



**Manitoba Home  
Builders' Association**

**2018 Winnipeg Municipal Election Candidate Questionnaire**

Dear Nikolas Joyal:

As a candidate in this year's municipal election, your opinion and position on issues important to our sector is highly valued. The MHBA asks that you please answer this brief questionnaire on the following four important topics:

**1) Increasing Costs and Fees**

According to Statistics Canada, residential construction costs in Winnipeg have risen over 14 per cent, more than double the national average, since the beginning of 2017. Between January 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2018, the cost of building or renovating a home in Winnipeg has shot up 7.3 per cent. To put that in comparison, the city with the next highest increase in construction costs during that time was Vancouver at 2.2 per cent.

During this same time, builders in Winnipeg saw increases on numerous permits and fees issued by the City of Winnipeg, including a 5% increase to the City's Impact Fee. These fee increases, while generating increased revenue for the City, are compounding other increasing construction costs and have negatively impacted the affordability of all housing – not just new homes - across Winnipeg.

What is your plan to stem increasing fees being charged to new and existing home owners in Winnipeg?

As discussed in a following question, I believe the easiest way to reduce fees is to simplify and stream line the approval process for construction and renovations. I support the city's Impact Fees, as they are meant to pay for services and maintenance that developers of neighbourhoods do not pay for long term (such as running transit service, constructing and maintaining parks and community centers, providing police and fire/paramedic services, snow clearing and garbage removal, etc.) However, I believe that these fees **should not** be applied to infill housing in existing neighbourhoods, or to renovations/additions of any sort, in any neighbourhood.

**2) Infill Strategy**

The City of Winnipeg's implementation action plan for the Residential Infill Strategy has been developed and is currently being presented for public feedback. The MHBA supports an active and thriving infill housing market. More and more, the City of Winnipeg will rely on infill housing to sustain its long-term population growth.

What is your plan to help promote infill housing development and to create more certainty around investing in infill housing?

There are several things I believe the city can be doing to promote infill housing. The first is public education: It is important that residents understand that infill does not simply mean a high-rise being constructed in an already established neighbourhood. Infill can mean splitting a lot and building two houses. It could mean a duplex on a lot formerly occupied by a single-family home. It could mean a high-rise, but only in areas where there is precedent for this type of development. Clearing up misconceptions and fear over what “infill” means can go a long way to increase support for it. A second thing that must be done is to establish clear guidelines for infill development, including which areas can best support infill, and what form it should take. Establishing these ahead of time will provide current and future residents an idea of what to expect for the future of their neighbourhood and will also allow the city to improve services to accommodate this future growth. The city is already making progress on this with the Residential Infill Strategy, as mentioned in the question. Finally, I would like to see the city amend zoning to include the possibility of future rezoning from the outset. For example: in a new neighbourhood the city zones a section of land for commercial use, such as a strip mall. At the same time, they include in the zoning that it may be developed as multi-family residential in the future. This would not only allow residents to have an idea of what could happen in the future, but would also allow potential developers to be able to skip rezoning applications, as the land has already been zoned for residential despite its original use as something else.

### 3) Development Approvals

Timing is a critically important component in securing private investment for major development projects that help provide Winnipeg with a consistent and reliable supply of housing. Winnipeg’s development approval process can be an onerous one and added delays can potentially put investment at risk. Streamlining this process, which involves multiple City departments, would significantly help both Winnipeg’s builders and land developers.

How would you support improving the development approval process?

As mentioned in the question, the easiest way to do this is to streamline the process. By receiving approval for all sections of a project at once, there is considerable opportunity to reduce delays, number of applications submitted, and committee hours/presentations. I am not overly familiar with the approval process and therefore do not have specific proposals on how to improve it, however I am supportive of any idea developed by the city and the industry that will improve the process.

### 4) Our Winnipeg Review – Plan for Growth

Our Winnipeg is the City’s road map and vision for future growth, planning and development for the next 25 years. It sets out the goals, policies and guidelines intended to direct all physical, social, environmental, and economic development in Winnipeg, now and into the future. A stable and predictable residential housing supply is critical to ensure that Winnipeg is able to grow in a sustainable way.

What are your thoughts on how Our Winnipeg can be a tool for residential growth?

Our Winnipeg is a critical tool for not just residential growth, but the growth of the entire city. By establishing *now* what will need to be done to support the city in the *future*, it allows the city to plan transit, infrastructure, fire/police, recreational spaces, etc. for future growth. Specifically for residential, it gives insight into what areas will

be developed over the long term, and for what uses. For new neighbourhoods, it gives general ideas of density and layout, and the general timeframe of the development of new neighbourhoods. For existing areas, Our Winnipeg gives the city a chance to identify what regions can handle further growth and densification. For both future and current neighbourhoods, the plan provides an idea of what to expect in terms of residential growth.

Please provide your response to our questions via email to [lmcinnes@homebuilders.mb.ca](mailto:lmcinnes@homebuilders.mb.ca) by **4:30 pm, October 12, 2018**.

Your responses will be shared with MHBA members through our e-newsletter on October 16, 2018 and will also be posted on the MHBA website.

*Building Excellence since 1937*

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