

2015.3 Affordable and Social Housing*

Whereas: Although the 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 2.2%, Thompson's from .2% to 1.1% and Brandon's from less than .1% to 2.8%), we are still experiencing an affordable housing crisis. In 2011, nearly 13,080 Winnipeg households were paying 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, acted to slow the creation of social and affordable rental housing. Our existing stock is aging and is not being adequately replaced. At the same time rental stock is being eroded through demolition and conversion to condominium. All of 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, and Aboriginal people). The ongoing expiration of operating agreements presents a further threat to maintain our existing social housing stock.

Whereas: Creating new housing projects is extremely complicated and many community organizations lack capacity to take advantage of funding opportunities despite being in the most need of housing.

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: The City of Winnipeg has recently passed the Housing Policy Implementation Plan that 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 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 and the Housing Policy Implementation Plan will expand access to funding for other neighbourhoods. Without significant increases to the HRIR allocation, the capacity of the City to support neighbourhood renewal and affordable housing development will be limited.

Whereas: The City of Winnipeg has developed two documents that direct it to be more proactive in housing and 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: In Budget 2013 the Province of Manitoba committed to the creation of 500 new units each of social and affordable rental housing throughout the Province over the next three years.

Whereas: The City of Brandon has recently 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 the Province of Manitoba's housing commitment by using the planning, regulatory and financial tools and powers at its disposal to support at least 350 new units of affordable rental housing and 350 new units of social housing over the next three years.
- 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%, and adopt inclusionary zoning to increase the number of affordable housing units in all housing developments.
- d. 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.
- e. The Province of Manitoba eliminates the further erosion of rent-geared-to-income housing, such that the existing commitment to 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.

- f. The Province of Manitoba builds the capacity of non-profit and coop 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.
- g. The Province of Manitoba lobbies its provincial counterparts and the federal government to create and fund a national housing strategy.

* Replaces resolutions [2013 – 5 Affordable and Social Housing](#), and [2013 – 7 “Affordable Housing First” Land Use Policy](#)