

Public Utilities Board of Manitoba Strategic Plan 2013-2017

Executive Summary

The purpose of this strategic plan is to provide guidance that will help the Public Utilities Board of Manitoba (PUB) achieve its vision for the future. The plan provides some short-term operational priorities, a framework for longer-term strategic decision making, a foundation for operational planning and a context to stimulate change.

1. Background

This plan was initiated by the Chair of the Public Utilities Board to provide guidance to the Board and staff of PUB as they undertake the work mandated by *The Public Utilities Board Act*. The members of the Board and the senior staff worked collaboratively to develop the plan. The vision and mission were developed as part of the planning process to set the tone for future PUB activity.

2. PUB Vision and mission

Vision

To provide effective, innovative regulatory processes and decisions for Manitobans.

Mission

The Public Utilities Board is fair, independent and accessible; PUB makes consistent and well-explained decisions in a respectful and timely manner.

3. Stakeholder engagement and SWOT analysis

This plan was developed with the benefit of feedback from stakeholders. A discussion of key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats also informed the plan.

4. Strategic priorities for 2013-2017

Four strategic priorities emerged during the planning process:

1. Effective communications and relationships;
2. Excellence in the provision of regulatory decisions;
3. Efficient internal operations; and
4. PUB 2020

5. Operational priorities

Specific operational priorities are adopted annually by the Board .

Public Utilities Board of Manitoba Strategic Plan

2013-2017

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An implementation plan will be developed to lay out the actions that will result from the plan in each year from 2013 to 2017. Operational priorities for 2015 are included as a section of this plan. These priorities will be developed in more detail and will form the basis for the work of PUB for 2015.

The purpose of the Public Utilities Board of Manitoba (PUB) is to regulate the rates charged by Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Public Insurance, gas and propane utilities, such as Centra Gas and Stittco and all water and sewer utilities in Manitoba except for the City of Winnipeg. PUB licences brokers of natural gas under *The Public Utilities Board Act* and regulates natural gas and propane pipelines so that gas and propane are safely distributed to Manitoba consumers. PUB also licenses funeral directors under *The Prearranged Funeral Services Act*.

In view of this purpose, the vision and mission for PUB are as follows.

Vision: To provide effective, innovative regulatory processes and decisions for Manitobans.

Mission: The Public Utilities Board is fair, independent and accessible; PUB makes consistent and well-explained decisions in a respectful and timely manner.

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4. PUB 2020

Strategic priorities for 2013-2017

1. Effective communications and effective relationships: PUB will position itself as a regulator that is transparent and responsive. It will ensure that its communications are clear and work with stakeholders to build and maintain effective relationships.
 - 1.1. Review the process for engaging the public in hearings to ensure that the public is well-informed and appropriately engaged.
 - 1.2. Better understand the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders and partners to ensure PUB is in step with them and/or best able to influence outcomes to meet PUB's vision and mission. These partners include Crown Corporations, the Manitoba Municipal Administrator's Association, the Municipal Board, Manitoba Local Government and the Manitoba Auditor General.
 - 1.3. Develop a survey mechanism to receive public input via the PUB website.
 - 1.4. Develop better communications protocols among related organizations that have overlapping mandates to make processes more efficient.
 - 1.5. Communicate learnings to responsible Ministers following major hearings.
 - 1.6. Expose PUB Board members to relevant events/groups to better inform them and facilitate networking.
 - 1.7. Improve the PUB web site to make it easier to navigate and more informative.
 - 1.8. Hold more discussions with utilities, while maintaining independence, to build on mutual understanding of issues.
 - 1.9. Meet with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities twice annually to build better mutual understanding with members.
2. Excellence in the provision of regulatory decisions.
 - 2.1 Adopt standards for Orders
 - 2.2 Develop innovative methods, such as generic hearings, to deal with common issues and streamline processes.
 - 2.3 Develop or adopt ways to handle confidential information that meet the needs of all affected parties.
 - 2.4 Develop a strategy to deal with lack of timely provision of information by utilities, especially small ones, to improve the timeliness of PUB decisions.
 - 2.5 Develop a process to improve the efficiency of hearings, including guidelines on the provision of information required and a hierarchy of the importance of information to improve hearing efficiency.
 - 2.6 Make better use of briefings prior to hearings to inform processes and streamline hearings.

3. Efficient internal operations: PUB will continue to look for operational efficiencies to make the best possible use of resources in fulfilling its mandate and delivering on its vision and mission.

3.1 Make better use of technology, such as SharePoint, to introduce more efficiency in information sharing.

3.2 Improve the education process for potential Board Members so they are more aware of expectations and provide comprehensive orientation for incoming members.

3.3 Provide meaningful education for Board members so they can carry out their duties effectively.

3.4 Continue to invest in staff so they are able to provide excellent service and advice.

3.5 Develop a succession plan for senior staff.

3.6 Develop a strategy to provide the flexibility to access various contract human resources to meet needs, such as the need for a communications expert.

4. PUB 2020: To meet its vision of effective, innovative regulatory processes and decisions for Manitobans, PUB will continue to take a long-term view and build for the future.

4.1 Modernize legislation.

4.2 Review the role of PUB in the context of related/overlapping organizations.

4.3 Modernize processes.

Operational priorities for 2015

While this plan is intended to guide PUB work until 2017, there is also a need to identify short-term priorities. These are:

External priorities:

- Address the applications from the major utilities (Manitoba Hydro, Centra Gas and Manitoba Public Insurance and the Cost of Service application from Manitoba Hydro)
- Complete the review of the PUB`s gas safety responsibilities
- Review PUB processes and implement necessary changes
- Implement a revised gas broker code of conduct and revised associated documents
- Review the funding of intervenors in PUB processes

Internal priorities:

- Integrate new staff and Board members
- Develop a communications strategy and plan
- Review PUB funding and fees
- Integrate SharePoint software
- Revamp the PUB website
- Make improvements to the PUB hearing room
- Overhaul the PUB`s filing system