

DRAFT Recommendations for a community-based Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Plan

The recommendations below are for potential inclusion in a community-based Winnipeg poverty reduction plan. They are built off of input received through five community engagement sessions that took place in Spring 2017 as well as recommendations from previously published research reports and consultation processes that took place in the past. This includes:

- 2015 Winnipeg Street Census
- 2015 The View From Here
- 2014 Alternative Municipal Budget
- OurWinnipeg
- 2015 City of Winnipeg Budget Consultation
- Housing Steering Committee, 2013 Housing Policy and Implementation Plan
- The Plan to End Homelessness in Winnipeg
- Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council framework for action
- Winnipeg Police Board - A Culture of Safety for Everyone 2015-2019
- Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation Community plans
- CCPA State of the Inner City Reports
- Winnipeg Plan to End Youth Homelessness
- Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action
- Policy recommendations of the City Working Group of the Right to Housing Coalition
- Bridging the Gaps: Solutions to Winnipeg Gangs

Please see the end of this document for more details on the background and rationale for this community-led initiative to create a Winnipeg poverty reduction plan.

1. Reconciliation and Supports for Indigenous Issues

- 1.1. Structure the City of Winnipeg's diversity training for employees within an anti-oppressive curriculum.
- 1.2. Apply a reconciliation lens to the City of Winnipeg's operating grant application process and prioritize funding for Indigenous-led and Indigenous-serving community-based organizations.
- 1.3. Increase funding for Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak - the City of Winnipeg's Aboriginal Youth Strategy - to develop existing and new programs for Indigenous youth. Grants to existing programs should be increased by 10 per cent and then indexed to inflation.
- 1.4. Engage with community-based organizations, grassroots groups and residents on how the City can build meaningful partnerships and relationships that support community efforts to implement the TRC Calls to Action and the UNDRIP. This engagement should feed into the City's own implementation process for the TRC Calls to Action.
- 1.5. Partner with northern, remote, and First Nations Communities and other levels of government to develop a comprehensive and coordinated strategy for supporting Indigenous people who migrate to Winnipeg.

2. Income and Employment

- 2.1. Establish a City of Winnipeg Employment Equity Policy with government-wide benchmarks for representation of equity-seeking groups, including Indigenous Winnipeggers, within all levels of the civil service.
- 2.2. Adopt a living wage policy that:
 - a. Ensures all City of Winnipeg employees are paid a living wage.
 - b. Ensures the evaluation of bids on City contracts takes into account whether or not the employer pays a living wage.
- 2.3. Ensure that the City of Winnipeg and its arms-length entities (e.g. the Winnipeg Police Service) use purchasing to support social and economic benefits (e.g. job and training opportunities for individuals facing barriers to employment). This can be accomplished by

purchasing directly from non-profit social enterprises, or by using Community Benefit Clauses in appropriate tenders.

- 2.4. Bring City services back in house implement hiring practices within them that create jobs for people with barriers to employment, including Indigenous people.
- 2.5. Pilot an employment program that targets the training and hiring of multi-barriered jobseekers to meet Winnipeg Transit's labour needs with the intent to expand the program into other City service areas.
- 2.6. Support existing and new job training and employment programs for youth, ensuring that services are continued beyond securing a job and youth are supported in maintaining employment.

3. Housing

- 3.1. Establish an entity with a dedicated mandate and resources to increase affordable and accessible rental housing that meets the unique needs of low-income people, women, newcomers, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, people experiencing homelessness, and youth throughout the city by:
 - a. Implementing the City's Housing Policy and Implementation Plan by XX.
 - b. Collaborating with the Province of Manitoba to implement the housing supply related recommendations outlined in the *Winnipeg Plan to End Youth Homelessness*.
 - c. Supporting the development of accessible housing options along the full continuum, including new emergency shelter beds, transitional and supportive housing, as well as social and affordable rental housing, over X years using a range of planning, regulatory and financial tools and resources including:
 - i. density bonusing, development fee waivers, land banking and donations, pre-zoning land for affordable housing, alternative development standards, TIF grants that prioritize affordable housing, reduced property taxes for affordable housing developments, inclusionary zoning, hands on support from planners, expedited permit processes, and federal funding.

- 3.2. Implement demolition and conversion control policies to assist in preserving the existing stock of affordable housing including rooming houses and single room occupancy housing. This should include:
 - a. Requiring developers to compensate for the costs of displaced households, charging developers a fee when affordable housing is demolished, or requiring developers to construct the same number of affordable housing units elsewhere in the community.
 - b. Regulating the conversion of rental stock to condominiums when vacancy rates fall below 4%.
- 3.3. Continue to fund the Housing Rehabilitation and Investment Reserve and develop a regular and transparent process for reviewing and adjusting its size to ensure it adequately meets housing needs in Winnipeg.
- 3.4. Develop an awareness and education campaign around the need for affordable housing for the homeless and low-income population in Winnipeg to address misconceptions about homelessness and affordable housing.

4. Transportation

- 4.1. Implement a low-income transit pass program and ensure that it, along with all other Winnipeg Transit policies and programs, runs parallel to Handi Transit.
- 4.2. Ensure sidewalks are accessible to pedestrians during winter months when heavy snowfall creates a barrier to mobility.
- 4.3. Increase the frequency of transit, including during off peak transit hours, in low-income neighbourhoods with highest transit dependency by incrementally increasing the bus fleet by at least 200.
- 4.4. Increase funding for the implementation of the City's Pedestrian and Cycling strategies by \$2 million annually between 2018/19 and 2020/21.

5. Recreation

- 5.1. Ensure that no program participant is denied the opportunity to take part in an activity due to their inability to pay registration fees or

equipment costs, and promote the availability of subsidy initiatives targeting increased participation in recreation to individual and organizational stakeholders.

- 5.2. Increase grants to non-charging community-based youth programs by 10 per cent and index future increases to inflation while providing additional targeted funding to community and recreation centres in the inner city and other low income areas as needed to prevent fee increases that negatively impact low-income people.
- 5.3. Support a wider variety of free community-based programs for youth (e.g. arts, sports, and music) so that they can stay open later, on weekends, and/or as part of 24 hour safe spaces for youth. Support should focus on programs that build a sense of identity and belonging while incorporating opportunities for mentorship, cultural reclamation, and healing.
- 5.4. Implement and resource a new collaborative approach to recreation planning and coordination in partnership with community to ensure the most effective outcomes related to facility use; program delivery and quality; and staff supervision, standards, and remuneration.
- 5.5. Collaborate with community to provide a coordinated approach to facility development to ensure new and existing facilities are inviting and accessible to a wider demographic of the community.

6. Community and Civic Engagement

- 6.1. Allow newcomers to vote in municipal elections based on residency requirement and not citizenship.
- 6.2. Re-establish Community Committees and Resident Advisory Groups to enhance access to information and facilitate citizen participation in municipal government.
- 6.3. Fund an outreach program to encourage voter participation in inner-city and low-income neighbourhoods.
- 6.4. Adopt an access without fear policy for undocumented individuals so they can access all City services without fear of reporting or deportation.

6.5. Provide core funding to Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations to support community-led efforts toward implementing OurWinnipeg.

7. Justice and Safety

7.1. Mandate the Winnipeg Police Board and Service to work with community-based organizations to develop and/or formalize policing policies that enable their members to make better use of their discretionary powers to:

- a. Divert individuals from the carceral justice system and into community programs that will support them in becoming accountable for their actions and empower them to make better decisions in the future.
- b. Avoid practices that only serve to deepen poverty.

7.2. Mandate the Winnipeg Police Board and Service to work with community-based organizations to develop and further emphasize current, comprehensive, and evidence-based training modules on the social conditions that contribute to people becoming involved in the justice system. Training should be made mandatory throughout their members' service careers.

7.3. Mandate the Winnipeg Police Board and Service to place a higher priority on the preventative role of community policing (e.g foot patrols) in meeting their objective of community safety through social development.

7.4. Advocate for and support the creation of 24 hour safe spaces for youth in multiple neighbourhoods

7.5. Publically endorse the Gang Action Interagency Network's *Bridging the Gaps: Solutions to Winnipeg Gangs*, a framework for a Winnipeg-based strategy to prevent gang involvement and facilitate gang exits, and provide financial and human resources to support its implementation.

7.6. Mandate the Winnipeg Police Board to ensure that the Winnipeg Police Service continues to support public education and awareness initiatives related to gang prevention/intervention programs and services.

8. Food Security

8.1. Mandate and fund the Winnipeg Food Council to develop a Winnipeg Food Strategy that includes:

- a. Conducting a food policy scan that systematically reviews municipal policies or policy gaps that impact access to nutritious and affordable food.
- b. Conducting simultaneous food assessments for each ward to identify assets and barriers to accessing nutritious and affordable foods.

8.2. Develop a plan to address the unique barriers faced by Indigenous people, newcomers, refugees, and people with disabilities in accessing nutritious and affordable food.

8.3. Research and implement public transit routes and bus design to facilitate access to nutritious and affordable foods, particularly in underserved neighbourhoods.

8.4. Develop and implement a comprehensive municipal community garden program with defined leases and infrastructure support (e.g. soil, water, composting equipment).

8.5. Reform zoning-bylaws and/or tax structures to:

- c. Incentivize new and existing food retailers to sell nutritious and affordable foods, particularly in underserved neighbourhoods.
- d. Remove barriers to small-scale and direct farm marketing (farmers markets, pocket markets, mobile markets) of nutritious and affordable foods, particularly in underserved neighbourhoods.

9. Public Spaces

9.1. Address the relative lack of green space in low-income neighbourhoods as part of develop and implementing a multi-year plan to preserve, protect, and enhance Winnipeg's park lands, green spaces, natural areas and connecting corridors that are accessible, inclusive, and safe year round.

9.2. Partner with Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations to determine how the City can support community-designed plans to protect, maintain, and improve local parks and green spaces.

9.3. Ensure that any privately-owned and publically-funded spaces are inclusive and accessible to the public year-round.

10. Child Care

10.1. Form a Childcare Planning Committee with the Province of Manitoba, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, Indigenous organizations, and community organizations including Francophone and newcomer representation, as well as other key stakeholders.

10.2. Improve the availability, accessibility, and affordability of culturally-appropriate non-profit childcare by:

- a. Incorporating childcare into community plans, zoning bylaws, and other City regulations.
- b. Undertaking land inventories of sites that could be reasonably used for childcare.
- c. Providing low/fixed rent spaces in municipal buildings along with building and facility maintenance.

11. Healthcare, Mental Healthcare and Addictions Treatment

11.1. Partner with all levels of government, allied professionals and community-based organizations to address the social determinants of health, including the impact of poverty on health, mental health, and quality of life.

11.2. Collaborate with all levels of government, allied professionals and community-based organizations to enhance access to family-centred addictions and mental health care supports for those living in low-income, especially youth and lone-parent households.

11.3. Support all levels of government, allied professionals, and community-based organizations to advocate for comprehensive mental health literacy education from K-12.

- 11.4. Support all health, mental health and addictions treatment professionals to be educated in trauma-informed care and anti-oppressive practice, and support the application of same in practice.
- 11.5. Provide financial supports to Indigenous and newcomer-led agencies so they can develop and provide cultural connections, opportunities for healing, and culturally-safe services and programming to all who seek them.

12. Accessibility Rights

- 12.1. Implement the Action Plan laid out in the City of Winnipeg’s 2016-2108 Accessibility Plan within that timeframe and play a robust leadership role in fulfilling and exceeding the City of Winnipeg’s obligations related to the Province of Manitoba’s Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

A Community-based Poverty Reduction Plan for the City of Winnipeg: Background & Rationale

Winnipeg is plagued by persistent poverty. The poverty rate in inner-city Winnipeg is 29.8% and 11.7% outside of the inner city. Pockets of poverty exist in suburban areas. It is well documented that poverty negatively impacts life expectancy, health, educational outcomes and the economic prosperity of our City (see www.mypeg.ca). While other levels of government have responsibility for social services, health and income security, municipalities have a responsibility as well. Municipalities have jurisdiction over policy areas that impact poverty and can use operating practices to reduce poverty. For example municipalities are responsible for public transportation, which many low-income people rely on.

Municipalities oversee recreational policy and programming; access to recreation can improve outcomes for children and adults alike. Municipalities have an interest in public safety and manage policing and fire services. Low-income people can be criminalized; unsafe housing increases risk of fire. Municipalities procure goods and services; applying a social return on investment to municipal procurement can support social enterprises that employ people with barriers to employment. Municipalities also employ workers, and can adjust hiring practices to encourage equity.

The City of Winnipeg currently does not have a municipal poverty reduction plan. Winnipeg does have a number of practices that impact poverty, for example free leisure activities or Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak, the Aboriginal Youth Employment Strategy. But without a strategy to guide planning and priorities at the City of Winnipeg, poverty reduction measures are done on an ad-hoc basis.

Community-based organizations (CBOs) are leading the way with innovative, locally-based efforts to respond to community need in Winnipeg. Many CBOs rely on municipal funding for their programming, or partner with the City of Winnipeg in some way.

In April 2016 several leaders of CBOs attended a conference hosted by Tamarack entitled *Cities Reducing Poverty: When Mayors Lead*. Mayor Brian Bowman presented on Winnipeg's efforts, which mainly focused on one initiative: enrolling more children in Registered Education Savings Plans (RESP). While registering children in RESPs is important, it is not a comprehensive approach. The CBO leaders returned home to Winnipeg with the realization that Winnipeg is falling behind other major Canadian cities who are already well-underway in their municipal poverty reduction plans (i.e. Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton, Hamilton).

Education is needed both at the Mayor and City Council levels, and with the public regarding the potentials of a comprehensive municipal poverty reduction plan, and what community organizations and members wish to see included in such a plan. This project is filling this key gap by creating an independent, community-based aspirational plan to reduce poverty in Winnipeg. The goal is to have the City use this report as a basis for a City of Winnipeg's poverty reduction strategy, co-created with community members and key stakeholders.