WILLIAM WHYTE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION
200 Powers Street, Winnipeg, MB, R2W 4P3, phone: 582-0988

November 15, 2005

Your Worship Sam Katz
Mayor of Winnipeg

Re: Request for Continued City Support of Housing Renewal in Winnipeg's North End (William Whyte Neighbourhood)

Dear Mayor Katz:

The William Whyte Residents Association would like to thank you and the executive policy committee for your support last year by allocating funding to maintain housing programs in last years budget. Once again, we ask that you consider further funding for our neighbourhood.

The city's contribution that has directly affected our neighbourhood include infill housing on vacant lots, emergency critical home repairs, the community housing coordinator position, the exterior home renovation program, rehabilitation of aboriginal housing and the Tenant Landlord Cooperation pilot project.

With your assistance, our housing plan (William Whyte 2002-2007) is meeting its goals. City funding has inspired the members of our community to dream of restoring our community back to the way it once was. A community that is clean, safe, vibrant and proud.

The William Whyte Residents Association is dedicated to creating a safe, healthy and vibrant community for everyone who visits, lives in or works in the area. We want to build:

- A safe area for people, property and the environment
- Clean attractive streets, properties, parks and gardens
- Quality housing and buildings
- Recreation and leisure activities particularly for youth

Together we can make a difference. The William Whyte Residents association strongly urges the City of Winnipeg to continue its commitment to housing renewal in our neighbourhood.

Sincerely,

annette Champion-Taylor

Annette Champion-Taylor
Co-Chair William Whyte
Residents Association

EPC November 16, 2005

I would like to start by thanking you and the executive policy committee for your continued support last year by allocating funding to maintain housing programs in last years budget.

I am her today, on behalf of the William Whyte Residents Association to once again ask you to please consider further funding for our neighbourhood.

Just as a background I would like to tell you about who we are and what we do:

The WWRA is a volunteer organization of people in the William Whyte area:

Our boundaries are the west side of Main street to the east side of Arlington and the south side of Redwood to the north side of Selkirk ave. (which includes both sides of Selkirk from Salter to Arlington). Aprox. 66 blocks are included.

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As I outlined last year the William Whyte Residents Association has taken on many projects over the last few years. These projects include such things as:

- Community gardens (we have six sites)
- An active citizens on Patrol Program
- Holiday Light Contest
- Monitoring of vacant and boarded up buildings group
- Zoning issues committee
- Monthly residents meetings (attendance of between 30-50 residents on a monthly basis)
- Spring and Fall Community cleanups
- Monthly newsletter (distributed to over 2,000 residences, businesses and local organizations)
- Grafitti removal
- Winter Pleasure skating rink for youth
- Refurbishment of two tot lots with new equipment

In just the last year we have we have managed to secure funding for a volunteer coordinator, ran our own green team and provided a recreational program for children in the summer on top of what we already do. We also have a place to work out of now. Pritchard Park (a tiny rec centre) which was virtually sitting empty and not used save for the wading pool program that runs over the summer. We the residents association take a lot of pride in our group and much of our success is due to the support of the city either by funding or in kind support.

Housing in our neighbourhood goes hand in hand with many of the types of activities that the residents association is involved in. Just building and renovating homes in the community is not enough. People need to have a safe, clean and vibrant community as well.

Over the past number of years our group has worked in a pro active manner with the city and other levels of government to deal with the many issues and challenges we are faced with on a daily basis. The city has been very supportive of our needs and encouraged us in our endeavours. The WHHI funding has been so badly needed and very much appreciated.

When I moved into the William Whyte community in 1989 I watched the gradual decay of our neighbourhood due to in part to the lack of attention paid to the neighbourhood by the city. Inspectors positions were cut. These inspectors mandate was to ensure the safety of the residents and therefore the people who occupy the homes. The lack of enforced rules led to the proliferation of slum landlords. People either left or stopped keeping their homes in good repair and the general value of the value of the neighbourhood declined.

In 2001 when we became a "Neighbourhood Improvement Zone" things started to change. Within the last four years we have seen and can feel the difference in our neighbourhood. People are really starting to talk about these changes. There is a feeling that we are starting to get our neighbourhood back. Homes are being repaired, eyesores are being torn down, gardens are springing up and residents are back strolling the neighbourhood. Pride is starting to return.

This is a direct result of the spark of hope that the initial dollars injected into the area brought about.

The new vacant and derelict buildings bylaw that came into effect only recently has also made a difference. No longer can buildings remain indefinite delapetated eyesores in our community.

Another very important component to the rejuvenation of the neighbourhood is the highly successful Neighbourhood Fix it program. The city has funded $30,000.00 for William Whyte each year for the past 4 now going into the 5th year. Through the administration of NECRC 1,000.00 grants are given to randomly selected entrants towards any exterior renovation of their home. This money is matched by the province. The need for this program is very great. Since the inception of this program all of the people are first time Recipients of the grant. We have more applications than we have money. The spinoffs of this program should also be mentioned. Not only do grant recipients spend far more than their 1,000.00 grant but it has a snowball effect on neighbours as well. When one neighbour see's the house next door with the a fresh coat of paint and new fence they often feel compelled to put in their own efforts and money towards improving or repairing their own home.

The rehabilitation of homes has started to take off and not just by non profit groups. Private residents and landlords are starting to take the ball and run with it. They are starting to invest in the neighbourhood.

Housing prices have increased as well (give examples Cal's place and the house that sold listed at 99,000.00. Even asking such a price a few years ago would be unheard of.

We the residents of our community strongly believe that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure and that is why it is so crutial to ensure the funding continues. If we invest now, and not ignore what could and did happen in the past we can restore the community back to what it once was.

It is imperative that we continue with full force to carry out our new vacant and derelict buildings bylaw. We need to do some major housecleaning if you will. With the reduction of many of these fire traps whether it be a commercial building or derelict building there will certainly be less incidences of arson and less strain on our tax dollars in sending out firefighters.

We need to provide more infill homes for low income responsible citizens to have a safe and affordable place to live. We cannot just tear down these decrepid buildings and continue to have ridiculous numbers of vacant lots. Empty lots certainly do not provide big dollars when it comes to property taxes. Homes on these lots will definitely bring in more revenue.

By improving our neighbourhood there are many other spinoffs as well. A safe, clean and vibrant community makes it far more attractive for people to start coming back into the neighbourhood. Our image improves.

In summary, I would like to say that we are definitely seeing improvement in our neighbourhood. We have a long way to go but that is to be expected. It took a number of years to see it decline and it is going to be a number of years before we can bring it back. The momentum in our community is going strong, more and

more people are getting on board. People are taking an active role – they are active participants and want to be a voice in their community and participant in the renewal efforts. Our residents association has put in thousands of hour of time and energy to bring about positive change.

There is so much that the city's allocation means to all of us in William Whyte. In-fill housing on vacant lots, emergency home repairs, the community housing coordinator position the exterior renovation program, the rehabilitation of aboriginal housing and the creation of the TLC project. So much would be lost. We need your help!