March 11th, 2024

Re: **Item #4: Housing Accelerator Fund**

Dear Mayor and members of the Executive Policy Committee;

The Right to Housing Coalition would like to encourage you to support the City Staff recommendations regarding the 2024 Housing Accelerator Fund expenditures, with 3 key amendments, outlined below. The funding approved by CMHC through the Housing Accelerator Fund represents an incredible opportunity for the City of Winnipeg to address the homelessness and housing crisis affecting so many of our neighbours.

We applaud the inclusion of a City Concierge for Affordable Housing with two dedicated full-time staff as part of the proposed $2.5 million for staffing to develop and deliver the HAF program. These two staff are less than the seven permanent FTE which would bring Winnipeg's affordable housing staffing levels to that of other mid-sized Canadian cities, but it is a very encouraging step. *We ask you to increase the staff dedicated to affordable housing and make these positions permanent to increase the City's capacity to support affordable housing.*

We are glad to see that the proposed $25 million Capital Grant Incentive Program includes increased funding for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) projects. Winnipeg needs 2,250 new units of RGI housing over the three years of the HAF funding. *We urge you to prioritize RGI housing – both within and outside Downtown, and ensure the housing funded is owned by public, non-profit, co-op, or Indigenous-led housing providers.*

We know the City can't do this alone. The newly elected Manitoba government has prioritized the creation of social housing. *We urge you to advocate to the Province to contribute capital and operating funds to create 750 new rent-geared-to-income units annually for the duration of the HAF funding.*

If you decide to include Downtown Market Projects in the Capital Grant Incentive Program as City staff suggest, *we urge you to increase the percentage of below-market units required to at least 25% and to ensure that these units are kept at these rent levels for 20 years, rather than 10 years, so they will be covered by Residential Tenancies Act rent regulations*.

The Housing Accelerator Fund resources present an incredible opportunity for the City to address our housing crisis. We hope that you do all you can, including partnering with the Province, to maximize the benefit of this funding for those who need it most.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for questions or additional information regarding our support for these amendments to the Housing Accelerator Fund expenditures.

Sincerely,

Yutaka Dirks
Chair, City Working Group
Right to Housing Coalition