

2017 – 1 Affordable & Social Housing

Mover: Right to Housing Coalition

Whereas: Although vacancy rates in Manitoba's cities are creeping up (Winnipeg's vacancy rate for a two bedroom apartment has gone from less than 1% to 3.2%, Thompson's from .2% to 2.2% and Brandon's from less than .1% to 2.5%), many Manitobans continue to experience an affordable housing crisis. Far too many households spend 50% or more of their income on rent, putting them at significant risk of losing their housing, their health and their spirit.

Whereas: Federal tax structures and the lack of a national housing strategy have, over the past 40 years, slowed the creation of social and affordable rental housing. Our existing stock is eroding through aging, demolition, expiring federal operating agreements and conversion to condominium, and is not being adequately replaced. These factors have escalated rents to make them unaffordable to a growing number of people, especially the most vulnerable (those on a fixed income, persons with disabilities, newcomers, women and Indigenous people).

Whereas: Affordable housing is a key piece of neighbourhood renewal and a necessary foundation for neighbourhood and family stabilization. As housing costs increase, people are forced to spend food money on rent, making personal debt and food banks sad necessities for survival. When housing needs are met, children do not need to move from school to school, parents have reduced stress and the means to provide the necessities for their families (food, winter clothing, transport, school supplies, etc.).

Whereas: All three levels of government have to play a role in affordable and social housing. The Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg can be proactive in working with the federal government as it implements and funds its national housing strategy.

Whereas: The Province of Manitoba can add to the supply of social and affordable housing through new builds and new subsidies, however, it has no current commitment to increase supply. Rent Assist continues to be available to support low-income Manitobans in private rental housing. The Province can also help build the capacity of community organizations to take advantage of funding opportunities to create new social housing. Ongoing resources for capital repairs and maintenance in public housing units are needed to preserve the existing stock, as are investments in addressing expiring federal operating agreements. Public housing tenants require access to resources and opportunities (e.g. mental health services, literacy training, job training, education and childcare) that enable them to maintain their tenancy, meet their basic needs and improve their quality of life.

Whereas: The City of Winnipeg passed the Housing Policy Implementation Plan in 2014. It commits to the creation of 750 new rental units only 10% of which are to be affordable. Other Canadian cities are developing affordable rental housing at a significantly higher rate.

Whereas: The City Of Winnipeg is committed to supporting neighbourhood renewal and the creation of affordable housing through the Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve (HRIR), however, the HRIR budget allocation is not sufficient to address the current rental housing shortage. The HRIR provides funding for housing development and renewal to the five Housing Improvement Zones. The Housing Policy Implementation Plan will expand access to funding for other neighbourhoods. Significant increases to the HRIR allocation are required to ensure the City has sufficient capacity to support neighbourhood renewal and affordable housing

development.

Whereas: The City of Winnipeg has developed two documents that direct it to be more proactive in housing and that outline how this could be achieved: Innovative Practices in the Provision of Affordable Housing and the Complete Communities Direction Strategy, part of the OurWinnipeg development plan.

Whereas: The City has senior staff and City Council representation on the board of the autonomous Winnipeg Housing and Rehabilitation Corporation (WHRC), which develops, renovates, owns, and manages affordable housing primarily in Winnipeg's inner city.

Whereas: The City of Brandon passed an Affordable Housing First policy for surplus land disposal. A significant constraint for the development of additional affordable housing is the availability of reasonably priced residential land. Brandon's policy can help ensure that full priority is given to mobilizing potential partners for the creation of affordable housing on surplus land before the property is disposed of through traditional market means.

Whereas: Providing housing is cost effective compared to the costs associated with homelessness. It costs on average \$48,000 a year to leave someone on the street versus \$28,000 a year to house them. Long-term social housing is one of the most cost-efficient ways to house someone. Furthermore, housing can be used to create employment and training opportunities for people commonly shut out of the workforce, including social housing tenants. This helps generate new tax revenues and keeps money circulating in the local economy.

Be It Resolved That: CCEDNet Manitoba continue to work with the Right to Housing Coalition to ensure that:

- a. The City of Winnipeg supports Provincial and National affordable housing initiatives by using the planning, regulatory and financial tools and powers at its disposal to support affordable rental housing and social housing.
- b. The City of Winnipeg continues to fund the Housing Rehabilitation and Investment Reserve or subsequent relevant budget reserve and develop a regular and transparent process for reviewing and adjusting its size to ensure it adequately meets housing needs in Winnipeg.
- c. Municipal governments in Manitoba regulate the conversion of rental stock to condominiums when vacancy rates fall below 4%.
- d. The City should provide the WHRC with a stronger mandate and increased resources to bring multiple levels of government together to initiate and coordinate the funding and development of new affordable and social housing options throughout Winnipeg.
- e. The Province of Manitoba and all Manitoba municipalities establish a policy for all surplus land disposals that ensures non-profit and cooperative housing providers are prioritized for receiving surplus land for the purpose of creating affordable housing.
- f. The Province of Manitoba eliminates the further erosion of rent-geared-to-income housing, such that the existing commitment to annually create 500 each of new social and affordable housing units represents a net increase in social housing, while also planning for further net increases, beyond these existing commitments, to the supply of affordable and social rental housing province-wide for those most in need.
- g. The Province of Manitoba continue to make Rent Assist available to low-income Manitobans on and off of EIA

and return the regulatory formula for deductible levels to pre-2017 numbers for all Rent Assist recipients.

h. The Province of Manitoba make annual investments of at least \$126M to meet the estimated need for capital repairs and maintenance in public housing units by 2020.

i. The Province of Manitoba ensure that all Manitoba Housing tenants have access to tenant-driven resource centres that offer comprehensive supports either on site or nearby.

j. The Province of Manitoba builds the capacity of non-profit and co-op housing providers to create new social housing projects in order to ensure that communities in most need of housing have improved access to housing funding.

k. The Province of Manitoba lobbies its provincial counterparts and the federal government to continue to support and fund a national housing strategy, including a legislated right to housing.