

A Municipal Corporate Utility 10 Questions

1. As most of the stated advantages of the proposed Utility Corporation would be possible under the current system, what precisely are the problems with the Water and Waste Department that require such an expensive solution?
2. The city says that the proposed Utility Corporation will be 100% publicly owned but this seems to conflict with the idea that the city is looking for a “strategic” partner. Is this a private/public partnership or a kind of contracting out? Please explain the seeming contradiction.
3. If an international corporation becomes involved, there could be consequences for Canada under the North American Free Trade Agreement and/or the World Trade Organization. Has the city looked into this matter? If so, please provide the opinion of legal counsel.
4. As third parties are exempt under The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, please explain how the proposed municipal Utility Corporation would be more, rather than less transparent? Also, given that the improvements to the waste-water treatment plants would be done under a contract between the City and a private company, the financial details will not be available to the public, an arrangement that will actually decrease, not increase, transparency. Please explain
5. Borrowing rates for infrastructure improvements paid for by private companies are generally higher than those available to governments. It is not entirely clear that private money would be involved, but if so, please explain why and how this would make such projects less costly?
6. Under the proposed Utility Corporation, would water, sewer, land drainage, garbage and recycling services be subject to GST, PST or municipal taxes?
7. The Province subsidizes infrastructure outside the city limits considerably more than within the City of Winnipeg, which allows ex-urban municipalities to offer an appreciable tax advantage. A number of surrounding municipalities would like to buy water, see the long-term projections for the supply of and demand for water from Shoal Lake and other sources.

An early response to the above questions and concerns would be most helpful in our preparations for a public meeting where Winnipeg citizens will have the democratic opportunity to "speak up".

- er, land drainage and other public services from the City without any conditions, so as to boost development in their municipalities. How would an appointed Utility Corporation Board protect the City’s interests better than the existing City Council from the policy implications of ex-urban development?
8. Please place all of the background studies, reports, surveys and focus groups data on the public record immediately.
9. Please provide a comparative analysis of the cost-savings in the proposed Utility Corporation over the current model.
10. Please provide the long-term projections for the supply of and demand for water from Shoal Lake and other sources.

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