (2) identify anticipated gaps in training and employment needs, and developing and implementing strategies aimed at filling those gaps; (3) encourage the incorporation of the concept of lifelong learning into workforce education; and (4) encourage the use of technology to facilitate education support for the workforce.[39]

With these data in mind, the City of Winnipeg introduced a long range policy plan, *Plan Winnipeg . . .2020 Vision*. Promoted as a prospective policy document to guide decision making relative to Winnipeg's physical, social, economic, and environmental conditions, *Plan Winnipeg* advanced a vision of the City's civic future. Adopted 1 December 2002, the plan covers a twenty-year period and outlines the anticipated results. It is also reviewed and updated every five years.[40] Both councillors and constituents endorsed the proposal, which is not surprising considering that the federal, provincial, and municipal governments had by this stage developed a tradition of establishing

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[38] *Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision*, p. 20.
[39] Ibid., p. 28.
[40] *Municipal Aboriginal Pathways*, p. 2.

successful tripartite partnerships to address endemic urban Aboriginal economic and social development issues.

Since 1981, four urban development agreements had been implemented which included the Winnipeg Core Area Initiative I ($96M)(1981-1986); the Winnipeg Core Area Initiative II ($100M)(1986-1991); the Winnipeg Development Agreement ($75M)(1995-2001); and the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement ($75M)(2004-2009).[41] The first three tripartite agreements contributed $271 million to address Winnipeg's challenges and resulted in noteworthy physical renewal in the downtown area, including the redevelopment of two areas: The Forks and the North Portage area.[42] Improvements to inner city neighbourhoods, business streets, and community facilities resulted as did the construction of new and renovated inner-city housing. A plan was struck to provide the delivery of innovative education and training initiatives directed to immigrants, Aboriginal persons, youth, and women.[43] Hence, Murray's accommodating stance concerning Aboriginal issues came as little or no surprise to those in the know.

The $196 million Winnipeg Core Area Initiatives leveraged $600 million in total public and private sector investment. The $75 million in tri-partite funding from the Winnipeg Development Agreement leveraged an additional $77 million from the private sector and $49 million from various government sources.[44] Canada, Manitoba, and Winnipeg signed the Winnipeg Partnership Agreement 20 May 2004 to fund four strategic program initiatives: (1) *Aboriginal Participation*: creating opportunities for

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[41] *Western Economic Diversification Canada*. "Urban Development Agreements: What are the Urban Development Agreements?" [online] http://www.wd.gc.ca/ced/urban/default_e.asp. Last accessed 7 April 2005.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

Aboriginal people to participate in Winnipeg's economy and community life; (2) *Building Sustainable Neighbourhoods*: to enhance neighbourhood renewal and build human capacity to ensure economic viability; (3) *Downtown Renewal*: designed to revitalize Winnipeg's downtown as a centre of commerce, entertainment, and education; and, (4) *Supporting Innovation and Technology*: to help build a knowledge-based economy.[45]

In August 2003, the City of Winnipeg released a draft document, *First Steps: Municipal Aboriginal Pathways (MAP)*. Described as a secondary document to the *Plan Winnipeg* policy, *MAP* was supposed to act as a framework highlighting a number of key principles that once operationalized would "open the door to a new era of co-operation between the City and Winnipeg's Aboriginal community."[46] *MAP* was initially short on specifics and lacked concrete initiatives. It was also devoid of the initiative's projected costs. It did focus on five target areas: employment, safety, economic development, general quality of life, and outreach and education. The plan's two key architects, Vandal and Gerbasi, did not intend for this draft to be the final word; rather, it was considered to be a working draft calculated to provoke debate and generate community insight that could later be considered for incorporation in a final draft. To date, no second draft has been prepared.

The promised public consultation phase was initiated by Murray's invitation to the Winnipeg public to "join us in drafting this strategy and to share in the responsibility for implementing it," to which 350 people responded on 6 September.[47] Speaking openly

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[45] Ibid.

[46] *Municipal Aboriginal Pathways*, p. 1.

[47] Glen Murray. "Honouring the past to Fulfill our Future: Urban aboriginal strategy a first step." *The Drum*. (no date) [online] http://www.firstperspective.ca/drum2a.html. Last Accessed 24 April 2005.

about Winnipeg's history of oppression and racism directed towards the Aboriginal population, Murray announced to the crowd at R.B. Russell High School, "This is an important step towards building a new era of co-operation and partnership with Winnipeg's Aboriginal population."[48] Murray, Vandal, and Gerbasi chaired the meeting and encouraged people to address the committee. Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people shared their views about the proposal, with former city councillor and current vice-president of the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg, George Munroe, declaring, "It's about time we started working together as a community."[49]

It appeared that Murray and his team had established the foundation of what theoretically could have developed into a collaborative relationship with Winnipeg's Aboriginal community. Such partnerships encourage trust, mutual dialogue, commitment, and cooperation, all initiatives Murray and his team were promoting. As the ownership for problem solving processes is shared, which the mayor and council were slowly beginning to endorse, social capital is built through reciprocal relations. The aim of a collaborative relationship is to work together and to pool resources "such as money, information, and labour to meet shared or compatible objectives."[50] The evolving urban Aboriginal initiative envisioned creating links between the City and Aboriginal communities, endeavoured to identify and pursue joint ventures between the City and municipal and provincial Aboriginal organizations, and sought to increase Winnipegger's awareness of the richness of the city's Aboriginal cultural communities.[51]

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[48] Stuart Desnomie. "City proposes Aboriginal strategy." *The Manitoban*. 10 September 2003. [online] http://www.google.ca/search?hl=en&q=%22manitoban%22+aboriginal+pathways&btnG=Search&meta= Last accessed 25 April 2005.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Kenneth Kernaghan, "Partnership and public administration: conceptual and practical considerations," *Canadian Public Administration* 36 (1993), p. 62.
[51] *Plan Winnipeg 2020 Vision*, p. 20.

If Murray and his supporters were perhaps unsure that their urban Aboriginal initiative was an effective strategy, especially when one considers the negative impact of potential jurisdictional issues, the *Misquadis* (2002) decision no doubt allayed their fears. This Federal Court decision determined that Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)(formally HRDC) discriminated against the urban Aboriginal community, which underscored the existing correlation between Aboriginal people living on reserve and Aboriginal people living off reserve. Specifically, the court defined off reserve Aboriginal people as comprising a group of self-organized, self-determining, and distinct communities, analogous to that of a reserve community.[52] *Misquadis* further reinforced the collective similarities between on- and off-reserve Aboriginal people articulated in the Supreme Court of Canada's *Corbière* (1999) decision, a ruling that immediately affected all 274 First Nations that had previously excluded non-resident members from participating in elections.[53] This decision and the resulting transitional amendments to voting regulations provide for First Nations holding elections or referendums under the *Indian Act* to permit members living off reserve to vote. More specifically, *Corbière* determined that issues and concerns related to equality of access to programs and services for urban Aboriginal people must be considered regardless of residenc*y*. Following *Corbière,* the court in *Misquadis* determined that Aboriginal organizations can represent urban Aboriginal interests, and that the HRSDC is responsible to provide funding to aid in the establishment of the infrastructure needed to effect service delivery and the creation of representative Aboriginal governance.[54] All

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[52] Canada (Attorney General) v. Misquadis. [2003] *FCA* 473; hereinafter cited as *Misquadis.*
[53] *John Corbiere et al. v. the Batchewana Indian Band and Her Majesty the Queen.* This decision declared invalid the words ". . . and is ordinarily resident on the reserve . . ." in sub-section 77 (1) of the *Indian Act.*
[54] *Misquadis*

signs led Murray and the City to believe that they were on the cusp of a new trend in municipal Aboriginal policy development.

Despite the impressive work directed at creating an urban Aboriginal initiative, which was soon followed by Canadian government's 25 November announcement that it planned to invest $25 million in its *Urban Aboriginal Strategy*, on 7 May 2004, after several months of denying rumours to this effect, Murray announced that he would run in the 2004 Canadian federal election as a candidate for the Liberal Party in the riding of Charleswood--St. James.[55] One week later on 11 May, Murray announced his resignation as the Mayor of Winnipeg, becoming the first mayor in Winnipeg history to resign mid-term. On 28 June, less than two months after announcing his resignation, Murray was defeated by Conservative Steven Fletcher in his attempt to become a member of the House of Commons.[56] Murray's resignation was significant a setback for those pursuing the urban Aboriginal initiative he created. The planned follow-up community consultation meetings never took place, the hoped for interaction with the leaders of several Aboriginal organizations never occurred, and the new City Council led by Mayor Sam Katz, who defeated Councillor Dan Vandal in his bid to become mayor 1 June 2004, immediately turned its attention to business-oriented and entrepreneur-focused issues while demonstrating little interest initially in pursuing Murray's vision.[57] An interesting study of how government transition can impact policy development and implementation

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[55] "Winnipeg mayor Glen Murray to run for Liberals." *CTV News*. 7 May 2004. [online] http://www.ctv.ca/servlet/ArticleNews/print/CTVNews/1083874927699_79284127/?hub=Canada&subhub=PrintStory. Last accessed 23 April 2005.

[56] "Former Winnipeg mayor loses to Conservative." *CBC News*. 29 Jun 2004 [online] http://www.cbc.ca/story/election/national/2004/06/29/elexn_riding_charleswood_stjames.html. Last accessed 24 April 2005.

[57] Katz defeated Vandal by a margin of nearly two to one (99,015 votes to 55,644 votes). See "Sam Katz is new Winnipeg mayor." *NewWinnipeg*. 22 June 2004. [online] http://www.newwinnipeg.com/news/2004/06-22election-results.htm. Last accessed 24 April 2005.

notwithstanding, the shift from Murray to Katz had a negative effect upon Winnipeg's urban Aboriginal strategy, which to curious outsiders appears at this point to have stalled.

The Proposed Winnipeg-Aboriginal Partnership

As sociologist Terry Wotherspoon has indicated, the move towards greater reliance on collaborative approaches with Aboriginal groups shows tremendous potential: "Integration of programs and services in concert with a clear understanding of community needs and strengths is particularly important, as demonstrated by numerous initiatives that have produced positive results," which include "community schooling and university access programs, professional development and leadership training mentorship, and economic development plans that combine training with meaningful job creation."[58] Creating such partnerships is also timely considering that "an increasing segment of urban Aboriginal populations appears to . . . becoming positioned for entry, into positions associated with new middle classes."[59] This is in part the result of the growth of an infrastructure of urban Aboriginal institutions and organizations.[60] In sum, establishing partnerships with urban Aboriginal community leaders is an emergent trend aimed at building social capital in centres with large Aboriginal populations.

Murray and his team were aware of many of these same facts and issues and sought to create collaborative partnerships with urban Aboriginal leaders "rooted in a spirit of co-operation and good-will," for according to the *MAP* report, "history teaches

[58] Terry Wotherspoon. "Prospects for a New Middle Class Among Urban Aboriginal People." David R. Newhouse & Evelyn Peters (Eds.), *Not Strangers in These Parts: Urban Aboriginal Peoples*. pp. 147-166. (Ottawa: Policy Research Initiative, 2003), p. 163.
[59] Ibid., p. 161.
[60] See David R. Newhouse. "The Invisible Infrastructure: Urban Aboriginal Institutions and Organizations." In David R. Newhouse & Evelyn Peters (Eds.), *Not Strangers in These Parts: Urban Aboriginal Peoples*. pp. 243-254. (Ottawa: Policy Research Initiative, 2003).

us that Aboriginal issues can never be addressed in political isolation."[61] The term 'partnership' has many different meanings in different contexts, however.[62] The reason for this is that partnerships are complex and difficult to define.[63] Perhaps the most uncomplicated definition of partnership is "a relationship involving the sharing of power, work, support and/or information with others for the achievement of joint goals and/or mutual benefits."[64] Some of the more unique elements of a partnership include the partners identifying a potential relationship and that the nature of relations is based on "mutuality."[65] Further, since partnerships are evolutionary and dynamic, their processes need to be evaluated as they evolve.[66] A range of characteristics is employed to identify the various types of partnerships, which for the purposes of this paper can be broken into four types categories: the collaborative, the operational, the contributory, and the consultative partnership.[67]

The City's goal was to achieve a number socioeconomic goals that would normally be unattainable without Aboriginal input and participation in the policy process. Since the Mayor's office was situated as the hub of municipal politics, as a governmental agency, Murray considered the City able to interact with several groups in an effort to

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[61] *Municipal Aboriginal Pathways*, p. 4.

[62] John Allan, "Public-Private Partnerships: A Review of Literature and Practice," *Saskatchewan Institute of Public Policy Public Policy Paper* No.4, 6-7.

[63] Stephen Linder and P. Vaillancourt Rosenau, "Mapping the Terrain of the Public-Private Policy Partnership," in Pauline Vaillancourt Rosenau (ed.), *Public – Private Partnerships* (London: MIT Press, 2000), 6; and Ronald McQuaid, "The theory of partnership," in Stephen Osborne (ed.), *Public -- Private Partnerships* (London: Routledge, 2000), 10; and Maureen Mackintosh, "Partnership: Issues of Policy And Negotiation," *Local Economy* 7 (1991), 213.

[64] Kernaghan, "Partnership and public administration," p. 61.

[65] See Jennifer Brinkeroff, "Assessing and improving partnership relationships and outcomes: a proposed framework," *Evaluation and Program Planning* 25 (2002).

[66] Brinkeroff J. (2002); and Vivien Lowndes and Chris Skelcher, "The Dynamics Of Multi-Organizational Partnerships: An Analysis Of Changing Modes Of Governance, " *Public Administration* 76 (1998), 320; and Macintosh, 213-214.

[67] Kernaghan, 62-65; and Rodal (1993); and David Wright and A. Rodal, "Partnerships and Alliances," in Mohamed Charih and Arthur Daniels (eds.), *New Public Management and Public Administration in Canada* (Toronto: IPAC, 1997), 267.

formulate innovative and collaborative approaches for problem solving.[68] Murray envisioned a relationship that was predicated on power sharing and a shared decision making process, the goal being to work together by pooling resources "such as money, information, and labour" to meet shared or similar objectives."[69] Thus the urban Aboriginal initiative was seen as a means to promote trust, mutual dialogue, commitment, and cooperation. Despite Katz's refusal to pursue the urban Aboriginal initiative laid out by his predecessor, it appears as though Murray's policy was nevertheless destined to fail. This was primarily been due to his inability to establish a relationship with urban Aboriginal leaders.

There are three aspects to a successful collaborative partnership: working partnership relationships; clarity of objectives, expectations, and responsibilities; and accountability framework considerations. The first step is self-explanatory: the City needed to establish a working relationship with urban Aboriginal leaders. Despite being impressed with the level of coordination of the larger Aboriginal political organizations and some of the more influential grassroots groups, Murray and his team failed to integrate the voice of Winnipeg's Aboriginal leadership for the purposes of expanding the policy's parameters. Such participation would have also permitted Murray, Vandal, and Gerbasi to more finely tune the policy's existing criteria to better reflect the Aboriginal reality of Winnipeg. With the exception of the Aboriginal people who participated in the town hall discussion, which was an open forum that offered them the chance to voice their opinions about a policy that they had read about in the paper or heard about from

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[68] Kernaghan, "Partnership and public administration," p. 67.
[69] Ibid., p. 62.

friends by word-of-mouth, there was little in the way of Aboriginal participation in the development of an urban policy designed to improve their lives.

The aspect of the City's urban Aboriginal initiative that required minimal clarification was its objectives. Fifteen points of action comprised five areas of change aimed at improving existing Aboriginal socio-economic conditions. Yet despite the presence of a list of anticipated outcomes, policy directives describing how to reach these goals were not included. The lack of direction was evident in a telephone interview conducted with Loraine Desjarlais in October 2003. In reference to the *MAP*, Desjarlais claimed that "the document is saying basically that the corporation and the city of Winnipeg proper would be much stronger building partnerships and creating opportunities for our larger and growing young population." When speaking to the notion of sustainable and self-reliant Aboriginal communities, she indicated that *Plan Winnipeg* was the central document to which "all other corporate plans plug into," with the *MAP* acting as the Aboriginal component. Further, "to assist in creating sustainable and self-reliant Aboriginal communities, the MAP document and policy statements are seen as ones that we can do while still realizing that this is just the first step and that there needs to be more consultation and additional steps along the way."[70] The majority of the responses were at best ambiguous and demonstrated that there was no clear path in place to help the policy's architects meet these objectives despite the desire to effect positive change.

Murray was clear from the beginning that the City would take responsibility for guiding the policy process and to take the initiative in terms of establishing relationships with Aboriginal leaders. In sum, the Mayor's office would act as the nexus, expanding

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[70] Desjarlais, telephone interview.

into the community only when Aboriginal consultation was deemed necessary. This approach does not reflect the necessary power-sharing a partnership requires to flourish, for according to Caiden, "to be responsible is to have the authority to act, power to control, freedom to decide, the ability to distinguish (as between right and wrong), and to behave rationally and reliably and with consistency and trustworthiness in exercising internal judgement."[71] In this instance, Murray and the City were indeed exercising their authority to act; the problem was Aboriginal leaders were not accorded a modicum of influence in the overall process.

One aspect of the potential relationships that Murray and his team failed to consider was how Aboriginal leaders viewed the notion of partnership and collaboration. According to Mohawk scholar Taiaiake Alfred, responsibility (and accountability) "in the indigenous sense needs to be understood not just as a set of processes but as a relationship" and that "the legitimacy of leaders and of governments is determined in part by the degree to which they adhere to accountability procedures, but to an even greater degree by the success leaders have in cultivating and maintaining relationships."[72] Moreover, collaborative partnerships are based on relationships, and these relationships may involve different organizational cultures. As Pocklington and Pocklington argue, "remarkable similarities" connect the basic structure of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal political morality.[73] Partnerships involve the sharing of responsibility, liability, and

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[71] Gerald Caiden, "Ensuring the Accountability of Public Officials," in Joseph Jabbra and O.P. Dwividedi (eds.), *Public Service Accountability: A Comparative Perspective*. (Connecticut: Kumarian Press, Inc., 1989), p. 25.
[72] Taiaiake Alfred. *Peace, Power, Righteousness. An Indigenous Manifesto*. (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 91-92.
[73] Tom Pocklinton and Sarah Pocklington, "Aboriginal political ethics," in *Corruption, Character, and Conduct: Essays on Canadian Government*, ed. John W. Langford and Allan Tupper (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1993), 52.

accountability, and, therefore, each partner should be honest and open about mutual concerns that have potential to affect the efficacy of the partnership.[74]

The lack of any clear-cut relationship with Aboriginal leaders meant that the final aspect of effective collaborative relationships, accountability framework considerations, can not be considered. This was not the fault of Murray, who clearly desired a working relationship with urban Aboriginal leaders. Rather, it is demonstrative of a poor policy framework that, notwithstanding its clear objectives predicated on creating collaborative relationships, was founded on a poor understanding of what collaborative relationships entail. Instead of establishing the foundation required to foster collaborative partnerships, Murray was instead creating an interactive political environment based on Aboriginal contributions to the policy process rather than directly participating. This resulted inadvertently in the creation of a advisory relationship whereby the City set the objectives and chose its partners from the urban Aboriginal community; however, these partners were given few options when it came to their evaluating the initiative's finer points: they could agree to the overall objectives, or not.[75] More accurately, the partners were on hand to provide City officials with public input concerning proposed changes and to offer ideas for future actions. There is little direct participation in this type of partnership, and that involvement in this case is strictly controlled by the mayor and council.

Final Thoughts

The fact that Mayor Glen Murray and the City acknowledged the need to improve urban Aboriginal socio-economic standards prior to overall community well-being

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[74] Brinkerhoff (2000)(b), 5.2.1.

[75] Flo Frank. *Flying Together: A Partnership Guidebook*. (Edmonton: Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers, 1999), p. 13.

improving demonstrates advanced thinking. Accepting also the point that a solid policy can only be constructed on a foundation made up of an ongoing dialogue and physical interaction is also impressive. Notwithstanding the fact that Murray resigned in 2004 to pursue a federal Parliamentary seat (which he lost), and that the new Mayor Sam Katz, has been reticent to pursue his predecessor's urban Aboriginal initiative, Murray's initial proposal was flawed. In particular, he promoted a collaborative relationship with the municipality's Aboriginal leaders without extending a formal invitation to participate and directly inform the policy. Despite the claim that the policy itself anticipated Aboriginal people filling city jobs following the retirement of current baby-boom employees, no advisory position was created that could have been filled by an Aboriginal person to consult with the Mayor and his team during the creation of the policy. In all, Murray's conception of a collaborative relationship was flawed. Rather, he promoted fostering a consultative relationship with Winnipeg's Aboriginal community, a process that keeps Aboriginal leaders at arm's length, thereby resulting in their becoming little more than peripheral players in the creation of policies aimed at improving their lives. This is nevertheless the first step in a process that has great potential to positively influence the development of the field of municipal-Aboriginal relations and policy development heretofore overlooked.

Areas for Additional Research

Notwithstanding the initial attempt by the Winnipeg city council to promote community development to build a better future for Winnipeg's Aboriginal citizens, certainly more research is required. For instance, throughout this paper I have provided

exclusively the City of Winnipeg rationale for promoting the cross-cultural political dialogue discussed; but how do the leaders of Aboriginal organizations feel about the proposal? How will Aboriginal people not represented by the existing provincial, municipal, and influential grassroots organizations work with city officials promoting this proposed model? Where does the non-Aboriginal citizenry fit into the discourse and how will their attitudes and beliefs be accommodated? How pragmatic is it to promote a dialogue that will involve dozens if not hundreds of representatives with competing agendas? Taking this general analysis a step further, could the Winnipeg model be an attempt at Aboriginal co-optation in an effort to secure a future urban work force? Is this assimilation in the guise of a well meaning attempt at Aboriginal inclusion that undermines any future attempts to secure urban self-government? These are but a few of the concerns and questions that have been raised during the course of this research that require further study.