Poverty Reduction Strategy – Implementation Plan (2024-2027)

Phase 1 Stakeholder Engagement Summary

February 2023

Background

On November 25, 2021, Council approved the City's first-ever Poverty Reduction Strategy (2021 – 2031). The Poverty Reduction Strategy is a plan, co-created with the community, that includes a practical approach to reducing poverty, increasing equity, and incorporating a "culture of caring" in all City endeavors over the next decade. The first implementation plan (2021-2023) for the Strategy includes 80 specific actions across City departments.

The City is now starting to write the second implementation plan (2024-2027) with the help of poverty reduction stakeholders and people with lived experience of poverty. The plan is timed so actions can be considered in the multi-year budget process.

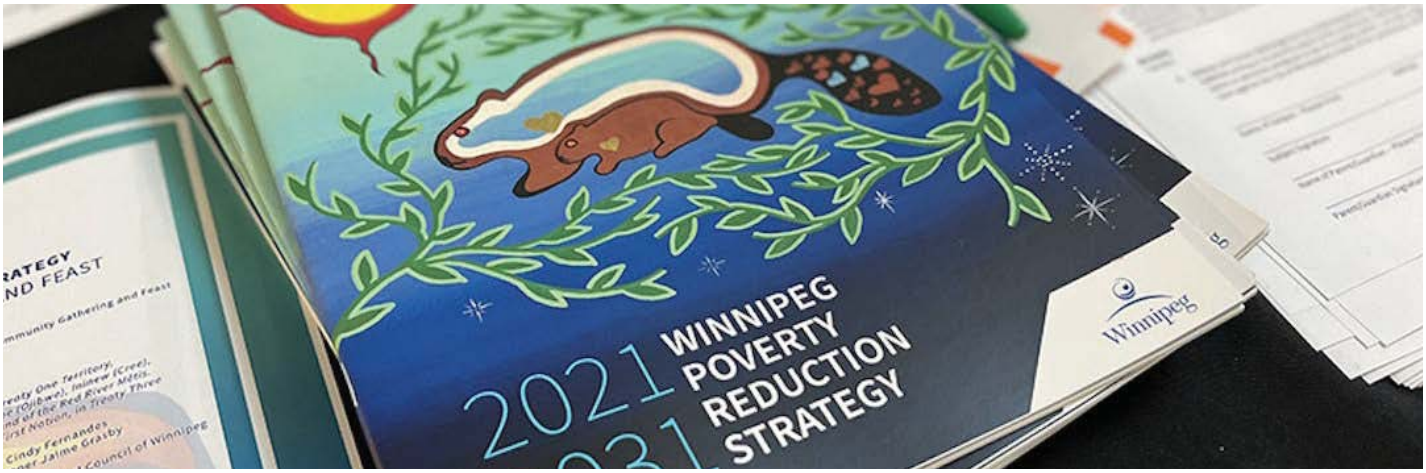
Engagement

Phase 1 stakeholder engagement on the second implementation plan (2024-2027) explored how challenges to people in poverty have changed since the COVID-19 pandemic. Ideas for projects to address the challenges since the pandemic were discussed and prioritized.

The City held focused conversations with a range of poverty reduction stakeholders and people with lived experience of poverty in December 2022. A list of organizations that the City reached out to is available in Appendix A and meeting notes from each conversation are available in Appendix B. Details on the stakeholder engagement conversations are available in Table 1.

Table 1: Stakeholder Engagement Activities

Date	Activity	Participation
December 7, 2022	Indigenous Organizations Meeting	4 representatives
December 7, 2022	Community Resource Centres Meeting	2 representatives
December 9, 2022	Community Safety and Well-being Organizations Meeting	2 representatives
December 12, 2022	Poverty Reduction Advocates Meeting	7 representatives
December 14, 2022	Rossbrook House	1 representative
January 5, 2023	Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre	1 representative



What We Heard

Changes Post-Pandemic

Stakeholders were asked if they noticed any changes to the challenges people in poverty face since the COVID-19 pandemic. Stakeholders noted the following negative changes or existing challenges that were amplified:

- Housing (15 comments)
  - Increase in encampments and homelessness (5 comments)
  - Increase in the use of transit shelters for housing (5 comments)
  - Increase in vacant buildings (2 comments)
  - Lack of transitional housing (2 comments)
  - Lack of affordable housing in new neighbourhood developments (1 comment)
- Food security (7 comments)
  - Increase in costs/inflation (3 comments)
  - Higher demand on service providers for food; community kitchens and food banks struggling to meet the demand (2 comments)
  - More anger and frustration in grocery stores (2 comments)
- Mental health (6 comments)
  - Increased prevalence of mental health issues (4 comments)
  - Social isolation and social exclusion (2 comments)
- Substance use (6 comments)
  - Drug supply contamination (3 comments)
  - Lack of safe consumption sites (2 comments)
  - Increase in substance use (1 comment)
- Service interruptions (4 comments)
  - Services closed because of pandemic (3 comments)
  - Services moved online since the pandemic (1 comment)
- Assault, aggression, and domestic violence (2 comments)
  - Increase in domestic violence (1 comment)
  - Increase in violent crime and assaults (1 comment)
- First responders are stretched (2 comments)
- Lack of Indigenous involvement (2 comments)
- Security guard profiling, discrimination and prejudice (2 comments)
- Education (1 comment)
  - Reduce reading and writing skills in children due to remote learning (1 comment)
- Issues with coordination of an extreme weather response (1 comment)
- Lack of time for prevention (1 comment)
- More Indigenous reconciliation in programs (1 comment)
- Transportation (1 comment)
  - Gas prices reduced access to transportation for resources and services (1 comment)

Stakeholders noted the following positive changes:

- Attitudes and awareness (2 comments)
  - Leadership attitudes are changing (1 comment)
  - Residents' attitudes are changing now that people are back to work and seeing the issues (1 comment)
- Harm reduction and substance use (1 comment)
  - New harm reduction van operating through Sunshine House to provide drug testing (1 comment)
- Housing (1 comment)
  - Astum Api Niikinaahk tiny home project with 22 transitional housing units is open and has tenants (1 comment)
- Food security (1 comment)
  - Community kitchen now open (1 comment)

A full list of changes is available in Appendix C.

Priority Goals

The eight Poverty Reduction Strategy goals (Table 2) were shared with stakeholders. Stakeholders were asked to identify a goal that should be a focus for the second implementation plan (2024-2027). These high-priority goals will help the project team develop projects to implement in the next four years of the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

The top three goals were:

1. The City actively plans for and partners in affordable housing (10 comments)

2. Equity and a culture of caring are demonstrated through strategy implementation and systems change (5 comments)

3. Food security and food system resilience is expanded (4 comments)

Stakeholders' top goals for the second implementation plan have changed since the first implementation plan, with the exception of affordable housing remaining the highest priority action area. Stakeholders were asked to prioritize the goals for the first implementation plan in 2021. The top three goals for the first implementation plan were affordable housing, community well-being supports, and equity in employment and income opportunities.

Projects and Programs

With priority areas identified, stakeholders were asked to share ideas for projects and programs that the City can lead to support people who are experiencing poverty. Table 2 includes a list of all ideas for potential projects and programs. The project team will consider these when drafting the second implementation plan. While some ideas in Table 2 may fall outside municipal jurisdiction, the City can have a role in advocating other levels of government and working with other levels of government to find solutions.

Table 2: Project ideas for the second implementation plan (2024-2027)

Strategy Goals	Project and Program Ideas
1. Equity and a culture of caring are demonstrated through strategy implementation and systems change	Provide harm reduction, trauma-informed, de-escalation, and anti-oppression training for first responders and frontline City staff.
	Coordinate a Non-Profit Sector table, hosted by the municipality, to provide improved collaboration and more ongoing engagement between the non-profit sector and the municipality.
	Increase representation in staffing to help create more inclusive City services and facilities.
	Create a public education campaign about homelessness and poverty to minimize discrimination against unsheltered residents; build an understanding of why residents use bus shelters as housing.
2. The City actively plans for and partners in affordable housing	Transform vacant buildings into transitional and 'rent geared to income' housing.
	Set an annual construction target for new 'rent geared to income' housing units.
	Supportive housing with a harm reduction approach, providing mental health, medical care, and housing services in one location.
	Ensure low-income housing is clean and safe to meet housing suitability standards and safety standards, and through inspections and improved landlord accountability.
	Amend bylaws and policies to make it easier to build more diverse types of housing developments to meet the needs of all Winnipeggers (multi-generational families, transitional housing for single adults or couples, modular housing, etc.)
	Create an inclusionary zoning policy so that all new developments include low-income housing and establish champions for inclusionary zoning within City leadership.
	Increase coordination between the municipal, provincial and federal governments on housing projects.
	Work with the private housing sector and landlords to address housing issues.
3. Equity is embedded in all City employment and income opportunities	Consider income diversity when hiring for City jobs, similar to other inclusive hiring practices that consider gender, race, or disability.
	Increase communications and collaboration with community-led job readiness programs to increase success for youth seeking employment at the City of Winnipeg.
	Provide training to remove employment barriers.
	Build a safe consumption site with connections to resources and relationship building.

Strategy Goals	Project and Program Ideas
4. Community well-being supports for those in greatest need are increased	Explore ways to provide support to people who are finding shelter in the bus shelters.
	Provide water fountains and enhanced access to public washrooms.
	Create a public education campaign to address misinformation around safe consumption sites and build public support.
	Conduct drug testing to ensure drugs are not contaminated and reduce overdose.
	Expand the Alternative Response to Citizens in Crisis program to increase community collaboration, and to provide enhanced mental health supports and culturally safe care during wellness checks.
	Develop a program to have dedicated ambulances, fire response, and police available in the neighbourhood where shelters are located to improve health outcomes for people who are unsheltered and address safety concerns.
5. Transportation system equity is enhanced	Extend transfer time from 1.5 hours to 4 hours on buses to support people using Transit for transportation outside of commuting (e.g. run errands without having to pay fare multiple times).
	Increase the WINNpass program reduced rate from 50% to 80%.
	Implement fare-free transit for all transit riders. Support low-income individuals and families in accessing services, and reduce violence towards transit operators.
	Re-introduce the free Downtown Spirit buses.
	Create a program to help people navigate complex systems when they visit Winnipeg to receive health care, and assist people in returning to northern communities that are in Winnipeg for medical purposes.
6. All City services are equitable, inclusive and accessible	Create a long-term extreme weather strategy and increase collaboration between the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Services and those operating shelters, for extreme weather responses.
	Open the Main Street public washroom 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
	Collaborate with Community Centres to offer free organized sport opportunities, expanding on the North End Hockey program that provides non-cost access to play on a hockey team.
	Transform City facilities into community resource hubs that offer a range of services, which could include food, shelter, health care, learning, cultural enrichment, play, and recreation, instead of City buildings with a single dedicated purpose (e.g. recreation, reading and learning, administration, etc.).
7. Food security and food system resilience is expanded	Build a hydroponic system to grow food and increase food security.
	Create more community kitchens and have food available at all City facilities.
	Provide education and learning opportunities about gardening.

Strategy Goals	Project and Program Ideas
	Collaborate with community organizations providing food services, such as Manitoba Harvest and Mamawi, to develop new partnerships to address food insecurity.
	Collaborate with the Winnipeg Food Council to address food shortages and food security issues.
8. Equity in community safety is increased through collaboration	Introduce Community Safety Hosts at Portage Place Mall and additional public facilities as an alternative to security guards.
	Provide more holistic resources at encampments to be proactive and create safer conditions for residents.
	Collaborate with community organizations, such as the Downtown Community Safety Partnership, to provide medical response training that is a bridge between Emergency Medical Services and First Aid.

Next Steps

The project team will use the challenges, priority areas, and potential projects, initiatives, and services from the stakeholder engagement to develop a draft Implementation Plan 2024-2027. The draft plan will include proposed poverty reduction projects to complete in 2024-2027 and will be shared with stakeholders in Phase 2 engagement.

The draft and the proposed projects will be refined based on feedback from Phase 2 engagement. The Implementation Plan 2024-2027 is expected to be submitted for Council consideration in 2023.

Appendices

Appendix A – Stakeholder Engagement Results
Appendix B – Stakeholder Meeting Notes
Appendix C – List of Stakeholder Organizations

Appendix A – Stakeholder Engagement Results

Stakeholder Engagement Results

1. **How have challenges for people living in poverty changed post-Covid-19 or over the last year? Have you noticed any negative changes, setbacks or trends? Have you noticed any positive improvements?**

Negative Changes

- Housing (15 comments)
    - Increase in encampments and homelessness (5 comments)
    - Increase in the use of transit shelters for housing (5 comments)
    - Lack of transitional housing (2 comments)
    - Increase in vacant buildings (2 comments)
    - Lack of transitional housing (1 comment)
    - Lack of affordable housing in new neighbourhoods (1 comment)
- Food security (7 comments)
    - Increase in costs/inflation (3 comments)
    - Higher demand service providers, who are struggling to meet the increased need (2 comments)
    - More anger and frustration in grocery stores (2 comments)
- Mental Health (6 comments)
    - Increased prevalence of mental health issues (4 comments)
    - Social isolation and social exclusion (2 comments)
- Substance abuse (6 comments)
    - Drug supply contamination (3 comments)
    - Lack of safe injection sites (2 comments)
    - Increase in substance use (1 comment)
- Service interruptions (4 comments)
    - Services closed because of pandemic (3 comments)
    - Services moved online since the pandemic (1 comment)
- Assault, aggression, and domestic violence (2 comments)
    - Increase in domestic violence (1 comment)
    - Increase in violent crime and assaults (1 comment)
- First responders are stretched (2 comments)
- Lack of Indigenous involvement (2 comments)
- Security guard profiling, discrimination and prejudice (2 comments)
- Education (1 comment)
    - Reduce reading and writing skills in children due to remote learning (1 comment)
- Issues with coordination of an extreme weather response (1 comment)

- Lack of time for prevention (1 comment)
- More Indigenous reconciliation in programs (1 comment)
- Transportation (1 comment)
    - Price of gas caused reduced access to transportation and therefore access to resources and services (1 comment)

Positive Improvements

- Attitudes and awareness (2 comments)
    - Leadership attitudes are changing, as seen in 2022 mayoral candidate platforms (1 comment)
    - Residents attitudes are changing now that people are back to work and seeing the issues (1 comment)
- Food security (1 comment)
    - Community kitchen now open (1 comment)
- Housing (1 comment)
    - Astum Api Niikinaahk tiny home project now open (1 comment)
- Substance abuse (1 comment)
    - Harm reduction van now operating

2. **The following Strategy Goals were identified based on themes from the last stakeholder engagement:**
    a) **Equity and a culture of caring are demonstrated through strategy implementation and systems change**
    b) **The City actively plans for and partners in affordable housing**
    c) **Equity is embedded in all City employment and income opportunities**
    d) **Community well-being supports for those in greatest need are increased**
    e) **Transportation system equity is enhanced**
    f) **All city services are equitable, inclusive and accessible**
    g) **Food security and food system resilience is expanded**
    h) **Equity in community safety is increased through collaboration**

If you could pick <u>one</u> of these that the City focuses on in the next four years, which would it be?

- The City actively plans for and partners in affordable housing (10 comments)
- Equity and a culture of caring are demonstrated through strategy implementation and systems change (5 comments)
- Food security and food system resilience is expanded (4 comments)
- Community well-being supports for those in greatest need are increased (2 comments)

3. **What are your ideas of projects or programs that the City can lead to support people who are experiencing poverty?**

Strategy Goal	Project and Program Ideas
1. Equity and a culture of caring are demonstrated through strategy implementation and systems change	Provide harm reduction, trauma-informed, de-escalation, and anti-oppression training for first responders and frontline staff at the City.
	Coordinate a Non-Profit Sector table, hosted by the municipality, to provide improved collaboration and more ongoing engagement between the non-profit sector and the municipality.
	Increase representation in staffing to help create more inclusive City services and facilities.
	Create a public education campaign about homelessness and poverty to minimize discrimination against unsheltered residents; build an understanding of why residents use bus shelters as housing.
2. The City actively plans for and partners in affordable housing	Transform vacant buildings into transitional and 'rent geared to income' housing.
	Set an annual construction target for new 'rent geared to income' housing units.
	Supportive housing with a harm reduction approach, providing mental health, medical care, and housing services in one location.
	Ensure low-income housing is clean and safe to meet housing suitability standards and safety standards, and through inspections and improved landlord accountability.
	Amend bylaws and policies to make it easier to build more diverse types of housing developments to meet the needs of all Winnipeggers (multi-generational families, transitional housing for single adults or couples, modular housing, etc.)
	Create an inclusionary zoning policy so that all new developments include low-income housing and establish champions within City leadership.
	Increase coordination between the municipality, province and federal government on housing projects.

	Work with the private housing sector and landlords to address housing issues.
3. Equity is embedded in all City employment and income opportunities	Consider income diversity when hiring for City jobs, similar to other inclusive hiring practices that consider gender, race, or disability.
	Increase communications and collaboration with community-led job readiness programs to increase success for youth seeking employment at the City of Winnipeg.
	Provide training to remove barriers employment barriers.
4. Community well-being supports for those in greatest need are increased	Build a safe consumption site with connections to resources and relationship building.
	Explore ways to provide support to people who are finding shelter in the bus shelters.
	Provide water fountains and enhanced access to public washrooms
	Create a public education campaign to address misinformation around safe consumption sites and build public support.
	Conduct drug testing to ensure drugs are not contaminated and reduce overdose.
	Expand the ARCC program to increase community collaboration, and to provide enhanced mental health supports and culturally safe care during wellness checks.
	Develop a program to have dedicated ambulances, fire response, and police available in the neighbourhood where shelters are located to improve health outcomes for people who are unsheltered and address safety concerns.
5. Transportation system equity is enhanced	Extend transfer time from 1.5 hours to 4 hours on buses to support people using Transit for transportation outside of commuting (e.g. run errands without having to pay fare multiple times.)
	Increase the WINNpass program reduced rate from 50% to 80%.
	Implement fare-free transit for all transit riders. Support low-income individuals and families in accessing services, and reduce violence towards transit operators.
	Re-introduce the free Downtown Spirit buses.

	Create a program to help people navigate complex systems when they visit Winnipeg to receive health care, and assist people in returning to northern communities that are in Winnipeg for medical purposes.
6. All city services are equitable, inclusive and accessible	Create a long-term extreme weather strategy and increase collaboration between the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Services and those operating shelters, for extreme weather responses.
	Open the Main Street public washroom 24 hours per day, seven days per week.
	Collaborate with Community Centres to offer free organized sport opportunities, expanding on the North End Hockey program that provides non-cost access to play on a hockey team.
	Transform City facilities into community resource hubs that offer a range of services, which could include food, shelter, health care, learning, cultural enrichment, play, and recreation, instead of City buildings with a single dedicated purpose (e.g. recreation, reading and learning, administration etc.)
7. Food security and food system resilience is expanded	Build a hydroponic system to grow food and increase food security.
	Create more community kitchens and have food available at all City facilities.
	Provide education and learning opportunities about gardening.
	Collaborate with community organizations providing food services, such as Manitoba Harvest and Mamawi, to develop new partnerships to address food insecurity.
	Collaborate with the Winnipeg Food Council to address food shortages and food security issues.
8. Equity in community safety is increased through collaboration	Provide community Hosts at Portage Place Mall and additional public facilities
	Provide more holistic resources at encampments to be proactive and create safer conditions for residents.
	Collaborate with community organizations, such as Downtown Community Safety Partnership, to provide medical response training that is a bridge between Emergency Medical Services and First Aid.

Appendix B – Stakeholder Meeting Notes

Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Plan 2024-2027 – Indigenous Organizations

Location:	Zoom	**Date:**	December 7, 2022
Attendees:	4	**Time:**	11 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

How have challenges for people living in poverty changed post-Covid or over the last year?

- Covid has closed doors to a lot of services for homeless people
- Many services moved online but not everyone has emails, access to internet, access to phone
- The street census showed that after covid more people on the streets, so no improvements after covid
    - Nothing was done
    - Costs have also increased for food, rent, and other essentials
- Need to relocate community programming from Millennium Library to Portage Place Mall, that is where the foot traffic is
    - People get kicked out of the Millennium Library
    - How do we make sure the space is space and has an Indigenous presence?
- NYMBYism in all neighbourhoods, for example Transcona bus shelter issue
- First Nation communities need to be sitting at table with Mayors to get included in economic development and housing
- New neighbourhoods are constantly being developed by developers, but cannot be accessed by Indigenous people
    - New developments need to include lower income options
- Challenges accessing services as a result of government boundaries and jurisdiction
    - For example, couldn't get IDs for two years because offices were closed
    - Trickle down effect with accessing housing and other services without ID
- Increase in people dropping into centres in since covid to access internet, computers, food and other basic needs
- Saw that there was a way to offer programs and services in another way
- A number of funding initiatives that came during covid
    - Now that covid is done, so is funding
    - However, the problem is not gone due to increasing costs
- Bus shelters is a big discussion
    - How is taking down bus shelters an answer to people experiencing homelessness
- Many buildings that are sitting vacant and they are no being used for anything
    - They need to be used to shelter residents
    - Continue to lose community members because of lack of shelter

Top Priority Themes: If you could pick one of these that the City focuses on in the next four years, which would it be?

- Equity and Culture of Caring is number one
    - Christian based organizations get the most money but are historically has the biggest detriment to people
    - People will not go to religious-based organizations to seek help because of intergenerational harm
    - Would rather sleep outside
- Equity and Culture of Caring is number one
    - If we have a culture of caring and understanding, you will naturally start to see the other pieces fall into place
- Affordable Housing

What can the City do to help address the challenges or issues we talked about and provide support? What are your ideas of projects or programs that the City can lead to support people who are experiencing poverty?

- A lot of people get stuck in Winnipeg when they come for medical services
    - Need a program to help return people to their communities
    - Transportation policy: Non-Insured Health Benefits Accommodation and Transportation
    - Need to advocate to the federal government to accommodate people to return to their community
- Better utilize the vacant buildings for long term and short-term housings
    - People coming from the north need somewhere to stay while they tend to their medical needs
- Bus shelters
    - Address the common belief that unsheltered residents should not be allowed to live in bus shelters
    - Systemic racisms contributes to this belief – not worthy of care
    - If you close one bus shelter people will just move to the other shelter
- When Inuit come for medical purposes, they stay in boarding houses
    - If they consume alcohol, they are kicked out on the street and have no place to go
    - These people are not familiar with the City and do not know where to go when they are kicked out
- The City needs to fund places that are anti-oppressive and harm-reduction focused
    - There are a few places that operate like that but they don't get sustainable funding
    - The places that do not work with individuals where they are at get most of the funding
- Temporary shelter
    - Explore ways to provide support to people who are finding shelter in the bus shelters

- Harm reduction approach to temporary housing developments (and housing for medical appointments)
- Harm reduction policies and anti-oppressive practices adopted by service providers (externally: shelters, food banks, meal providers, transitional housing, short-term housing, etc.; Internally: libraries, community centres, recreation facilities)
- Increased coordination between the municipality, province and federal government on housing projects.

Last words

- Require Christian organizations to create an extreme weather policy that makes them open their doors
- Hope change comes. Sat in many meetings to discuss change, but change does not come.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Plan 2024-2027 – Community Resource Centres

Location: Zoom
Attendees: 2
Date: December 7, 2022
Time: 1 p.m. – 2 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

How have challenges for people living in poverty changed post-Covid or over the last year?

- Depth of poverty has changed
- Can't keep up the demands around food security
- Money flowed freely during the pandemic now the money stopped but the problems did not go away
    - Trying to figure out how to continue the work without money people people still need food
    - Lots of anger and frustration because people are starving
- Pandemic impacted drug supply
    - Rates of drug poisoning and death have gone up
    - Need safe consumption sites and drug testing
- Homelessness is now front and centre now that the pandemic is over and people are back out in the community
    - It is on people's radar in a different way
- Winter and extreme weather planning is frustrating
    - Every year we pull together a working work and start from scratch
    - Need a plan instead of reacting every winter
    - Do we need to do consultations every winter and determine who can do what
    - Can't we have a strategy because cold weather happens every year
- Mental health issues at unprecedented levels
    - Kids with no supports and extreme levels of vulnerability
- The toxic drug supply in the city is at unprecedented levels
- Growth of encampments is spreading
    - Rules at shelters, such as curfews, are a barrier for a lot of people
    - This is the reason encampments grow
    - Challenging for young people that have to live in encampments and still need to be in a community
    - Garbage cans, people to clean up so no disease and fire hazards
    - Strategy around encampments
- Increase in use of bus shelters as housing, as an only viable option for many unsheltered people
- Not necessarily to focus just on inner City stuff
- EMS is already stretched, everyone is tired

- Government structures have been put in place that have done the opposite of what they are supposed to do
    - Part of the fatigue is watching systems being put in place by governments that cause more harm and systems that just won't move to help people
    - Four-year election cycle is problematic because the community needs longer-term solutions
    - Government actions are short-term
- So busy with reaction and intervention, they don't have time for prevention

What can the City do to help address the challenges or issues we talked about and provide support? What are your ideas of projects or programs that the City can lead to support people who are experiencing poverty?

- Real intentional food production by the city
    - Use vacant buildings for hydroponics to produce food
    - Can teach kids about gardening
    - Winnipeg Harvest is over-stretched
- Need to do something with vacant buildings
    - Taxing resources on emergency workers
    - Need housing
- Support people humanely with addictions
    - Safe consumption sites
    - Drug testing sites
- Extreme weather strategy
    - Churches pulling together to do the right thing and housing some people
- Maintenance of encampments
    - Reduces hazards
    - Provide holistic supports for encampments
- Can map methods in a smarter way
    - Who is covering what areas at what times
- Need supervised consumption sites
    - And understanding of the general public that they are more than just a place to do drugs
    - And they don't increase crime
    - And they connect people with resources for housing and addictions
    - City of Winnipeg and Federal Government need to create an agreement
    - All centers have become de facto consumption sites and Resources Centers are not trained to deal with that
    - Need connections to resources and relationship building
- Buildings are being rented but are not up to code
    - No fire separation, fire suppressant, fire rated doors

    - When buildings burn, people are now homeless
    - Making sure buildings are safe and secure would reduce homelessness
    - But getting held up in inspections is also a problem
- Coordinate a Non-Profit Sector table, hosted by the municipality, to provide improved collaboration and more ongoing engagement between the non-profit sector and the municipality. (Could be an opportunity for regular consultation)
- Working relationship between the province and City to develop coordination and collaborative approaches to address systemic issues Can't point fingers at jurisdiction
    - We are one body and need to work together
- Collaborate with community organizations, such as Downtown Community Safety Partnership, to provide medical response training that's a bridge between EMS and First Aid
- Provide water fountains and enhanced access to washrooms
- Mental health and housing services in one facility
- Transitional housing that also offers medical support (private market not meeting demands)
- Create a strong partnership with End Homelessness Winnipeg

Top Priority Themes: If you could pick one of these that the City focuses on in the next four years, which would it be?

- Affordable housing
    - Rent geared to income housing
- Affordable housing
    - Maybe look at rent controls
    - Land lord responsibilities and regulating landlord that exploit people who live in the buildings – greater oversight
    - Vacant housings
- Food security would be second

Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Plan 2024-2027 – Community Safety and Wellbeing

Location:	Zoom	**Date:**	December 9, 2022
Attendees:	2	**Time:**	11 p.m. – 12 p.m.

Meeting Minutes

How have challenges for people living in poverty changed post-Covid or over the last year?

- Food security was brought to a more pressing issue
    - A lot of places that people would access food got shut down
    - There was funding during the pandemic but not that it is gone, a lot of the issues are coming back
- Homelessness issues
    - Increase of shelters in the past two years
    - Seeing higher demand
    - Need to shift focus from shelters to transitional housing now
    - Market rent and rent geared to income is great, but missing supportive transitional housing. Big gap right now. Need to develop that housing stock.
    - Can't just rely on private market to provide these needs
- Health
    - Health system is overwhelmed
    - Used to be part of City work in the past
    - Links to first responders
    - Outreach driven health services and provide health services to where people are at will reduce demand on first responders and save on emergency calls
    - Savings should go back to this strategy
- Paramedics in shelters program
    - Issue is they won't go into shelters across the street. Need to call 911 for emergency.
    - When people come into protective care, they are evaluated
    - If one ambulance was dedicated the four shelters along Main Street in the area, that would cut down on calls to 911 and response time
- Housing
    - Both transitional and affordable
    - EIA does not provide enough for most housing
    - Far more conversation in society now the issues now that the issues are visible. A lot of conversations around bus shelters
- Health - Significant increase in substance use and overdose
    - Drug supply, making sure it is clean
    - Have administered naloxone more times this year than ever before
    - Need supports

Top Priority Themes: If you could pick one of these that the City focuses on in the next four years, which would it be?

- Housing
    - Universal income would go a long way
    - CERB repayments, creating an amnesty line to not have to pay back CERB benefits that they were not entitled to
    - Guaranteed livable basic income might be an easier conversation to have
        - Slightly different model than Universal income
- Food security
- Health
- Housing
    - Empty Manitoba Housing units and units that need renovations
    - Renovating would be significantly cheaper than building
    - Winnipeg Housing also has a lot of empty units
    - Waving development fees helps and goes a long way
- All city services are equitable, inclusive and accessible

What can the City do to help address the challenges or issues we talked about and provide support? What are your ideas of projects or programs that the City can lead to support people who are experiencing poverty?

- Public washroom is great but is not funded 24 hours per day
    - That would save a lot of lives
- Pushing back on misinformation
    - Clarity around safe consumption sites, present the research that is out there, education
    - Get information out to the general public- the research is already done
    - The conversation is happening in the broader public but there is a big mismatch between the public conversation and the discussion at the government level
    - Fear based disinformation campaigns
- Resource Hubs
    - Every city building should be an active community space, and a community resource hub rather than specific use (like sports, or reading)
    - Provide food at all City facilities
    - Libraries are one of the few indoor places where you aren't expected to spend money
    - Policies around how homeless folks are welcomed in city spaces – some spaces feel hostel
        - Makes spaces more accessible so people can get connected to resources
        - Unfortunately, facilities like libraries and recreation centers have had to become resource centers due to a gap in other spaces

- Employment
    - Need to consider diversity of income levels in City staff, not just race
    - Support people in getting training to provide low-barrier jobs
- Winter Weather Strategy
    - Spaces open during extreme weather
    - City won't open buildings unless extreme pressure
    - Why can't this be planned in advanced
- Transportation
    - Cost
    - Transit system is very structured around getting people to and from work
    - Transfers are short so if you are trying to run errands, you have to do them all in 1.5 hours or you have to pay again. Open the transfer window to 4 hours
    - Not set up as a life system
    - Bus fares are way too expensive
- Accountability for City to follow its own strategies
    - For example, dismantling bus shelters goes against many City Strategies
- Emergency services
    - Develop a program to have dedicated ambulances, fire response, and police available in the neighbourhood where shelters are located to improve health outcomes for people who are unsheltered and address safety concerns
    - Expand paramedics in shelters program, to have EMS and WFPS available within an area around the shelters. E.g. Paramedics at MSP have a mandate to focus on the withdrawal support facility, can't go across the street to the shelter or assist people outside the building
    - Increase collaboration and communications with organizations operating shelters, including shelters for extreme weather responses

Final Comments

- Different model of policing
- Making sure there is actually funding for these initiatives

Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Plan 2024-2027 – Poverty Reduction Advocates

Location: Social Enterprise Building
765 Main St.
Date: December 12, 2022
Time: 2 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Attendees: 7

Meeting Minutes

How have challenges for people living in poverty changed post-Covid or over the last year?

- Rising costs, inflation, and food prices are really impacting people in poverty and even those just above poverty
    - Outbursts in grocery stores are a result of food costs and pressures on society
    - People are struggling to access food, even people that are employed
    - Shows desperation, which links to crime
- Positive seeing grass-roots organizations stepping up
- Bus shelters are being vandalized
- A lot of people are pulling away and losing touch with their community
- The new harm-reduction van is a positive
- The tiny home project is positive news since covid
    - Housing is a first step
- Vacant buildings are a growing issue
    - Vacant buildings need to be renovated
    - Manitoba Housing has upgraded many vacant buildings very quickly
    - BUILD needs to partner with the City to fix up vacant homes and rent them out
- EIA payments need to increase
    - Just over $3 per day allotted for food
- The challenges have not changed since covid, they have just gotten more severe
- The attitudes of leadership have changed
    - Previously, the City has said poverty reduction is not its jurisdiction
    - Now all 2022 Mayoral candidates had poverty reduction in their platforms
    - Time for change is now
- Security at Portage Place Mall is very aggressive
- Mental health issues getting worse and are maxing out community organizations
    - There is a lack of people applying for jobs
- Community kitchen is now open
    - Can access the kitchen and take home ingredients to cook meals at home
    - Make soup for the Bear Clan to hand out
- Social exclusion
    - If you focus on basic needs and emergencies, belonging and inclusion can get missed

Top Priority Themes: If you could pick one of these that the City focuses on in the next four years, which would it be?

- Housing
- Housing
- Equity and culture of caring (systems change)
- Housing
- Food security
- Equity and culture of caring
- Housing
- Food security

What can the City do to help address the challenges or issues we talked about and provide support? What are your ideas of projects or programs that the City can lead to support people who are experiencing poverty?

- Target for new 'rent geared to income' units built every year
    - For example, 300 new 'rent geared to income units' in 2023
    - What happens when Rapid Housing Initiative money ends
    - Need to shift from affordable housing to 'rent geared to income'
    - Need to increase staff to reach targets
    - Mayor needs to be a political champion of the target
    - Need municipal and provincial partnerships
    - Provide supports for housing projects and developments that are focused on rent geared to income housing, not just affordable housing
    - Provide staffing for 'rent-geared-to-income' housing projects
- In London, ON every new development needs to include affordable housing as part of inclusionary zoning policy
    - Amend bylaws and policies to make it easier to build more diverse types of housing developments to meet the needs of all Winnipeggers (multi-generational families, transitional housing for single adults or couples, modular housing, etc.)
    - Westminister Housing is a good example for a housing model
- Housing projects and initiatives that focus on providing safe, clean, quality housing that is reliable, and with rent-geared-to-income
- Fare free transit
    - Move WinnPass from 50% reduced rate to 80% reduced rate
    - Create free fares for the whole City, which will also reduce violence on buses that is often sparked from fare disputes
    - Bring back the Downtown Spirit bus
- Tie staffing needs to each project in each department

    - Staff to manage the Poverty Reduction Strategy and project supports in the departments that are hosting projects
- Community kitchens
    - Collaborate with the Winnipeg Food Council
    - Many food projects are band aid solutions and do not address the root causes of food insecurity
    - The address food shortages today but not long-term solutions
    - Housing and transit could address food security so people would have more money to spend on food
- Culture of caring
    - Training for first responders and frontline staff on harm reduction, trauma-informed, de-escalation and anti-oppression
- Involvement in the private housing sector, and working with landlords to address issues
- Holistic programs and facilities that support all needs – food, shelter, health care, learning, cultural enrichment, play, and recreation
- Community Hosts at Portage Place Mall and additional public facilities

Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Plan #2 – Rossbrook House

Location:	Zoom	**Date:**	December 14, 2022
Attendees:	1	**Time:**	9 a.m. – 10 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

How have challenges for people living in poverty changed post-Covid or over the last year?

- Increased demand for meals and food. Children and youth come to their facility for programming, and parents often stay to eat as well. Before the pandemic they always served food as well, but it was less needed by whole families
- Increase in mental health concerns; anxiety is high.
- Working towards a trauma-informed approach in all aspects of their programs, including looking to retrofit the building to minimize noise triggers for participants
- Education and learning limitations since the pandemic – reduced reading and writing skills as a result of remote learning. It's led to major gaps in learning. Need to focus more on education; people need these skills; need to be able to apply for jobs
- Gas is expensive leading to reduced access to transportation; increase in demand for Rossbrook's safe ride services and transit tickets
- Integrating reconciliation in all their programs – want people to be proud of their culture
- Partnerships are beneficial. Other external organizations provide supports and sponsor events. Important to build relationships to enhance the work.
- Transportation is very limiting; unable to access resources and services, and results in safety concerns for indigenous children & youth
- Transient families as a result of unsafe and poor-quality housing; infestations with cockroaches, poor air quality, unkept buildings, etc. Families are displaced and move frequently looking for better housing, results in mental health issues, learning delays for children, interpersonal conflicts, and other socio-economic stressors. Need to provide clean, quality housing as well as affordable prices.

What can the City do to help address the challenges or issues we talked about and provide support? What are your ideas of projects or programs that the City can lead to support people who are experiencing poverty?

- Collaborate with community schools to help provide holistic supports to children and youth; community schools receive alternative funding from most public schools and use a more community-focused approach to education that benefits whole families and communities.
- Housing projects: Focus on providing safe, clean, quality housing that is affordable and reliable.
- Transportation: provide free transit to families to make services and resources more accessible; limited access to transportation makes it difficult to get health care, food, opportunities for employment, etc.
- Holistic programs that support all needs – food, shelter, health care, learning, cultural experiences, play and recreation.

Top Priority Themes: If you could pick one of these that the City focuses on in the next four years, which would it be?

- Affordable Housing – quality, clean and affordable housing will help address all the other issues.
    - People are forced to move frequently, which leads to instability for children, youth and families. They are forced to focus their energy on shelter, and other things such as learning, skill-building, friendships, sports and recreation, get neglected.
    - Stable housing allows families to focus on all aspects of well-being.
    - Need to take a holistic approach.

Poverty Reduction Strategy Implementation Plan #2 – Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

Location:	Zoom	**Date:**	January 5, 2023
Attendees:	1	**Time:**	10 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

How have challenges for people living in poverty changed post-Covid or over the last year?

- Community is in crisis, and all issues that people are facing have been exacerbated (e.g. income, poverty, housing, food security, mental health, substance use, domestic violence, assaults)
- Food security:
    - Increase in need. During pandemic delivered average of 500 hampers a day to community members with provincial funding. Funding has since been cut.
    - Inflation has made food security much worse.
- Seeing significant mental health concerns and addictions, increase in crisis response.
- Mamawi is working on a 5-year plan that will identify how to continue to meet community needs. Have seen a shift in needs and want programs to help people where they're at;
    - Focusing on crisis response and providing basic essential (food, water, clothing)
    - Staff feeling under-resourced to provide responses to people with mental health and addictions.
    - New training needed – NARCAN training, mental health awareness and mental health first aid, addictions supports, trauma-informed care, Indigenous ways of knowing.
        - Collaborate with WPS for new training.
    - Need to increase compassion and learn how to respond to support people in a good way who are in crisis (dangerous and erratic behaviour is a symptom of other issues).
- Inflation is impacting service providers budget's as well, because a significant amount of their programming includes meals
- Concerned about health. Reduced level of care in health care facilities, as well as surgery cancellations.
- Trends:
    - High populations of Indigenous people living in poverty.
    - Central and North End seem to be most heavily impacted, but there's a need for hampers and food support city-wide
    - More encampments around the City, they're not just downtown and north end
    - Increase in crime, because people are looking for ways to survive. Increase in theft and property crimes, increase in violence. Feels like there's a lot of desperation.

What can the City do to help address the challenges or issues we talked about and provide support? What are your ideas of projects or programs that the City can lead to support people who are experiencing poverty?

Equity and Culture of Caring:

- Inclusive and equitable service delivery through cultural safety. Enhanced training for City staff about anti-oppression, cultural safety, harm reduction, and indigenous ways of being.
    - E.g. Use indigenous ways of interacting and approaches to managing child and youth behaviour; food shouldn't be used as leverage to change behaviour, all kids should be fed regardless of how they are acting.
- Increase representation in staffing, alongside enhanced training.
    - Do people feel like they're represented in the staffing? Increase Indigenous staff hiring.

Employment:

- Low-barrier employment opportunities – increase communications and collaboration with community-led job readiness programs to increase successful employment
    - Identify what type of certifications and qualifications are needed to be successful in the City of Winnipeg hiring processes, and adjust hiring practices to make the process more accessible to Indigenous youth.
    - Future is Yours, a youth employment readiness program from Mamawi, has identified low success rates for youth seeking employment after the program. Would like to collaborate to identify the disconnect between the training youth are receiving through their program and the requirements for employment with the City of Winnipeg.
        - Are they applying and not getting interviews? Are interviews not going well?
        - Non-violent crisis intervention, food handlers, etc. Are these the wrong types of certifications? What certifications and training should they be receiving?

Food Security:

- Community gardens – reinvigorate community gardens to increase access to healthy foods
- Collaborate with Harvest Manitoba and Mamawi to develop new approaches to food security
- Increase access to city owned kitchens for Community kitchens for food programs

Equitable City Services:

- Free organized sport programs through GCWCC and Community Centres. (E.g. the North End hockey program that's managed by MASC to provide no-cost access to play on a hockey team in a hockey league. Team was called Norquay Knights)
    - Collaborate with GCWCC to enhance access to hockey with free equipment and registration to hockey teams.
    - Skill-building opportunity through this program, so people can integrate into other teams
- Expand on the ARCC program and increase community collaboration, to provide more mental health supports and culturally safe care during wellness checks.

Top Priority Themes: If you could pick one of these that the City focuses on in the next four years, which would it be?

- Community Wellbeing supports for those in greatest need are increased
    - All other goal areas are reflected within 'wellbeing supports'

Appendix C – List of Stakeholder Organizations

List of Stakeholder Organizations

The City reached out to the following organizations as part of the second implementation plan (2024-2027) for the Poverty Reduction Strategy:

Aboriginal Centre
Canadian Community Economic Development Network
Community 204
End Homelessness Winnipeg
Fearless R2W
Ka ni Kanichihk Inc
Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre
Main Street Project
Make Poverty History Manitoba (CCEDNET)
Poverty Awareness and Community Action
Rapid Housing Initiative (MMF)
Resource Assistance for Youth
Right to Housing City Working Group
Rossbrook House
Siloam Mission
Sunshine House
Tunngasugit Inuit Resource Centre
United Way
West Central Women's Resource Centre
Winnipeg Indigenous Executive Council
Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council