

Poverty Reduction and the City of Winnipeg: Developing an Effective Strategy

Mid-term Update to EPC
September 21, 2020
Community Services

Poverty Reduction Strategy

Land Acknowledgement

*We would like to acknowledge that we are in
Treaty No.1 territory and the traditional
homeland of the Métis Nation.*

*We also acknowledge that the water we drink
comes from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation on
Treaty No.3 territory.*

Poverty Reduction Strategy

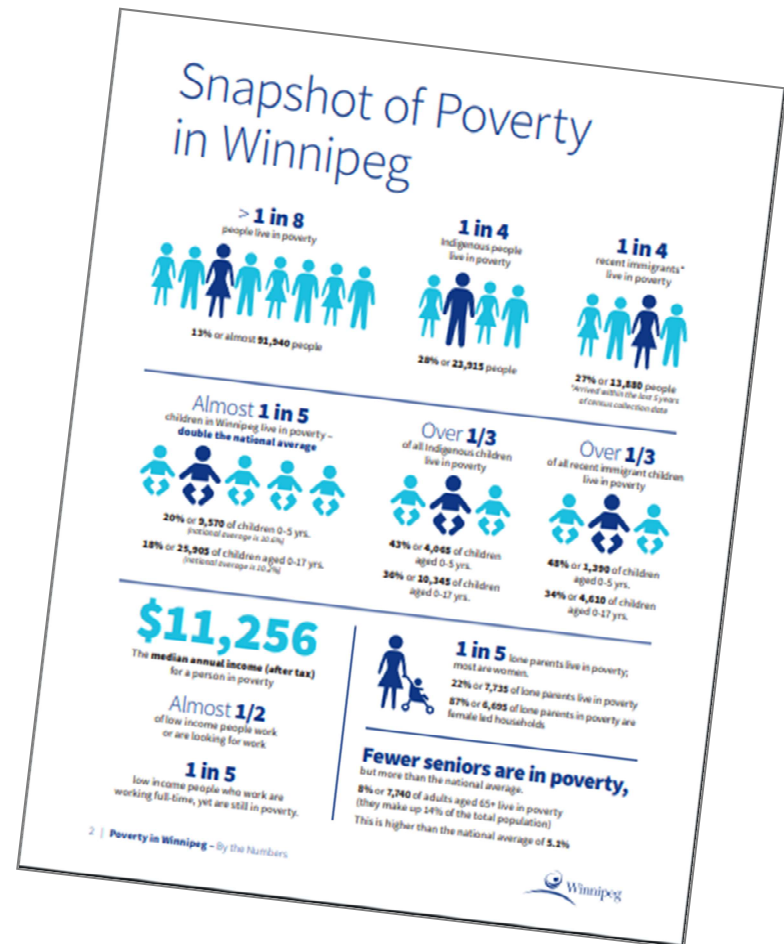
Project Overview

- **Executive Policy Committee of City Council (EPC)**
 - Requested the Public Service report back with a **City of Winnipeg poverty reduction strategy and detailed implementation plan**, all within existing resources
- **Timelines**
 - June – Sept: Stakeholder Engagement – Phase 1
 - Sept 21: Mid-term update to EPC
 - Oct – Nov: Stakeholder Engagement – Phase 2
 - **Late Feb 2021: Final Report to EPC**

Poverty Reduction Strategy

Poverty Snapshot

- **1 in 8 people live in poverty (13%)**
- **1 in 4 Indigenous people live in poverty (28%)**
- **1 in 4 newcomers live in poverty (27%)**
- **Almost 1 in 5 children live in poverty (18%)**
- **1 in 5 working low income people are employed full-time, but are still in poverty**



(Source: 2016 Census)

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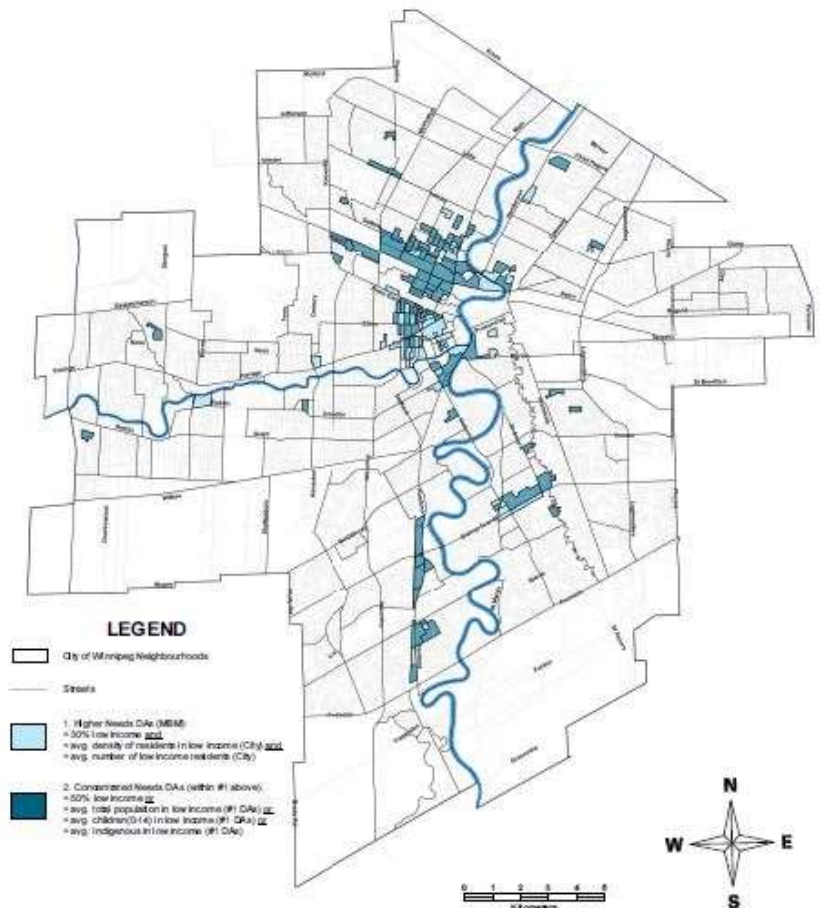
Concentrations of Poverty

Light blue areas:

- **42% of residents** are in low income
- **57% of children** are in low income
- **58% of Indigenous residents** are in low income

Dark blue areas:

- **44% of residents** are in low income
- **61% of children** are in low income
- **61% of Indigenous residents** are in low income



(Source: Census 2016, Higher Needs Areas analysis)



Current Context for the Strategy

Critical conversations on human rights, equity, diversity

- Need to ensure anti-racism and anti-oppression
- Need to address colonialism and systemic racism

Calls for alternative approaches to community safety and well-being

- Need to address system costs for helping people in crisis
- Need to include prevention and community based approaches to safety

Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic

- Most vulnerable in society most impacted
- Many are one pay cheque away from being in poverty

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With COVID, the disparities in our community have become even more stark. This spring...

- **30% increase in people accessing food banks** at Winnipeg Harvest, representing 90,000 people without enough food.
- **Winnipeg's unemployment rate doubled** to 11.2% (July 2020).
- **Avg. of 300 visitors per day at the daytime shelter** the City ran in partnership with Salvation Army.





Majority of Canadians support affordable housing

Post-COVID Nanos Poll on Housing/Homelessness found:

- **Many Canadians are worried about paying for housing**
 - 16% are worried/somewhat worried about paying their housing costs next month
 - 1 in 4 renters are worried/somewhat worried about paying their housing costs next month
- **Majority of Canadians support efforts to end homelessness**
 - 72% believe it is urgent to work to end homelessness in Canada
 - 84% support/somewhat support investing in building new affordable housing to stimulate the economy and help end homelessness in Canada (82% Prairies)
 - 36% have been homeless themselves/know someone who has been homeless

Homelessness + mental illness produce high economic costs for society

- 2017 national study of annual costs to society of homeless people with mental illness.
- Looked at high use of health/emergency services, social, and justice/police services combined with government benefits income.
- **Study Findings:**
 - **Avg. annual cost to support 1 homeless person in Winnipeg - \$49,000** (\$59,000 in Canada's 3 largest cities)
 - These costs combined with low quality of life and health problems of homeless people suggest need for a comprehensive response to homelessness and reallocation of existing resources
 - Costs can be offset through plans to end homelessness that address the health, housing and social service needs of homeless people (i.e. Housing First), as well as interventions to prevent people from becoming homeless

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Our Approach to Developing the Strategy

- **Strategy for the City of Winnipeg:** The City cannot end poverty alone. Actions in the Strategy will focus on actions the City can take to help reduce poverty, and identify areas for partnership and advocacy.
- **Co-created with the community:** The Core Working Team includes community representatives from *Make Poverty History Manitoba*, *Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council*, and an Indigenous organization, working alongside Public Service representatives from CmS, PP&D, and IRD
- **A ‘building blocks’ approach:** The Strategy will clarify the City’s role in poverty reduction; Set a three year implementation plan; followed by review and renewal to keep momentum, work on long term actions/goals

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The City has an important role to play in reducing poverty...

Winnipeg Charter Act (legislation)

5(1) The purposes of the city are

- a) to provide good government for the city;
- b) to provide services, facilities or other things that council considers to be necessary or desirable for all or part of the city;
- c) to develop and maintain safe, orderly, viable and sustainable communities; and**
- d) to promote and maintain the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants**

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OurWinnipeg (2011)

03 QUALITY OF LIFE

03-1 Opportunity

Direction 4: Work within municipal service areas as a collaborator on poverty reduction.

UN Sustainable Development Goals (2015)

Goal#1: No Poverty

Economic growth must be inclusive to provide sustainable jobs and promote equality.

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OurWinnipeg 2045 (*Current Draft*)

Goal: Economic Prosperity

Objective 3. Address poverty as an unacceptable and costly outcome of systemic barriers, through collaboration with the community and other government bodies.

Collaborate with the community and other levels of government to identify and implement strategies and actions for community return on investment related to housing, education, training and employment, physical and mental health, and social supports for the individuals, families and communities who are most impacted by poverty.

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Internal Areas for Alignment

- OurWinnipeg & Complete Communities
- Reconciliation (TRC – Calls for Actions; UNDRIP)
- Winnipeg's Indigenous Accord
- Calls for Justice - Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG)
- Newcomer Welcome & Inclusion Policy
- Housing Policy and Implementation Plan
- Transportation Master Plan Review; Transit Master Plan (pending)
- Recreation and Leisure Facilities Policy; Recreation Strategy (pending)
- Four-year budget cycle; Operating Grant Review (pending)

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Strategic Framing: *Areas of Jurisdiction*

Federal

- Indigenous Relations
- Employ. Insurance
- Family Benefits
- Immigration & Citizenship
- National Security & Defense
- Postal Service
- Internat'l Relations

Provincial

- Education
- Health Care
- Social Assistance
- Housing
- Families and children
- Natural Resources
- Licenses
- Vital Statistics (i.e. birth certificates)

Municipal

- Public Transit
- Libraries & Recreation
- Local Parks
- Land Use, Zoning & Permits
- Property Standards
- Property Taxes
- Water, Waste & Recycling
- Municipal Roads
- Municipal Police & Fire/Paramedic

Shared: Indigenous relations, Laws/Justice, Environment, Regional Roads, Income Tax and other areas

Wpg Charter: *promote and maintain the health, safety and welfare of inhabitants*

Strategic Framing: A 'Building Blocks' Approach



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Initial Drivers / Approaches for the Strategy

- Demonstrate a **Culture of Caring, Compassion and Cooperation**
- Use Our **Tools and Resources** to Improve Lives
- Respond to **Immediate Needs** in our Community
- Address **Root Causes** of Poverty
- Cultivate a **Prosperous Future Full of Opportunities** for Everyone

Indigenous Worldview

- Develop the strategy such that it reflects a balanced and respectful relationship amongst Indigenous and Western approaches.

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Amik (Beaver) - Teachings of Wisdom

- **The Beaver represents Wisdom in the Seven Sacred Teachings:**
 - Wisdom is not to be confused with knowledge. Wisdom is the gained experience and knowledge to know the difference and accept responsibility and accountability.
- In developing the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the City will:
 - Use the Wisdom it already has and accept responsibility.
 - Use the Wisdom gifted to us from our stakeholders, and those with lived experience who are showing us the way.
 - Everyone has unique gifts and needs the opportunity to use them.

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Initial Strategy Framing

Vision (aligns with City of Winnipeg Corporate Vision)

To be a vibrant and healthy city which places its highest priority on quality of life for all residents.

Mission

By implementing the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the City of Winnipeg will demonstrate leadership by taking a proactive and responsive role in reducing poverty, with community partners and other levels of government, to ensure that the basic needs of all residents are met. City services will be developed and delivered using a poverty reduction lens and in a manner that fosters an inclusive, equitable, healthy, and vibrant city where everyone is cared for and can flourish.

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Initial Strategy Framing

Overarching Principle

- We will be **Guided by Wisdom and the Teachings of the Beaver**

Principles

- We will **Uphold Human Rights**. *(Manitoba Human Rights Code; UNDRIP; UN Rights of the Child; Jordan's Principle; Accessibility for Manitoban's Act)*
- We will **Honour Relationships and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples**. *(Treaty #1 and Métis Homeland; TRC Calls to Action; MMIWG Calls for Justice, Winnipeg Indigenous Accord)*
- We will **Address Systemic Oppression, Trauma, and Social Inequity**.
- We will **Promote and Maintain the Welfare of all residents**.
- We will **Develop Trust and Meaningful Partnerships** to find solutions and drive change.

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Initial Strategy Framing

Themes – Potential Areas for Action:

1. Food Security, Good Health & Well-being
2. Housing for All
3. Transportation Equity
4. Employment, Training & Livable Incomes
5. Community Safety
6. Social Equity, Inclusion & Community Connections
7. Access to Information and Services
8. Access to Recreation and Social Infrastructure
9. Active Implementation & Systems Change

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Stakeholder Engagement – Phase 1

- Requested feedback on draft strategy framing, potential areas for action, and ‘game changers’ for reducing poverty in Winnipeg
- **Five sessions held (June – August):**
 - **Two with people having lived experience with poverty or homelessness**
 - **One with stakeholder groups:** Make Poverty History Manitoba Coalition
 - **Two with City advisory groups:** Winnipeg Committee for Safety, Winnipeg Food Council
- **Two Public Service Engagement Sessions:**
 - Interdepartmental Working Group; Reconciliation Leadership Circle

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Stakeholder Engagement – What We Heard

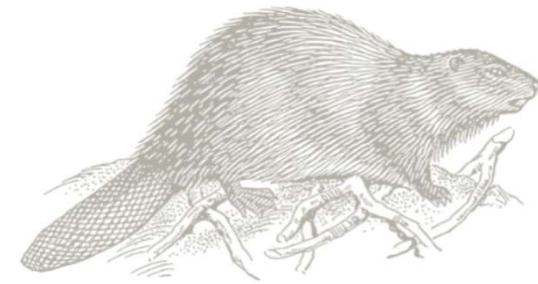
Top ‘Game Changers’ & Priority Focus Areas:

- **Building Trust for Implementation & Systems Change**
 - *anti-oppression, anti-racism and decolonization; awareness and communication; commitment to implementation across the organization*
- **Health & Well-Being**
 - *health, mental health, harm reduction, healing, food security*
- **Affordable Housing**
 - *homeless supports, partnerships for transitional and affordable housing*
- **Transportation**
 - *access to affordable transit, transit service to employment opportunities*
- **Employment & Income**
 - *training, low-barrier jobs, social procurement, living wage*

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Being Guided by Amik (Beaver):

Wisdom informing future actions related to 'Game Changer' feedback



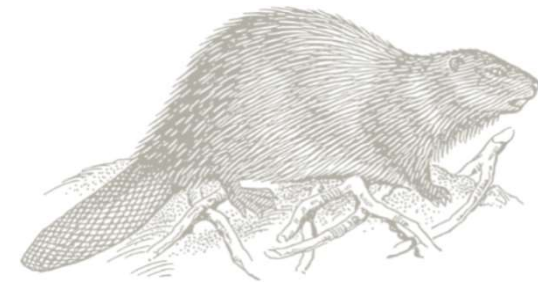
'Building Trust for Implementation & Systems Change'

Our shared wisdom	Examples of gained knowledge from recent experience	Looking forward...
Systems change requires an organization-wide commitment.	• Anti-oppression/anti-racism training and Anti-Racism Week 2021 (Mayor's motion, July 15, 2020).	• Hiring an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Coordinator (October 2020). • Joint leadership/stakeholder discussions on City role and priority actions in Phase 2 engagement for PRS • 'Poverty reduction lens' tool development and testing by Community Services

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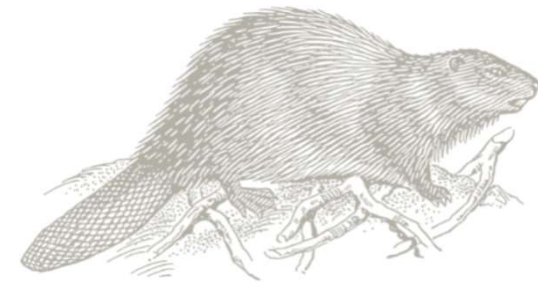
'Health & Well-Being'

Our shared wisdom	Examples of knowledge gained from recent experience	Looking forward...
Vulnerable residents most impacted by COVID-19 closures and public health requirements.	• Opened daytime shelter with Salvation Army, staffed by Community Crisis Workers (April – Aug 2020). • Temporary water stations in key locations (Summer 2020) • Sharps containers installed in parks (Summer 2020) • 24/7 safe-space grant program (Fall 2020)	• Ongoing and new partnerships to support vulnerable population during COVID this winter. • Public washrooms installation (CMAF grant). • Community Connections space at Millennium Library (anticipated 2021).

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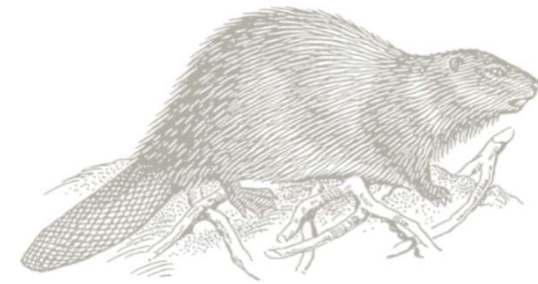
'Affordable Housing'

Our shared wisdom	Examples of knowledge gained from recent experience	Looking forward...
As the regulator of land development, the City can facilitate/support affordable housing development.	• William Whyte pilot. • Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment report and recommendations (July 2020).	• PP&D report back on the establishment of an affordable housing program(s) to SPC PDHDD (Fall 2020).

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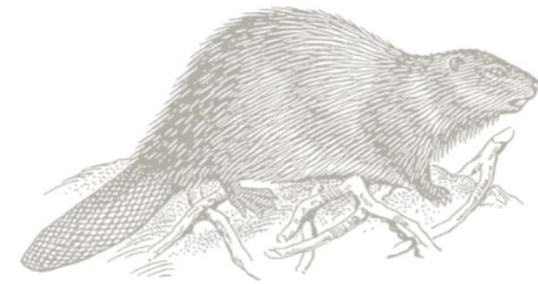
'Transportation'

Our shared wisdom	Examples of knowledge gained from recent experience	Looking forward...
Low-income residents rely heavily on public transportation.	• Launch of Low Income Transit Pass (May 2020).	• Free transit for children under 12yrs starting 2021 (per multi-year budget 2020-2023)

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Being Guided by Amik (Beaver):

Wisdom informing future actions related to 'Game Changer' feedback



'Employment and Income'

Our shared wisdom	Examples of knowledge gained from recent experience	Looking forward...
City is one of Winnipeg's largest employers.	• OAN Indigenous Youth Employment Strategy. • Newcomer Welcome and Inclusion Policy - 'A <i>Representative Workforce</i>' objectives and activities (Feb 2020)	• Enhanced opportunities for Indigenous people in hiring and training programs (per Poverty Reduction report April 2019). • Newcomer Welcome and Inclusion Policy implementation.

Poverty Reduction Strategy

Caring for our most vulnerable residents makes the city better for everyone.

What kind of city do we want to be? How do we take care of each other?

How can the City of Winnipeg lead by example, especially during these difficult times?



Poverty Reduction Strategy

Next Steps

- **EPC Update on Sept. 21**
- **Phase 2 – Stakeholder Engagement**
 - Discussion of priorities and potential actions (Oct – Nov)
- **Interdepartmental Engagement (Sept – Dec)**
 - Exploration of immediate and short-term actions
 - Participation in stakeholder engagement
 - Feedback on priorities and potential actions for full strategy, and assistance in developing an implementation plan (timelines, lead dept, etc.)
- **Final Strategy presented to EPC in Feb 2021**

Poverty Reduction Strategy

For more information:

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