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April 22, 2014

Mayor Sam Katz
Chairperson, Executive Policy Committee
Council Building
510 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Dear Mayor Katz:

Re: Winnipeg Housing Implementation Plan

A recommendation to approve the Winnipeg Housing Implementation Plan will be considered by the Executive Policy Committee at its meeting on April 23rd. The Right to Housing Coalition supports the approval of the plan and recommends that the public service be directed to take action on the plan as a priority activity of the City.

Right to Housing is a Winnipeg-based coalition of individuals and 50 organizations that advocates for affordable housing for low-income households. The Coalition lobbies all three levels of government to address the current lack of affordable housing. The lack of decent affordable rental housing has been the focus of our advocacy efforts in recent years.

The Coalition was pleased that the City's housing policy approved by Council last September identified affordable housing development as a key issue and priority and that it established a leadership role for the City in working with other levels of government, housing developers and community organizations to meet the need.

The proposed implementation plan sets out a healthy vacancy rate of 3% and a target for purpose built rental development. The plan also provides for the development of housing incentive programs that our Coalition has been recommending to the city as a critical component of an affordable housing strategy. The plan outlines several areas of collaboration with the Province, another area consistent with previous Coalition recommendations.

The implementation plan indicates that the City will advocate for changes to federal legislation to create a more enabling environment for rental development. The Coalition strongly supports this advocacy role.

The Coalition hopes that the Executive Policy Committee and City Council approve the plan quickly so that actions outlined in the plan can be taken by the City to address the critical lack of affordable housing in Winnipeg.

With regards,

Clark Brownlee
Coordinator
Right to Housing Coalition