General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres (GCWCC)

PLAN 2045: ACTION PLAN & RECOMMENDATIONS



Prepared by

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JANUARY 2025

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Land and Water Acknowledgements

We acknowledge that Winnipeg's community centres are located in Treaty One Territory, the home and traditional lands of the Anishinaabe (Ojibwe), Ininew (Cree), and Dakota peoples, and in the National Homeland of the Red River Métis. Our water is sourced from Shoal Lake 40 First Nation.

Plan 2045 Contribution Acknowledgements

The project team would like to thank the following individuals and organizations for their important contributions to the development of Plan 2045:

Plan 2045 Steering Committee

Bill Jost (Chair) - Wildwood Community Centre, City Centre District President, GCWCC Vice President
Bruce Kazun - GCWCC Member at Large
Lora Meseman - GCWCC Executive Director
Arthur Pearson - GCWCC Facility & Program Coordinator
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Marshall Kirton - Fort Garry Community Centre
Breanna Sawatzky - Deer Lodge Community Centre
Tracy Ball- Sinclair Park Community Centre
Len Fabris & Denis Van Laeken - Gateway Recreation Centre
Sean Fedorowich - Norberry-Glenlee Community Centre

Plan 2045 Facility Development Sub-Committee

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Sandra Sawatzky - Community Services (Asset Management)
Hector Argueta - Community Services
Samara Fields - Assets & Project Management (Municipal Accommodations)

All five District Boards and all 63 Community Centre Boards

Community organizations participating in workshops & interviews:

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA)
Chalmers Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation
Elmwood Community Resource Centre
BGC Winnipeg
Winnipeg Newcomer Sports Academy
Manitoba Association of Seniors Communities
South Sudan Canadian Community Centre
Art City
Rossbrook House
Immigration Partnership Winnipeg
Eagle Urban Transition Centre
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM)
Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre
Sport Manitoba
Winnipeg Youth Soccer Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Plan 2045 was developed through extensive engagement and collaboration with Winnipeg's community centre volunteers, GCWCC and City of Winnipeg staff and other community organizations and stakeholders.

Plan 2045 provides strategies and actions to help ensure Winnipeg's community centre model is inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to the communities it serves and provides for:

PEOPLE - The community centre model builds upon its proud legacy of volunteerism and community leadership. The model is collaborative in nature and provides flexibility with a variety of governance and management options aimed at ensuring its long-term sustainability while maximizing the use of resources.

PROGRAMS - The model will continue to offer a variety of programs that meet the unique needs of its community, including unstructured and informal activities, drop-in and low-cost programs, registered sport and wellness programs and community events.

PLACES - The community should be served with relevant and desirable programs delivered through well-maintained, and accessible, contemporary facilities. This can include a combination of neighbourhood, community and district-scale community centres.

The intent is that Plan 2045 will guide the actions, direction and resource allocation of GCWCC and the City of Winnipeg over the next 20 years. Recognizing that new opportunities and challenges will arise over time, Plan 2045 should be reviewed and updated approximately every 5 years to ensure it remains current and relevant to meet the needs of the community.

Recommendations within Plan 2045 are categorized into four key strategic goals represented as follows:

Improved Governance

Supported Volunteers

Responsive Programming

Contemporary & Maintained Facilities



Image 1. Youth programming.

For each Strategic Goal, the Plan identifies Strategic Objectives as noted below, as well as initiatives and actions to guide their implementation. Recommendations in Plan 2045 are also outlined in an Implementation Plan organized in Short, Medium and Long term timelines that align with the City of Winnipeg's multi-year budget process and includes high-level human and financial resource requirements. Implementation of many of Plan 2045's recommendations are inter-dependent on the corresponding funding and human resource requirements to enable the actions and corresponding improvements to the community centre model.

STRATEGIC GOALS	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
IMPROVED GOVERNANCE	• Enable Governing Boards • Create Efficient Governance • Clarify and Formalize Roles and Responsibilities • Optimize Accountability & Transparency • Optimize & Support Operating Models • Promote Board Diversity
SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERS	• Develop and Share New Approaches in Volunteer Recruitment • Utilize Paid Staff to Recruit and Coordinate Volunteers • Motivate New Volunteers • Ensure Adequate Staffing Levels at City and GCWCC
RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING	• Engage the Community • Broader Definition of Recreation and Programming • Enhanced Program Supports • Establish Programming Metrics
CONTEMPORARY & MAINTAINED FACILITIES	• Provide City of Winnipeg Capital Maintenance Funding • Efficient Grant and Facility Development Processes • Support Optimized Facilities • Prioritization of Projects • Plan for Growth • Consider Climate Resiliency

Figure 1. Plan 2045 strategic goals and objectives.

How to Use This Plan

Plan 2045 is presented in five main sections. Figure 1 explains how each section works together to provide context and direction for over the next 20 years.

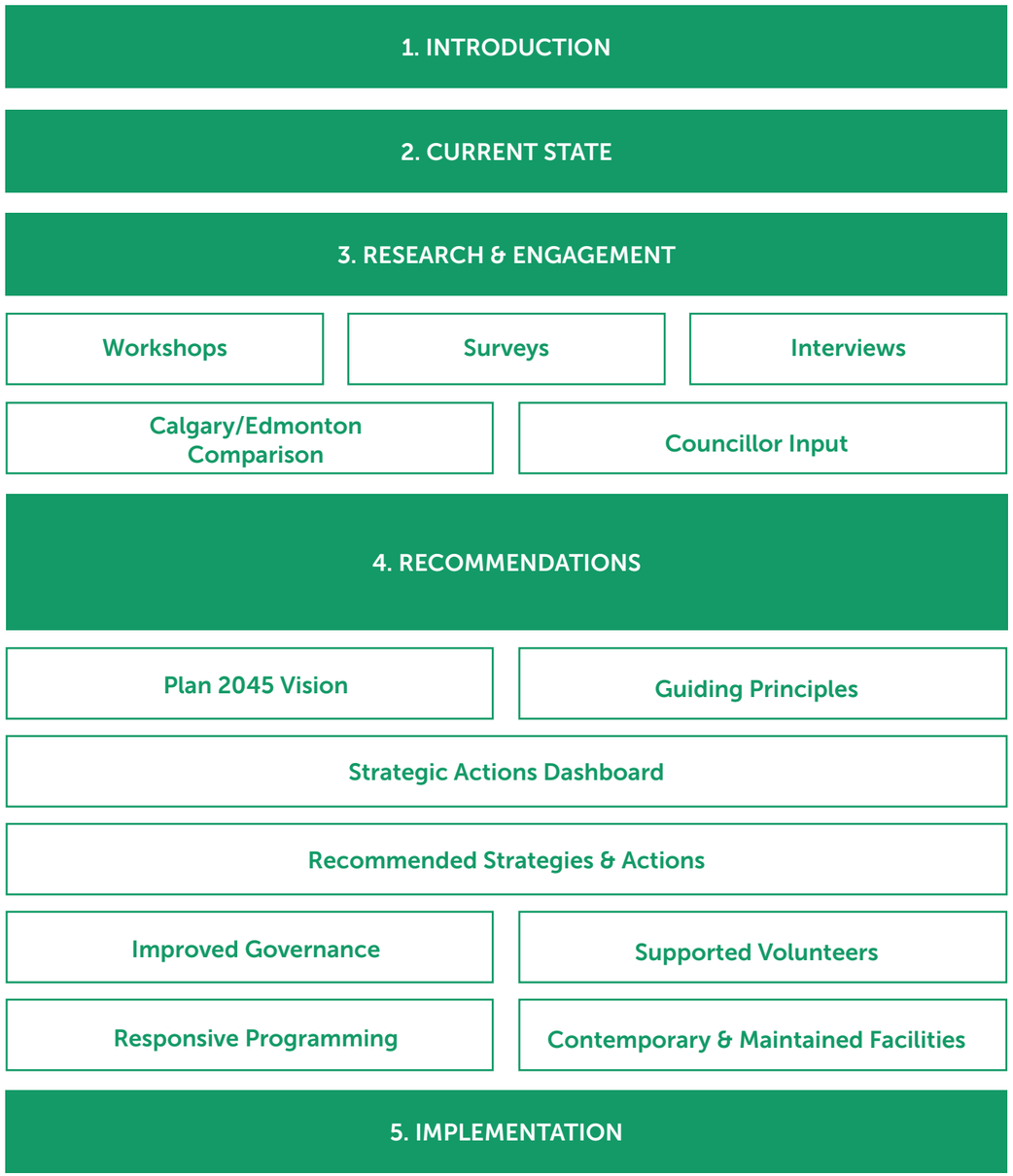


Figure 2. How to use this Plan.

Section 1: Introduction

Provides background on the need and intent of Plan 2045, Winnipeg Recreation Strategy context and project process and timeline.

Section 2: Current State

Highlights current challenges and opportunities facing the community centre model that Plan 2045 will strive to address.

Section 3: Research & Engagement

Provides an overview of the diverse engagement activities and research that informed Plan 2045 recommended strategies and actions.

Section 4: Recommendations

Updated Guiding Principles and Vision developed through grassroots volunteer discussions, as well as recommended Objectives, Initiatives and Actions developed around the key Strategic Goals of Improved Governance, Supported Volunteers, Responsive Programming, and Contemporary & Maintained Facilities.

Section 5: Implementation

Recommended short, medium and long-term actions and associated resource requirements, aligned to the City of Winnipeg's multi-year budget cycle.

1.0
INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Winnipeg's community centres have a rich history of providing grassroots recreation and sports programs dating back to the 1920's and 1930's. Suburban growth through the 1960's and 70's, and the Unicity amalgamation of municipalities, resulted in over 100 community centres by the early 1980's. Today, there are 63 community centres, operating at 81 locations throughout the city.

The General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres (GCWCC) was established in 1971 to promote and encourage cooperation and communication among the community centres and city administration, and to provide a central council for the exchange of ideas and consideration of solutions to common problems.

GCWCC's mandate and role has evolved and expanded over the past fifty plus years, to include greater leadership and responsibility in facility planning, grant administration, governance support, and in direct operation of centres that have been unable to meet operational or financial requirements.

1.1 PLAN 2045 NEED & PURPOSE

In 2009, Plan 2025 was developed through a grassroots planning exercise involving extensive consultation and collaboration with community centre volunteers with the intent to:

- Support and sustain a volunteer base for recreation services,
- Guide the delivery of recreation programs,
- Direct the development of recreation facilities.

Plan 2025 had several key successes in:

- Providing strategic alignment with the City's Recreation, Leisure and Library Facilities Policy (RLLF)
- Providing resources and an enhanced leadership mandate to help strengthen and optimize the community centre model.
- The development of 'District Plans' to guide facility development, amalgamation, and investment to better meet the needs of the community.
- Early successes with the availability of a $10 million Community Centre Investment Fund that leveraged over $27 million in facility investment including Sinclair Park, Norberry-Glenlee, Bronx Park, Sturgeon Heights and others.

However, budget constraints greatly reduced major facility investment and the ability for Plan 2025 to leverage change. In addition, other challenges and issues facing the community centre model have become more pressing and urgent and require new approaches and strategies to ensure a sustainable and effective model.

Plan 2045 provides strategies and actions to help ensure Winnipeg's community centre model is inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to the communities it provides for:

PEOPLE - The community centre model builds upon its proud legacy of volunteerism and community leadership. The model will be collaborative in nature and provides flexibility with a variety of governance and management options aimed at ensuring its long-term sustainability while maximizing the use of resources.

PROGRAMS - The model will continue to offer a variety of programs that meet the unique needs of its community, including unstructured and informal activities, drop-in and low-cost programs, registered sport and wellness programs and community events.

PLACES - The community should be served with relevant and desirable programs delivered through well-maintained, and accessible, contemporary facilities. This can include a combination of neighbourhood, community and district-scale community centres.



Image 2: Youth programming at community centres

1.2 WINNIPEG RECREATION STRATEGY

Plan 2025 was 'received as information' by City Council in 2009 and is not a formal or official City of Winnipeg policy document. However, as Plan 2025 was developed in alignment with the *Recreation Leisure and Libraries Facility Policy* (RLLF Policy), it has served as a guiding strategy and action document to support the continued strengthening and sustainability of the community centre model. In 2022, Council rescinded and replaced the RLLF Policy with the *Winnipeg Recreation Strategy*, which provides policy direction, strategies, level of service targets and recommended implementation investments and actions for all City of Winnipeg owned recreation facilities, including community centres.

The *Winnipeg Recreation Strategy* provides a policy and service target foundation for Plan 2045 and helps guide its development through further grassroots planning and broader stakeholder and public engagement. Plan 2045 was also developed in alignment with other City of Winnipeg policies, including the Poverty Reduction Strategy, Newcomer Welcome & Inclusion Policy, and others as noted in Figure 3.



Image 3. Cover photo from Recreation Strategy.



Figure 3. Diagram of the City of Winnipeg policy hierarchy (adapted from the Winnipeg Recreation Strategy 2021, 23).

Policies within the Winnipeg Recreation Strategy have been developed around the five goals:

- **Active Living**
- **Inclusion and Access**
- **Connecting People with Nature**
- **Supportive Environments**
- **Capacity Building**

While much of the policy direction within the Winnipeg Recreation Strategy has direct or indirect implications for community centres and the services they provide, there are several distinct community centre focused policies that should be highlighted:

Policy #	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy Policy Statement	Implications for Plan 2045
4.5.12	Continue to facilitate a strong and more sustainable community centre model through a formalized management agreement with the General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres (GCWCC). GCWCC will have a leadership mandate to strengthen and optimize the community centre model.	Updating of the Management Agreement with the City of Winnipeg is a key consideration for Plan 2045.
4.5.13	GCWCC will assist and support the volunteer community centres to build on individual and community strengths, to provide residents with recreation opportunities that reflect community needs and interests.	Guiding principle for Plan 2045.
4.5.14	GCWCC will assist in providing day-to-day administrative support to community centres and will collaborate with the City to optimize the support provided to community centres.	GCWCC role in supporting community centres is a key consideration in Plan 2045.
4.5.15	GCWCC will facilitate consultation processes regarding opportunities to reconfigure and optimize centres in accordance with the Recreation Levels of Service for Community Centres as set out in Section 7.	GCWCC leadership role in facility development anticipated to continue as a key part of Plan 2045,
4.5.16	GCWCC will consult with community centres to identify and prioritize capital investments, considering the needs of the local community, the district, the city overall, and in keeping with their mandate and the parameters of the Recreation Strategy.	GCWCC leadership role in facility development anticipated to continue as a key part of Plan 2045, including facility redevelopment process mapping
4.5.17	GCWCC and the City will work collaboratively to determine the most effective means to operate community centres that are not able to sustain a volunteer board and programming. This may include temporary or long-term operation of the community centre by GCWCC or the City until a sustainable volunteer board can be re-established.	Roles and processes for temporary or long term operation of community centres by GCWCC or the City to be considered in Plan 2045.
4.5.18	Proceeds from property sales that may arise as a result of community centre redevelopment will be reinvested in the community centre system. The proceeds will be held in the Land Operating Reserve until they are reallocated.	Consideration for Plan 2045

The *Winnipeg Recreation Strategy* also outlined targeted levels of service for community centres, which includes targeted catchment areas for District, Community and Neighbourhood centres. Mapping of these catchments indicates most Winnipeggers have 2 or more community centres within 2km of their home. The Strategy further identifies a target by 2045 to reduce the total number of community centres to between 60-70 facilities (currently 63 community centres at 81 sites) through amalgamations and consolidations driven at the grassroots level with community and political support.

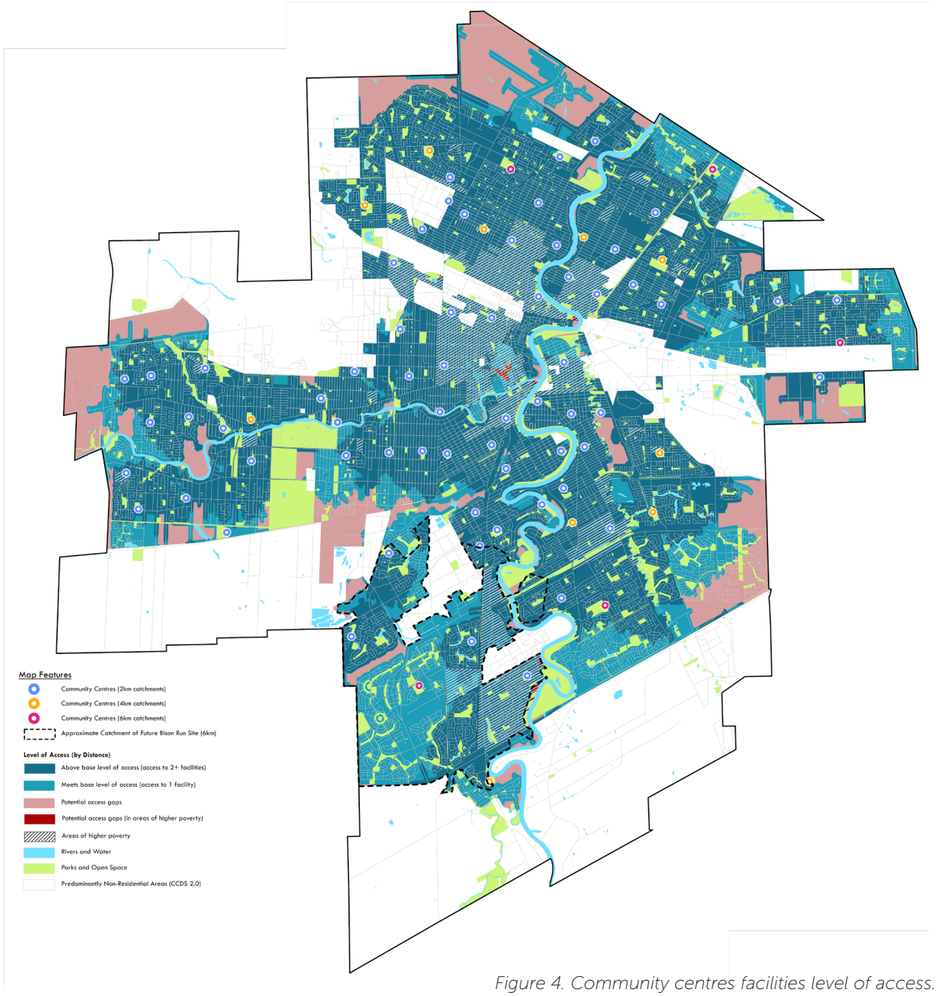


Figure 4. Community centres facilities level of access.

1.3 PLAN 2045 PROCESS

During the development of the Winnipeg Recreation Strategy, two workshops with community centre volunteers were conducted at the 2018 and 2019 GCWCC Annual General Meetings. Feedback from these sessions outlined many of the current challenges facing community centres. The Winnipeg Recreation Strategy included a recommendation to update Plan 2025 (Plan 2045), and Council subsequently approved funding in 2022 for the development of Plan 2045 through the Recreation and Library Facility Investment Strategy.

Scoping Exercise

Extensive engagement with community centre volunteers in 2023 helped define the scope of Plan 2045. That scoping process included the following engagement activities:

- Five meetings with a Steering Committee comprised of City, GCWCC staff and community centre representatives.
- A workshop at the April 2023 GCWCC AGM focusing on current challenges facing community centres.
- Presentations and discussions with the 5 District Boards
- An online survey completed by 48 of 63 community centre boards.

This engagement resulted in a recommended scope of work for Plan 2045 provided to GCWCC in Summer 2023.

Grassroots Focus

The development of Plan 2045 focused on the key objectives related to People, Programs and Places, with collaborative input from community centre volunteers at all stages. This grassroots input included representation from all 63 community centre boards and all 5 community centre districts, including various sizes of community centres, from small inner City neighbourhood centres to large suburban district-scale facilities. The intent was to ensure that recommended strategies and actions reflect the real needs and challenges facing the community centre model and the volunteers who run them.

Project Organization

Development of Plan 2045 was led a multi-disciplinary consulting team guided by the following committees:

Plan 2045 Steering Committee

Composed of high-level City of Winnipeg and GCWCC staff and Chaired by a community centre volunteer, the Committee provided high level input and guidance to the project to ensure it meets the needs of community centre volunteers, GCWCC, the City of Winnipeg, and the community.

Plan 2045 Project Working Group

Composed of representatives of the 5 District Boards and supplemented by City and GCWCC staff representatives. This committee provided input and feedback on review of the community centre organizational model, governance structures and program priorities for the various scales of community centres.

Facility Development Sub-Committee

This committee provided input and feedback on the creation of a community centre development process map and on development opportunities for community centres by district.

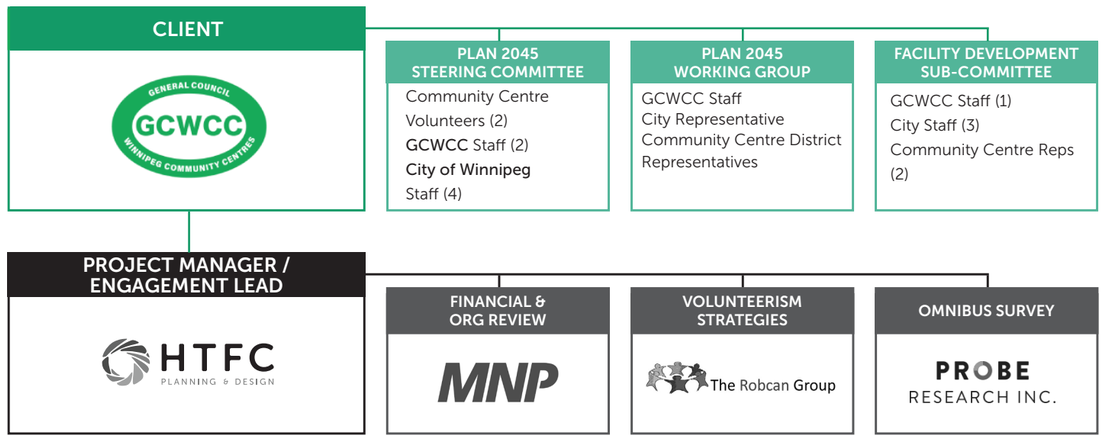


Figure 5. Project organization chart.

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Plan 2045 Delivery

Work on developing Plan 2045 began with a Steering Committee kick-off meeting in late January 2024. Over the next 5 months, extensive research, discussions and engagement activities helped shape draft strategies and actions for Plan 2045. These recommendations were shared with the Steering Committee, Project Working Group, Facility Development Sub-Committee, 5 District Boards, all 63 community centres and City Councillors in September 2024 for feedback. Feedback received was incorporated into a Final Plan 2045 document and provided to GCWCC in January 2025.

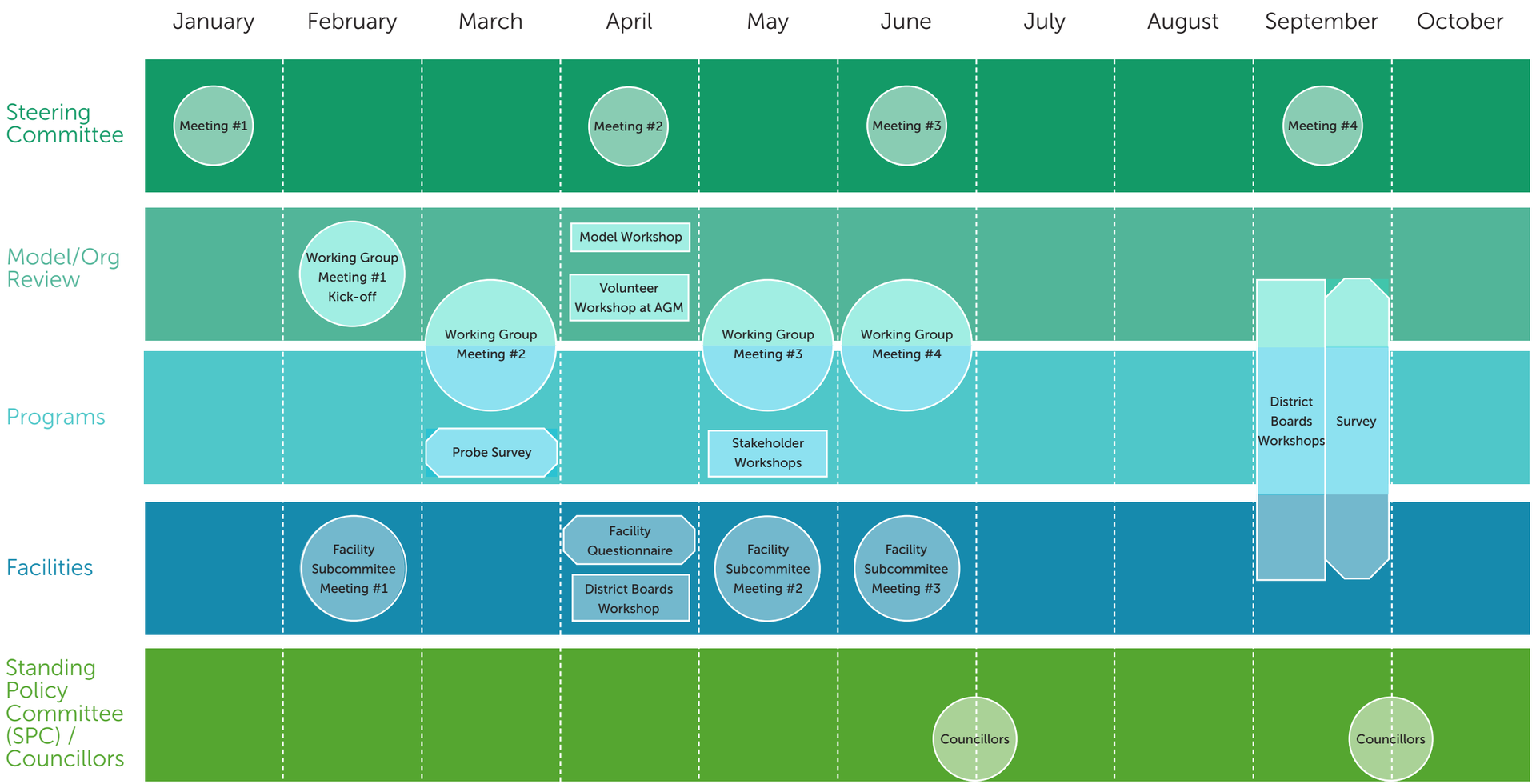


Figure 6. Plan 2045 project schedule.

2.0
CURRENT STATE

2.0 CURRENT STATE

Today's community centres are facing many challenges and opportunities that require new approaches and resources, in order support a sustainable model that is responsive to the communities they serve.

2.1 OUTDATED GOVERNANCE MODEL

Much of the governance model for Winnipeg's community centres was established over 30 years ago and requires updating to meet current realities and challenges. By-laws, policies and accountability procedures require streamlining to include what is important and reduce the burden on volunteers. In particular, several important issues were identified:

Financial Accountability Reporting:
Community centres are required to submit monthly financial statements to the City of Winnipeg, but these statements are not measured against established budgets, operating plans, or business plans. This makes it difficult for the City to assess the appropriateness of expenditures or identify potential issues.
Accountability requirements may have been developed for the right reasons but volunteers feel overburdened with the requirements and it is does not appear the information is used for system wide analysis.

Lack of Support and Structure:
The Universal Funding Formula outlines the City's expectations for community centres but does not require the City to provide necessary support to fulfill those expectations. This can leave community centres struggling to meet their obligations without adequate resources. The responsibilities matrix in the Universal Funding Formula falls short in providing the necessary structure and detail to understand the different roles and responsibilities of the City, individual community centres, and GCWCC in delivering leisure and recreation services.

Disparities and Inefficiencies:
The accountability framework does not sufficiently account for the differences between large and small community centres.
The current renovation grant application process is often more readily accessed by centres with paid staff and larger boards. It also currently requires community centres to compete for limited capital dollars and does not take a system-wide approach to prioritizing capital needs.

Proactive Risk Identification:
The current accountability framework only allows for the identification of past errors and does not provide a mechanism to proactively identify potential risks or where additional supports are needed to ensure community centres can fulfill their mandate and support the needs of the population they serve.

In addition, some of the challenges with the current model identified by community centre volunteers include:

	CHALLENGES	GOVERNANCE MODEL WORKSHOP FEEDBACK
Systems & Process	• Accountability & transparency with the City (i.e., Grant application process) • No shared sponsorship (system wide) • Community Centres have no influence over policy, but have to implement • Community Centres expectation are higher than City's (i.e., grass cutting) with little to no support • Centralization of registrations, loss of revenue & volunteer recruitment	• Capital grant program does not allow for a system wide view of capital needs and contributes to inequity since centres with greater capacity to develop proposals are able to get grants easier than those with limited capacity. • Requirements of capital grant (to follow City requirements) limits ability of Centres to draw on neighbourhood resources to complete projects and makes simple projects complex (beyond what should be expected to be managed by volunteers). • Current model does not require or incentivize planning (operational, programming, fundraising, capital) • Current reporting requirements do not contribute to meaningful or transparent accountability. Submitting reconciled bank statements and annual financial statements only allow for reactive accountability and do not help identify risk factors that could be mitigated if caught early.
Resources & Operations	• Community Centres (especially smaller ones) do not have business plans • Volunteers shouldn't be operators • Equity: Volunteer capacity/experience is not equal everywhere (re: grant access & writing applications) • Universal Funding Formula equity	• GCWCC staff are responsible for a large number of Community Centres in comparison to other jurisdictions (20 facilities/staff compared to 5.2 and 9 per staff in Calgary and Edmonton respectively) • The Universal Funding Formula does not account for community capacity or current building condition. • Roles and responsibilities in the UFF are onerous on Community Centres, especially ones that do not have staff. • Community Centre facilities are owned by the City of Winnipeg, therefore, the maintenance and capital renewal of those facilities should be their responsibility. • Community Centres do not have equal access to volunteers (volunteer capacity, availability, and skills are not uniform across the City).

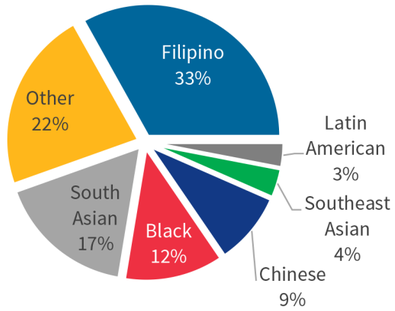
Connection & Collaboration	• Communication with the City departments can be challenging
	• No one facilitates/enables partnerships
	• Not enough knowledge sharing opportunities (partners/ programs/ funding)
		• City of Winnipeg staff support is low in Winnipeg compared to other jurisdictions (10 facilities per staff vs. 3.7 and 2.8 in Calgary and Edmonton respectively)
		  • There are only 3 dedicated Community Centre Liaisons employed by the City of Winnipeg
		  • Calgary has 24 Neighbourhood Resource Coordinators
		  • Edmonton has 45 Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinators
		• District Boards are organized geographically, which impacts the ability to share knowledge and collaborate between Community Centres. Forums that allow for discussion between Centres of similar size or who serve similar populations, would be useful.

Figure 7. Feedback from Governance Model workshop.

2.2 CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS

Over the past two decades, Winnipeg has been experiencing high levels of immigration, with over 19.7% of the population identifying as foreign born in the 2021 Census. In February 2020, Council passed the first-ever Newcomer Welcome and Inclusion Policy which presents a vision for how the City of Winnipeg can better support the settlement and integration of newcomers, and foster a welcoming, inclusive, and equitable city for all residents. In addition, Winnipeg's Indigenous population is growing and represents a higher percentage of the population than other Canadian cities. This growth presents a significant reconciliation opportunity and a need to provide welcoming and appropriate programs and facilities. The percentage of the population that are seniors is also increasing, which increases the need to provide more accessible facilities and varied programming for all ages. These ongoing changes in Winnipeg's population bring with it the need to meet different recreation and sport interests and preferences and the opportunity to bring new volunteers and activity to community centres.

Distribution of Equity Deserving Groups



Distribution of Indigenous Groups

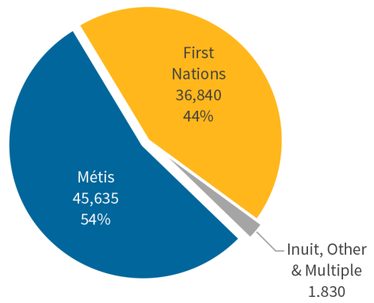


Figure 8. Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 and 2016 Census of Population. Data is representative of municipal boundaries.

2.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PRESSURES

Poverty affects one in eight people in Winnipeg and is particularly, overrepresented in Winnipeg's populations of Indigenous people, recent immigrants and children (0-14 years). In addition, poverty along with mental health challenges are contributing factors to the growing addiction and homelessness crises facing the city. Winnipeg's Poverty Reduction Strategy aims to be a catalyst for action and partnerships going forward to address underlying root causes and localized impacts of poverty in our city. While community centres are not directly responsible for resolving these significant challenges, they can be part of the solution through low-cost programming, providing supportive and welcoming spaces and contributing to improved social and health equity.

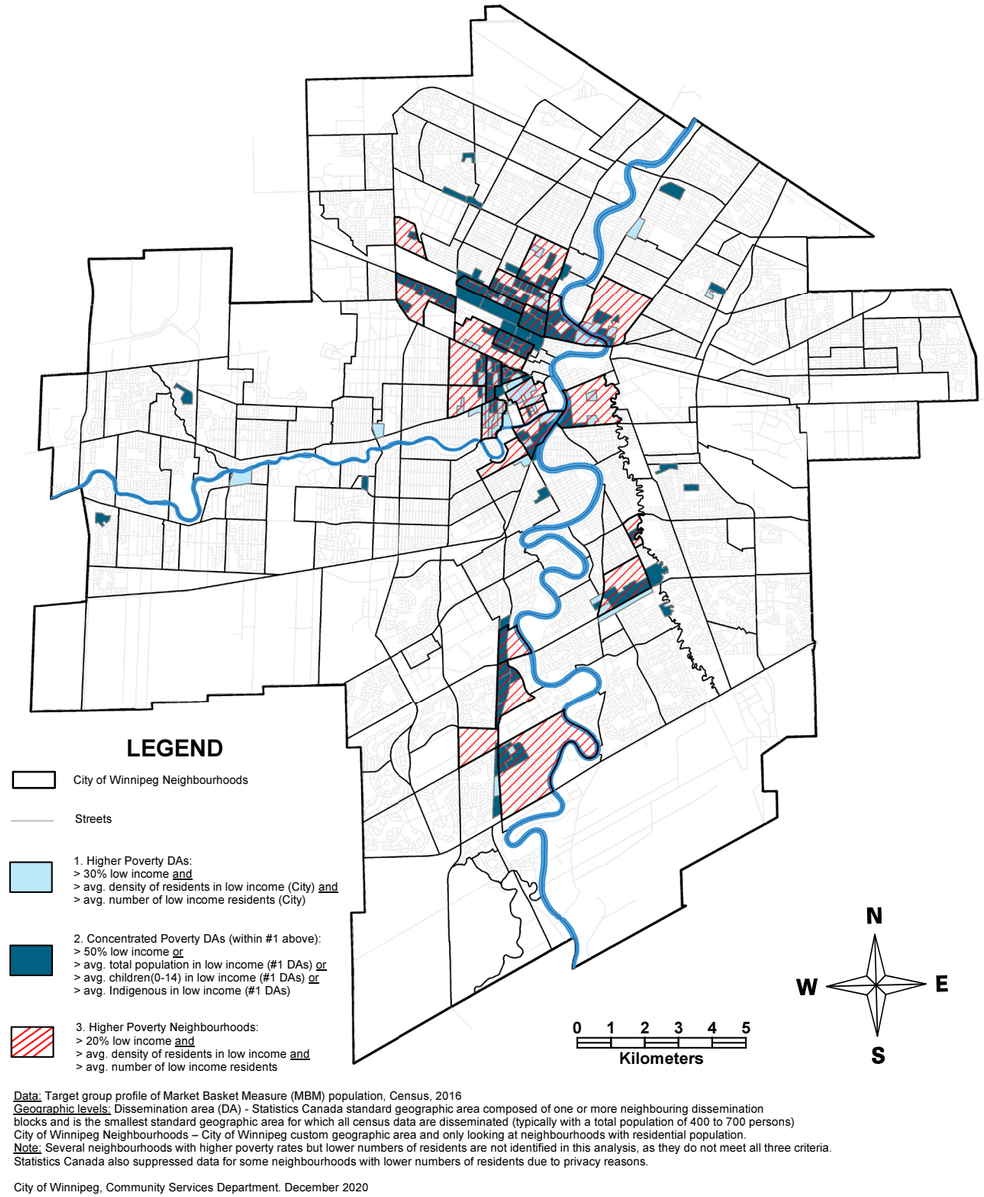


Figure 9. Geographic areas of higher povery (Census 2016 analysis) from the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

2.4 FACILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Winnipeg's community centres include over 300 assets, including community centre buildings, skate change buildings, storage/garages, arenas, fieldhouses and outdoor rinks. The majority of these assets were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s, primarily to support outdoor sports such as hockey, baseball, and soccer, and indoor activities such as bingo and socials. Many of these facilities are rated in poor condition and lack suitable gymnasiums, multi-purpose space and community kitchen facilities to support contemporary program needs for the entire community. There is also a need to upgrade many community centres to meet current building code and accessibility requirements, meet climate change and climate resiliency objectives and provide facilities in newer communities experiencing residential growth.

The *2024 City of Winnipeg Infrastructure Plan* indicates the community centre portfolio requires over $273M in capital funding over the next 10 years to ensure adequate building condition, safety and maintain service levels. That translates to a requirement of over $27M per year over the next 10 years in unfunded risk.

However, all dedicated funding in the Municipal Accommodations budget for community centres has been eliminated since the 2020 budget. As such, the department can generally only address community centre maintenance in a reactionary manner, with little opportunity for planned and proactive asset management. Funding in the form of the Community Centre Renovation Grant, Land Dedication Reserve Fund, Community Incentive Grant Program and others help supplement facility maintenance but rely on volunteers to identify needs, prepare grant applications, obtain contractor quotes and often act as project managers. The burden on volunteers to apply for grants and manage maintenance of City of Winnipeg assets is one the biggest issues identified in consultation with community centers.

It should be noted that under the *Universal Funding Formula Responsibilities Document*, the City of Winnipeg, as owner of all community centre facilities, is responsible for:

- Building envelope retrofit,
- Structural repairs,
- Controls and mechanical systems,
- Repair/replacement of sewer and water lines to buildings,
- Electrical systems,
- Functionality and accessibility improvements,
- Hazardous material abatement (radon, lead, mould or asbestos),
- Outdoor rink lighting upgrades,
- Parking lot lighting replacements,
- Replacement of elevators and lifts due to age, roof replacements,
- Fire safety system improvements
- parking lot renewals.

Dedicated annual capital funding is required in order for the City to meet its facility maintenance obligations and ensure community centres remain safe, accessible, and operational.



Image 4. Valour Community Centre.



Image 5. Tyndall Park Community Centre.

2.5 EVOLVING VOLUNTEER LANDSCAPE

Volunteer participation for Winnipeg's community centres was already in a decline prior to the pandemic. Since then, the number of community centre volunteers is just over half of the pre-COVID numbers (from 14,314 to 7,805 volunteers). The community centre model was established in the 50's and 60's, when single income households and less busy lifestyles contributed to greater volunteer time and commitment. Today, many community centres struggle to attract new volunteers and those already involved, have been for many years, with increasing demands in running and maintaining aging facilities, delivering programs and meeting administrative and financial accountability requirements.

While previous generations were often motivated by a sense of duty or community commitment, many of today's volunteers are looking for personal fulfillment, skill development and social connections. New methods and approaches to volunteer recruitment, retention and motivations are needed to connect and attract today's volunteers, as well as resources for volunteer coordination.



Image 6. Volunteer at Dakota Community Centre.

2.6 CHANGING SPORT DELIVERY

Over the past 20 years, many sports traditionally offered through local community centres (hockey, soccer, baseball) have changed to more district based, sport association-led delivery models. This has generally resulted in reduced registrations and fewer teams run at local community centres, and subsequent reduced revenue and volunteer recruitment opportunities. Many sports associations focus on the elite, high-performance levels which can create financial and transportation barriers for participants. This leaves room for community centres to focus on grassroots, local support, especially at the younger ages. Various 'jack rabbits' hockey, cross-country skiing programs and mini soccer programs are good examples of these fun, affordable and locally accessible programs.

In addition, as organized sport has become less of a focus for programming, community centres continue to redefine themselves through other program opportunities including community wellness programs, community events and other community activities. Other cities such as Calgary and Edmonton have made food security a key aspect of community centres through community gardens, community kitchens, and even bee-keeping.



Image 7 Sport Delivery at Dakota Community Centre

2.7 GROWTH & INFILL

Winnipeg's population is projected to grow from 761,900 in 2020 to 956,600 in 2045. Much of this population growth will be accommodated in new suburban development, built with a higher level of density than previous suburban neighbourhoods. This growth brings demand for new services including community centres to meet local recreation needs. More mature areas of the city are also anticipated to experience population growth through new infill development and densification along major corridors. Again, increased population will bring greater demands for services and may result in the need to expand or refurbish the existing community centres in these areas.

Over the past 20 years, planning for new community centres to support growth has lagged behind actual development. This has created challenges in securing suitable lands and planning for capital investments. *Complete Communities Direction Strategy 2.0* seeks to resolve this by identifying key policies on provision and access for park and recreation facilities to ensure these needs are planned for as new development occurs. Some growth-related community centre/recreation investments have recently been approved including the South Winnipeg Recreation Campus serving the neighbourhoods of Waverley West and the southwest quadrant and the Bonavista Recreation & Leisure Center serving Bonavista, Precinct K South and Sage Creek.

The 2023 *Complete Communities Land Monitoring Report* includes projections for infill and greenfield residential growth over the short, medium, and long terms and resulting infrastructure required to support that growth. Some key community centre implications include:

Precinct/ Neighbourhood	Quadrant	Potential Dwelling Units	Timeframe	Anticipated Growth Supportive Infrastructure	Community Centre Scale (based on population)
South Transcona	Northeast	4,590	Short to medium term	New community/ recreation centre	Neighbourhood to Community
Precincts B & D (see Figure 10)	Northwest	14,550	Short to medium term	New community/ recreation centre	District
Wilkes South	Southwest	31,470	Long term	New community/ recreation centre	District

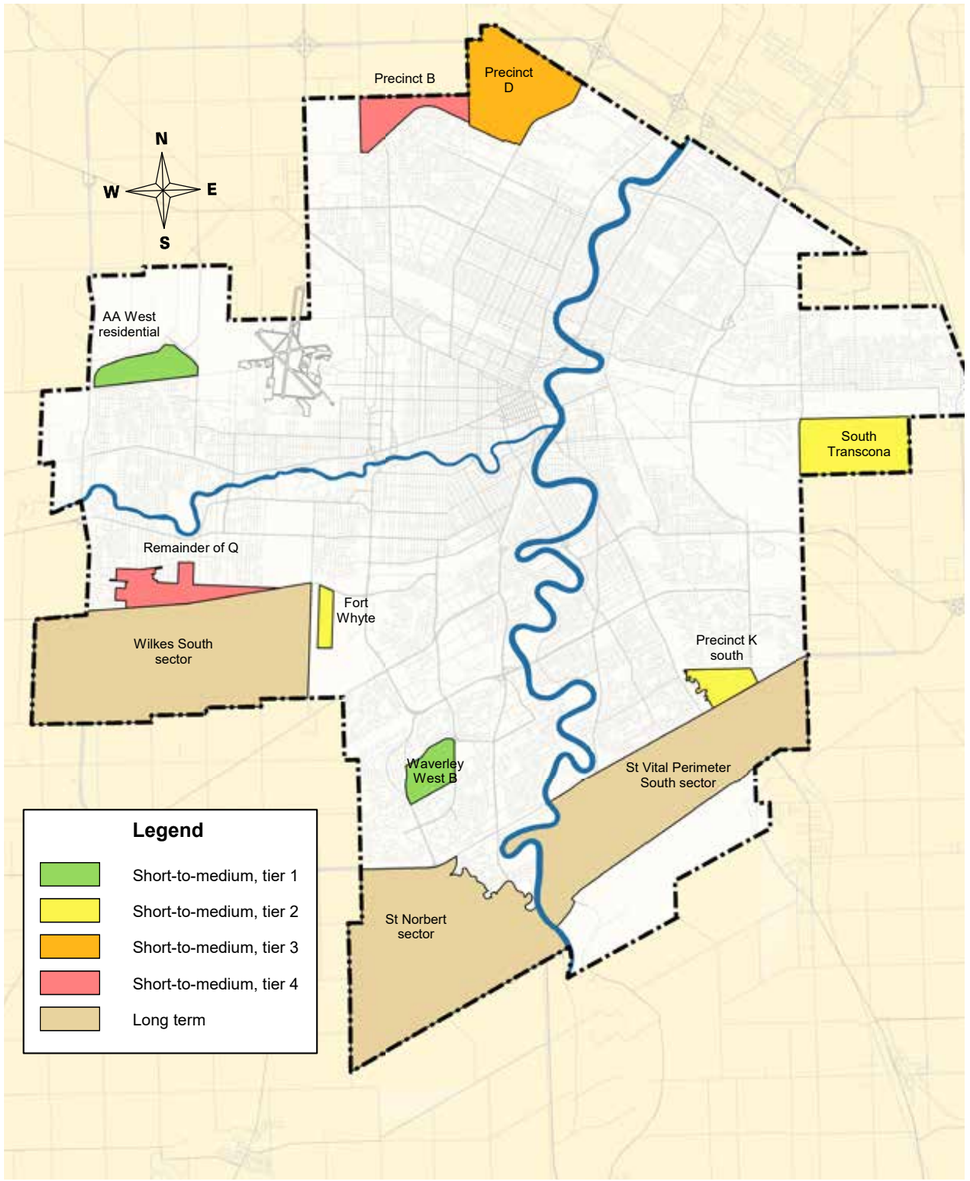


Figure 10. Map of greenfield phasing from City of Winnipeg Complete Communities 2.0.

2.8 FINANCIAL & HUMAN RESOURCES

Winnipeg's community centre model is dependent on the time and dedication of thousands of volunteer board members, convenors, coaches and laborers. However, this model also requires significant staffing and financial resources in order to sustain itself while managing often complex risks and challenges.

GCWCC Operating Budget & Grants

The City of Winnipeg provides several annual operating and programming grants to GCWCC to fund the operation of GCWCC and the many supports they provide to Winnipeg's community centres. In 2024, this includes:

Grant	Purpose	2024 Amount
GCWCC Operating Grant	GCWCC staff, office, administration	$260,226
Program Registration Fee Subsidy Grant	Program to help families who need financial assistance to register their child in Community Centre programs	$150,000
Community Centre Programming Grant	Funding assistance to ensure Community Centres can offer sustainable programs for area residents	$430,750
GCWCC Janitoral Wage Subsidy	Assist centres with hiring janitorial and maintenance staff	$388,844
Athletic Field Maintenance Program	Funding for community centre that maintain multiple athletic field sites	$390,600
Athletic Field Maintenance-Trailering Grant	Supports trailering of equipment for centres with multiple sites.	$30,000
Graffiti Control Program Grant	To support graffiti removal at community centres	$20,000
		TOTAL: $1,670,420

While the annual grants provided to GCWCC are significant, they are a relatively small amount to support the operation of 63 community centres and the significant programming and community value they provide.

Universal Funding Formula

Approved City of Winnipeg operating grants to community centres in 2024 totaled $7,102,000. This amount is dispersed through the Universal Funding Formula (UFF) which provides each centre funding based on:

- Population served within their defined catchment area.
- An amount for heated square footage (ice rinks, field house and lease spaces exempted).
- Amounts for permanent and knockdown outdoor hockey pens.

The general consensus amongst community centres is that the UFF grants generally cover most of community centre utilities and first line maintenance costs, with no funding to support staff wages or programming. It has been identified that additional amounts are required to support programs and staff at smaller centres (especially those in areas with higher levels of poverty), and that the population amounts provided to district scale centres do not reflect the larger geographic areas that they tend to serve.

Community Centre Renovation Grants

The City has committed $2,000,000 per year through the multi-year budget to funding the continuation of the Community Centre Renovation Grant Program (CCRGP). While this grant provides opportunities for centres to upgrade and maintain their facilities, it pushes the burden of applications, contractor quotes, legal agreements and often project management to community centre volunteers. The CCRGP is a valuable tool to support volunteer efforts to improve facilities to better meet the needs of the community, but it be should supplemented by a properly funded asset management program for capital renewal and maintenance, managed and implemented by the City of Winnipeg.

Staffing

GCWCC provides critical assistance to community centres in the areas of governance, volunteer support, programming, marketing, finances, facility development and general information sharing and support. GCWCC also currently manages 5 community centres that have not been able to sustain a viable board. However, the staffing component that enables this support is limited to 2-3 public facing positions, including the Executive Director and Program and Facility Coordinator and recently hired Communications Coordinator, supported by a Financial Officer and Administrative Coordinator.

On the City of Winnipeg side, community centres are supported by five dedicated full-time positions within the Community Services Department (plus one FTE for finance), and one full-time position in Municipal Accommodations supporting facility assessment and development. Recent Council direction and funding support may increase the Municipal Accommodations staffing support. Other City staff supports on an ad-hoc basis include Municipal Accommodations Project Officers, as well as staff in Risk Management (Insurance), Legal Services, Parks & Open Space and Urban Planning & Design.

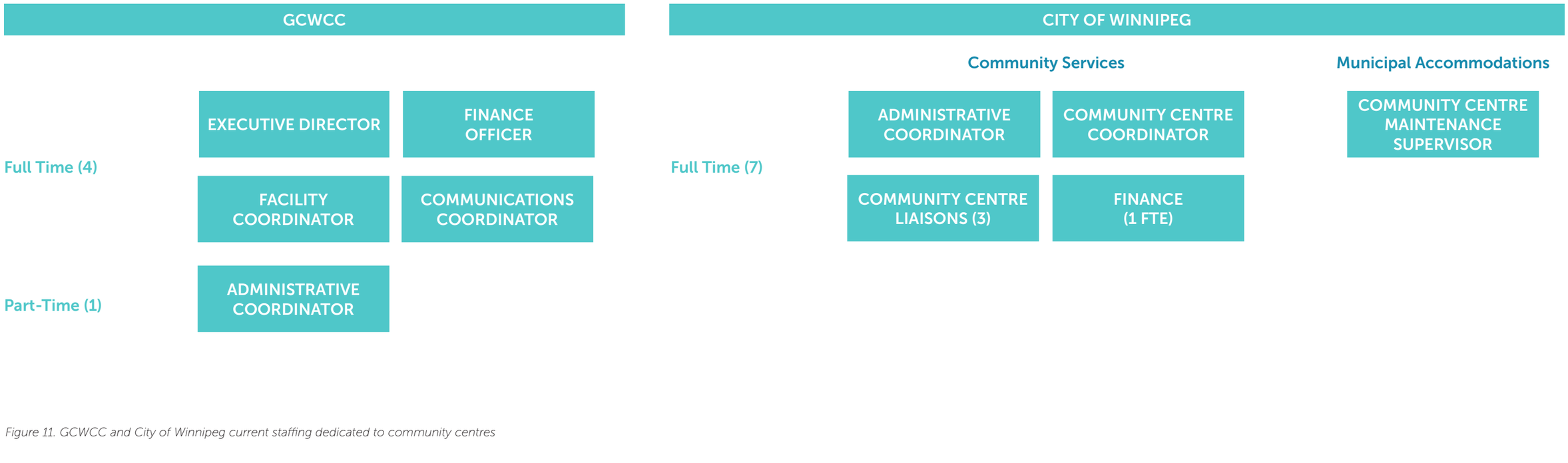


Figure 11. GCWCC and City of Winnipeg current staffing dedicated to community centres

Overall, these staff support resources are likely a fraction of what are needed to adequately support the volunteer-run community centre boards. By comparison, the Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues and Calgary Federation of Communities (GCWCC equivalents) have up to 14 fulltime positions, supplemented by several part time, seasonal and volunteer positions to support their volunteer-run community recreation model. While both these cities face similar challenges as Winnipeg, they are able to provide significantly more support to their volunteers in areas of programming, marketing, governance and financial management and facility development. The City of Edmonton and City of Calgary also have significantly greater dedicated supports for their volunteer models with over 45 FTE's in Edmonton and over 30 FTE's in Calgary.

Supporting Staff Comparison

	WINNIPEG	EDMONTON	CALGARY
	General Council of Winnipeg Community Centres (GCWCC)	Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL)	Calgary Federation of Communities (CFC)
STAFFING	4.5 full time positions including: Executive Director Program & Facility Coordinator Communications Coordinator Financial Officer Part Time Administrative Coordinator	14 full time positions 2 part time 2 summer students 3 office volunteers	24 full time positions including: 7 Administrative Staff (ED, senior admin, admin support, data analytics, IT, senior accountant, org development analyst) 6 Engagement Staff 11 Auditors/Audit techs
DIRECT MUNICIPAL STAFF SUPPORT	7 FTE's, including: 3 Community Centre Liaisons 1 Community Centre Coordinator 1 Administrative Coordinator-Community Centres 1 Community Centre Maintenance Supervisor 1 Finance staff FTE equivalent	45 Neighbourhood Resource Coordinators, including 2 who support building development applications and processes.	24 Neighbourhood Partnership Coordinators 4 Sport Advisors 2 Partnership Specialists 4 Facility Operations Coordinators

Figure 12. GCWCC staffing in comparison to Edmonton and Calgary.

3.0
RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

3.0 RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT

Plan 2045 included multiple engagement activities and approaches to maximize opportunities for input and ideas. Each engagement event focused on a strategic area of the Plan, except the Probe survey which provided helpful background on the general public's views on community centres. GCWCC's AGM Volunteer Workshop focused on People, specifically volunteerism; the Model Workshop focused on People, specifically governance and organization management; the District Board Meetings focused on Places, specifically facilities; and the Access and Inclusion Workshop focused on Programs. This engagement has greatly contributed to our understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing community centres. Full results are available in Appendices A-C.

3.1 PROBE SURVEY

In order to better understand the needs and opinions of the general public with respect to community centres, Probe Research was included as part of the project team. Probe carried out a random and representative sampling of 600 Winnipeg adults through their March 2024 Omnibus Survey (statistically relevant survey). Six questions were used in the survey to help understand Winnipeggers attitudes toward community centres, how they're used, and any barriers to usage.

Key findings

Usage

- About 60 per cent of Winnipeggers have used a community centre in recent years – mostly for community events like socials and meetings, but also to take advantage of outdoor rinks, etc.
- Parents and higher income Winnipeggers are most likely to use community centres, but there is room to increase awareness and usage among lower-income Winnipeggers and those 55+.
- There is also an indication that community centres don't really offer the kinds of programs Winnipeggers want. The third-most-cited reason was for lack of usage was that community centres don't offer the right programs and activities. While 30 per cent say their local centre doesn't really offer anything for them or their family, 47 per cent are neutral on this question, meaning they don't know or have no top-of-mind opinion.

Barriers

- The big barriers to usage are around awareness and programming. A significant proportion of Winnipeggers just don't know what community centres offer. Only about 16 per cent of Winnipeggers feel they know what goes on at their local centre, and 44 per cent simply aren't sure how well-used their local community centre is.
- Awareness is particularly low among Black, Indigenous or People of Colour (BIPOC), young adults and those with lower socio-economic status.
- Community centres are generally viewed as welcoming and friendly by about two-thirds of Winnipeggers, but this view is somewhat tepid. Only one-quarter of Winnipeggers strongly agree that community centres are welcoming. And Winnipeggers who identify as Black, Indigenous or a Person of Colour (BIPOC) are slightly less likely to feel their local community centre is welcoming.

Attitudes Towards Community Centres by Sub-Group

Parents



- Much more likely to use community centres in all ways. For example, one-half of parents (47%) have had a child attend a kids' program at a community centre.
- More interested in any new programs at their local community centre, particularly community events and celebrations, sports and recreation programs and outdoor winter activities.

Lower-Income



- Much less aware of what goes on in community centres (71% unaware), and one-half have not used a community centre lately for any reason.
- Slightly less interested in all kinds of new programs.

High School Education or Less



- Much less aware of what goes on in community centres (70% unaware) and one-half have not used a community centre lately for any reason.
- Slightly less interested in all kinds of new programs but especially winter activities and community events.

Older Adults (55+)



- Among the least likely to use community centres (53% haven't done anything at a community centre in the last few years).
- Less interested in any new programs at their local community centre. For example, only 37% are interested in community events and celebrations.
- Still feel community centres are an important part of their neighbourhood (59% agree).

Younger Adults (18-34)



- Much less aware of what goes on in community centres (78% unaware).
- Slightly more likely to say they use other fitness facilities instead of community centres.
- Most interested in outdoor winter programs (74% interested) and sports and rec programs (70% interested) but less interested in fitness programs.

Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC)



- Much less aware of what goes on in community centres (78% unaware).
- Slightly more likely to say they use other fitness facilities instead of community centres.
- Most interested in outdoor winter programs (74% interested) and sports and rec programs (70% interested) but less interested in fitness programs.

3.2 EDMONTON-CALGARY COMPARISON

In March 2024, site visits and interviews were conducted in the cities of Edmonton and Calgary in order to better understand and compare their version of a volunteer led recreation model to Winnipeg.

Edmonton

Edmonton's 'community leagues' provide grassroots neighbourhood programming and are supported by both the City of Edmonton and Edmonton Federation of Community Leagues (EFCL). Some key highlights and differences of the Edmonton model include:

- 126 'community leagues' generally operate at the neighbourhood level, although there are some larger facilities serving clusters of neighbourhoods.
- Broader mandate-includes grassroots recreation, community events and neighbourhood advocacy on development proposals.
- Each community league owns the buildings on City-owned land, operating under a Tri-partite agreement with ECFL and the City of Edmonton that clearly defines roles and responsibilities.
- Some community leagues operate with no building assets and utilize school or city space to deliver programs. Most community leagues are focused around a community hall space, outdoor hockey pen and often, community gardens.
- Generally, 2 acres of land for community leagues is dedicated in new suburban neighbourhoods (similar to how school lands are planned in Winnipeg).
- The City of Edmonton provides very modest operating grants to each community league supplemented by Provincial casino funding ($70k to $80k per year).
- Community league volunteers receive strong staffing supports from the EFCL (14 full-time staff) and City of Edmonton (45 dedicated full-time staff).
- Community League Infrastructure Program provides $2M/year in funding as a 50/50 grant of up to $400k per project, with some funding used for annual facility inspections.



Image 8. Kenilworth Community League in Edmonton.

Calgary

Calgary's 'community associations' provide grassroots neighbourhood programming and are supported by both the City of Calgary and Calgary Federation of Communities (CFoC). Some key highlights and differences of the Calgary model include:

- 156 'community associations' generally operate at the neighbourhood level, although there are some larger facilities serving clusters of neighbourhoods.
- Broader mandate-includes grassroots recreation, community events and neighbourhood advocacy on development proposals.
- City of Calgary owns the buildings and the land at community association sites-operating under a Tri-partite agreement with CFoC and the City of Calgary that clearly defines roles and responsibilities.
- Some community associations (rare) operate with no building assets and utilize school or city space to deliver programs (buildings range from small halls to large multi-use centres).
- Land for community associations provided in new developments (3-4 acres).
- No operating grants provided directly to community associations from the City of Calgary. Provincial casino funding, membership fees and program revenue are major sources of operating funding.
- Community association volunteers receive strong staffing supports from the CFoC (24 full-time staff) and City of Calgary (34 dedicated full-time staff).
- Fairly significant capital funding commitment from the City of Calgary ($31M over 4 years) is recognized as not enough to address their infrastructure deficit.



Image 9. Varsity Community Centre in Calgary.

3.3 VOLUNTEERISM WORKSHOP

On April 13, 2024, a 'Plan 2045 - Volunteerism Workshop' was held as part of GCWCC's Annual General Meeting at Norwood Community Centre. Brenda Robinson of the Robcan Group provided an inspiring and informative presentation on ways to engage, retain, and motivate today's volunteers. Following this, facilitators from HTFC, GCWCC, and the City of Winnipeg worked with AGM participants to brainstorm ways to improve volunteerism in community centres.

Some of the key themes from the workshop include:

- Some volunteers were very positive about the volunteer capacity at their centres, using words like 'vibrant', 'engaged', 'committed' and 'strong', while others felt more challenged, describing their volunteer landscape as 'lacking', 'dwindling', 'stagnant' and 'limited'.

- Volunteers shared some of their new or changed strategies to address volunteer participation:
    - » Communications: Using their website, e-newsletters, signage and town hall meetings to reach out to new volunteers.
    - » Recruitment: Using personal invites from board members, networking, promotion to newcomers, look outside catchment area.
    - » Collaboration: Connect with high schools for volunteer credit opportunities.
    - » Supports/Resources: Use paid staff to organize and recruit volunteers, job-share/co-chairs to reduce the burden on individuals and enable succession planning.

- Additional supports/resources to improve volunteer participation:
    - » Centralized or district-level supports needed, including volunteer coordination by paid staff, training, templates, marketing, software, community stakeholder database.
    - » Education - City and GCWCC supports on UFF responsibilities, understanding and connecting with newcomers and underrepresented populations; educate public on community centres.
    - » Governance changes - ensure diverse skills and representation on boards.
    - » Incentives - scholarships, school credits, reference letters, food, recognition.

3.4 MODEL & GOVERNANCE WORKSHOP

A Governance and Organizational Workshop hosted by MNP was held on April 18, 2024, with the Project Working Group plus additional community centre representatives and staff reflecting small, medium, and large community centres, as well as newer and longstanding community centre volunteers.

The session focused on:

- Clarifying and defining the roles and responsibilities of community centres, GCWCC, District Boards, and the City of Winnipeg.
- Identifying future needs and existing gaps for community centre governance and management to be addressed in recommendations included in Plan 2045.

Key workshop outcomes and responses include:

- Outlining the current Strengths and Challenges within the current community centre model
- Developing a shared 'strategic vision' for a future community centre model, in the following areas (more details in Appendix C):
    - » Administration & Supports
        - Sustainability: resources, funding, & volunteer capacity
        - Operations by paid staff
        - Greater focus on community needs by volunteers
        - Recruitment support: board members & volunteers
        - Business planning support
    - » Communications
        - System wide communication: timely, effective, & open/transparent
        - Streamlined information sharing
        - Hub for information sharing between community centres
    - » Standardized Agreements Policies & Procedures
        - Management agreements
        - Reasonable & appropriate board roles & responsibilities
        - Standardized constitution with flexibility
        - Clarity on roles, processes, and responsibilities
        - Fair expectations from the City
    - » Independence with Supports
        - Autonomy (with support)
        - Boards run own governance
        - Individuality within the model
        - Less oversight and more accountability from the City to community centres
    - » Financial Sustainability
        - New revenue streams
        - Community centre business plans, matching funds in future funding model
    - » Re-Imagining Collaboration Groups
        - Realign based on community centre size, not geography
    - » More Diverse and Equitable at All Levels
        - Responsive & inclusive of changing demographics (i.e., newcomers)

3.5 SPRING 2024 CONSULTATIONS

HTFC attended the five District Board meetings during April and May to hear directly from community centres about their facility plans, opportunities, and concerns. Several questions were posed for discussion, related to:

- Significant facility maintenance/renewal needs?
- Major project redevelopment opportunities?
- Needs for facilities to serve new or 'growth' neighbourhoods and communities?
- Amalgamation of boards and/or facilities?

The most pressing concern raised by almost every centre is the **lack of maintenance funding** available to renew, repair and upgrade community centres. Many buildings are deteriorating past the point of repair due to lack of proactive capital maintenance. Without City support staff and insufficient funding means volunteers are shouldering the burden of planning and renewing City owned facilities.

Centres from each District also shared any facility redevelopment opportunities they have considered to meet community program needs and improve the accessibility and functionality of their centre.
Several centres identified current or future amalgamation discussions involving multiple boards and facilities.

Top responsed are presented in Figure 13 below. A full summary of District Board discussions is provided in Appendix A, with Facility Opportunities for each District highlighted in Appendix D.

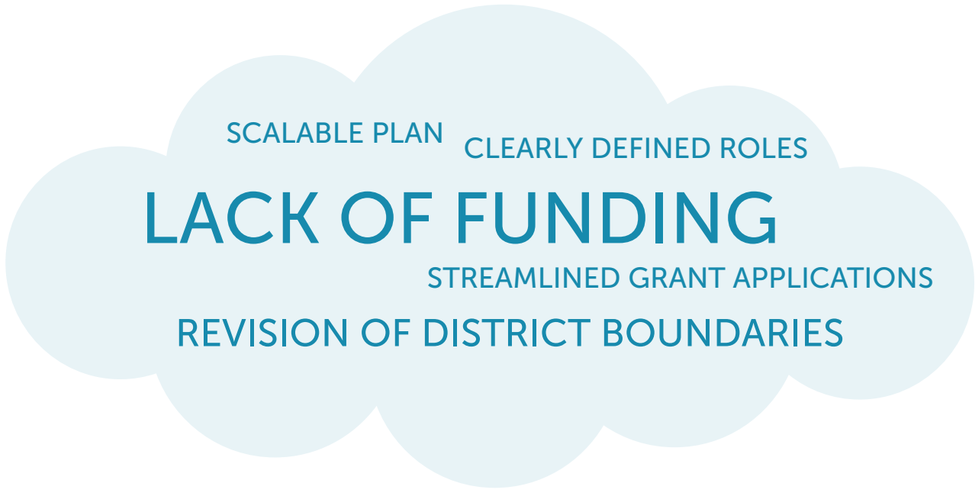


Figure 13. Word cloud to highlight major themes at District Board meetings.

3.6 SPRING 2024 COMMUNITY CENTRE SURVEY

To supplement the District Board Consultations, an online Community Centre facility development survey was developed to assist centres to articulate existing facility challenges and opportunities. Questions included:

- Are you aware of any significant facility maintenance or building condition issues that need to be rectified over the next 5 to 10 years?
- Are there any significant functional deficiencies with your facility that you are aware of that could include needed accessibility upgrades (washrooms, ramps, etc.), unsuitable program space (size, height, etc.) lack spaces to support programs sufficiently (kitchen, storage, etc.).
- Based on the population your centre serves, its size, and the community program needs you are aware of, are there any amenities or spaces that you feel could be added to better serve your community? (e.g. gym, multi-purpose room, community kitchen, etc.)
- Has your board considered or discussed potential amalgamation of boards with nearby community centres to help with program delivery and volunteer capacity?
- Do you see any potential opportunities for amalgamation or consolidation of your own community centre facilities and assets and/or amalgamation of facilities with a nearby community centre.

Top responses are presented in Figure 14 below. A full summary of the Facility Survey results is provided in Appendix A, with Facility Opportunities for each District highlighted in Appendix D.



Figure 14. Word cloud to highlight top responses for improvements to better serve the community.

3.7 ACCESS & INCLUSION

Workshop

On May 2, 2024, an 'Access & Inclusion' workshop was held at Weston Memorial Community Centre, with representatives invited from various social and health equity organizations from throughout Winnipeg. A total of 14 participants from 12 organizations attended and contributed to robust discussions.

Collaboration

- Community Centres should partner with other organizations.
- Community centres are program poor but facility rich.
- Other community organizations have accountable, paid, skilled staff who can deliver programming with community centre volunteer support.

Inclusion + Transparency

- Community centre boards need to be derived from the community. Many of the participants felt that community centres are removed from the present-day community and are having a hard time attracting volunteers/operating because the boards do not reflect the community they serve and they are not involved in community life.

Stakeholder Interviews

Follow up interviews were conducted with key community stakeholders and rightholders that were unable to join the in-person workshop. A total of four virtual interviews were held with seven individuals representing four organizations.

Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM)

- Access to sports for youth is difficult as families are looking for employment and language skills, which highlights the importance of low barrier sports and recreation.
- Community centre boards require training to recruit and retain leadership that reflects the diversity of their communities. Additionally, financial resources need to be provided to incoming members.
- Looking for additional space, particularly cultural and community space. Having space in community centres would be the preference as it allows IRCOM members to engage with other Winnipeggers and change perceptions towards new immigrants.

Urban Eagle Transition Centre

- Community centres could create a mentorship program for youth, providing opportunities for job experience (programming, janitorial,etc.)
- Job shadowing existing board members before they transition out of the position.
- Opportunity for funding for technical training for recreation positions to allow diverse community members to be hired.

Sport Manitoba

- Sports associations need to reimagine operations to be more inclusive.
- Boards need to be more diverse to reflect their community.
- Accessing gym space in different school divisions can be challenging as 90% of the participants must be living in the catchment area. Community centre gyms and multi-purpose spaces are therefore very important for community access.
- Youth that need the space the most at community centres are often not getting access due to facilities requiring revenue generation.

Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre

- Typically partner with schools or City facilities
- Indigenous program coordinators are in high-demand, could prove to be difficult to have them in community centres.
- Community centres used to be the heart of the community. Youth transitioning out of hockey due to high costs and sports leaving community centres, they no longer are at the centre which is a missed opportunity.

3.8 FALL 2024 CONSULTATIONS

HTFC attended the five District Board meetings in September to present the draft recommendations for Plan 2045 and receive preliminary feedback. The major themes which emerged across the District Board meetings are identified below:

- **Governance and Operations:** Suggestions included having GCWCC provide more staff and centralized resources to support administrative tasks, including HR, accounting, and grant applications. This would allow community centres to focus on programming.

- **Funding:** Participants highlighted the need for increased financial support from the City to manage facility maintenance, fund operational needs, and support community-driven projects. Some centres struggle with revenue generation and are limited by restrictions like the Universal Funding Formula (UFF).

- **Volunteer Management:** The need for a structured volunteer support system was emphasized, including paid staff or shared resources to manage and motivate volunteers. Participants noted that people want to contribute but often lack guidance or structure, which could be provided by the City or GCWCC.

- **Responsive Programming and Community Engagement:** It is important to many to tailor programming to the community's changing demographics, with a focus on partnerships to improve accessibility for underserved groups such as newcomers and single-parent families. Enhanced communication and engagement strategies were discussed, including the potential for a City-led awareness campaign to clarify community centres' roles and limitations.

- **Facility Maintenance and Improvement Needs:** There was consensus on the need for clearer City involvement in facility upkeep and a shift towards more proactive maintenance.

- **Long-Term Planning and Development:** Centres in rapidly growing neighbourhoods expressed concern about insufficient facilities and the importance of forward-looking investment, with proposals for business plans to support financial sustainability.

A summary of District Board discussions is provided in Appendix A.

3.9 FALL 2024 COMMUNITY CENTRE SURVEY

To supplement the District Board Consultations, a survey to review the draft recommendations for Plan 2045 was made available for community centres to provide feedback. Several major themes were observed:

- **Governance and Operations:** There is a strong push towards having boards that provide high-level governance rather than operational oversight, suggesting paid staff should handle daily operations. Various governance models are also discussed to accommodate the unique needs of different communities.

- **Funding:** Numerous responses advocate for a review of the Universal Funding Formula (UFF) to reflect modern needs and community demographics, especially in high-poverty areas. There is a call for increased City support in funding maintenance and upgrades to reduce reliance on volunteer-driven fundraising.

- **Volunteer Management:** Respondents expressed concerns about volunteer recruitment, engagement, and retention, with recommendations for paid volunteer coordinators and flexible, low-commitment volunteer opportunities to attract more volunteers.

- **Responsive Programming and Community Engagement:** Many responses emphasize the importance of community engagement to tailor programs to local needs, partnerships with other organizations, and using an equity lens to ensure access for under-served neighbourhoods.

- **Facility Maintenance and Improvement Needs:** There is a call for proactive maintenance programs led by the City, streamlined grant processes, and a clear strategy to manage the growth of community centers in response to urban densification and new development areas.

- **Additional Suggestions:** A few responses suggest further topics to address, such as sponsorship opportunities, an honorarium for board members, and clear definitions of community centre roles to remain relevant in a changing social landscape.

A summary of the Survey results is provided in Appendix A.

4.0
RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

Research and engagement summarized in the previous section of this report contributed to confirming key challenges facing community centres, but more importantly, led to the development of recommended strategies, actions and resources necessary to sustain and improve the community centre model in Winnipeg.

4.1 GUIDING PRINCIPLES & VISION

The following Guiding Principles and Vision for Plan 2045 are based on the previously developed vision and guiding principles for Plan 2025 and updated to align with the Winnipeg Recreation Strategy and more recent community centre feedback obtained through GCWCC AGM workshops held in 2018, 2019, and 2023:

Guiding Principles

Plan 2045 will support and align with the following guiding principles:

Healthy & Active Living: Promotes healthy and active living for all community members through the provision of both structured and unstructured recreation, leisure, play, and sports activities.

Community-Led: Based on grassroots community involvement and leadership, ensuring responsiveness to the diverse communities it serves.

Volunteer-Driven: Continue to promote and support a strong base of volunteers to meet its service needs while providing role models for youth.

Affordable, Accessible, and Inclusive: Strive to reduce barriers that impede access to its programs and facilities.

Collaborative: Encourage collaboration (within and outside the system) in recognition of overlapping responsibilities and the need by all to maximize the use of resources and build community capacity.

Supportive Environments: Provide safe, supportive, welcoming and respectful environments for the community.

Equitable: Balance the needs of individual centres with the need to optimize the system overall and will do so in an equitable fashion.

Flexible and Multi-Faceted Approach: Provide flexible and multi-faceted approaches and solutions to respond to the varied scales of community centre sizes, catchments, and the diverse community needs in each area that they serve.

Vision

Plan 2045 provides strategies and actions to help ensure Winnipeg's community centre model is inclusive, sustainable, and responsive to the communities it provides for:

People: The community centre model builds upon its proud legacy of volunteerism and community leadership. The model will be collaborative in nature and provide flexibility with various governance and management options aimed to ensure its long-term sustainability while maximizing the use of resources.

Programs: The model will continue to offer a variety of programs that meet the unique needs of its community, including unstructured and informal activities, drop-in and low-cost programs, registered sport and wellness programs and community events.

Places: The community should be served with relevant and desirable programs delivered through well-maintained, and accessible, contemporary facilities. This can include a combination of neighbourhood, community, and district-scale community centres.

COMMUNITY CENTRE MODEL ROLES

A. The mandate for the City of Winnipeg in the Community Centre system is to provide facilities and financial support for the delivery of leisure and recreation services. As the owners of the physical assets, they should be responsible for all capital improvements and renewal necessary.
B. The mandate for GCWCC is to support community centres in delivering programs and services that align with the City of Winnipeg priorities by providing a system-wide view, facilitating collaboration and information sharing, and providing appropriate training, templates, and best practices.
C. The mandate of Community Centres is to provide tailored leisure and recreation services that meet the specific needs of the communities they serve.
D. District Boards/Committees have the mandate to support information sharing, to act as forums for collaboration, and to encourage district-level planning between community centres.

4.2 IMPROVED GOVERNANCE

Feedback from the Plan 2045 engagement processes identified the need to update and improve many of the governance structures, processes and practices that have been in place for many decades. Recommendations related to Improved Governance seek to update the model to address today's challenges and support the needs of volunteers. Plan 2045 recommends the following initiatives and actions to improve governance:

Strategic Goals & Objectives	Lead	Key Initiatives/Actions	City Policy Alignment
1. Enable Governing Boards	GCWCC	Where feasible, transition the majority of community centre boards to 'governing boards', where volunteer board members provide high-level direction and oversight to paid staff who lead facility operation and program delivery. Support boards open to amalgamations to enable combined resources for paid staff. • Support boards to enable shared staffing and resources amongst multiple community centres. • Standardized governance training to be delivered by GCWCC. • Ensure adequate resources for staffing through UFF Review, as well as GCWCC Programming and Wage Subsidy Grants.	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy
2. Create Efficient Governance	GCWCC	The size of boards and number of meetings should be determined by what is necessary and sustainable. • Assist individual community centres in updating constitutions/by-laws with leading practices for Board sizes, meeting frequency, and governance structures.	
3. Clarify and Formalize Roles and Responsibilities	City	Revise the Management Agreement between the City of Winnipeg and GCWCC to clarify and update roles. • Define City and GCWCC roles in assessments. • Define authority and decision process for providing additional support, and alternative operating models for community centres experiencing financial, board, facility, and program health challenges.	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy
	City	Establish Management Agreements between the City of Winnipeg and each community centre to ensure clear roles and responsibilities. • Codevelop standardized agreement covering facility use, responsibilities and other key terms. • Contract external legal advice for all community centres on a draft agreement to ensure informed consent by community centre Boards.	
	GCWCC	Re-envision District Boards as 'District Committees', each with a clear Terms of Reference (purpose, responsibility, and objective and reporting requirements, if any). • Future state may include District Committees that meet quarterly, supplemented by Sub-Committees for groups of centres with common needs/issues, e.g. larger centres with arena/fieldhouse operations and centres dealing with poverty & homelessness. • Committees and Sub-committees could include Subject Matter Experts (volunteers/paid staff) who do not sit on any individual community centre board but provide information and experience.	
4. Optimize Accountability & Transparency	City (GCWCC Support)	Conduct a review of the Universal Funding Formula to reassess baseline funding, community centre maintenance requirements & responsibilities, and address shortcomings within the current UFF and consider: • As the owner of the facilities, the City's financial commitments should be aligned with responsibilities for capital maintenance, renewal and scheduled replacement. • Additional resources for staff support for smaller centres and those serving higher poverty areas. • Service areas of district-scale community centres outside of defined catchments. • Possible changes to ice rink grants given projected future ice-making challenges due to climate change. • Possible link of UFF to assessments.	
	City (GCWCC support)	Replace/remove current accountability and reporting requirements that do not add value or reduce risk. • Refocus reporting to outcomes and alignment with the City of Winnipeg strategies/priorities/policies. • Review and evaluate current accountability/reporting requirements including an assessment of risk, benefits and human resources inputs associated with each requirement. (e.g. financial reporting from monthly to quarterly for community centres in good standing). • For the GCWCC and individual Community Centre Management Agreements and updated UFF Agreement/Accountability document, use a framework, such as the RACI matrix to clarify responsibilities, where: a. Each party (City, GCWCC, Community Centre, and District Committees) is assigned either R (responsible), A (accountable), C (consulted), or I (informed) for each key task. b. Roles and responsibilities should align with high-level mandates, and expectations should be 'right-sized' for organizational capacity and level of support available (financial or other).	

Strategic Goals & Objectives	Lead	Key Initiatives/Actions	City Policy Alignment
4. Optimize Accountability & Transparency (cont'd)	Co-lead: GCWCC/ City	Establish a regular assessment process and tools to evaluate the Health/Risk level of each community centre related to Organization, Finances, Programming and Facility Condition. Determine each operating model's criteria and necessary support level for each. • Codevelop metrics to assess health/level of risk for community centre Organization (Board, planning, etc.), Finances (operating budget, policies & procedures, etc.), Programming (utilization/service) and Facilities (life safety, accessibility, building condition, etc.) • Define metrics based on the size/scale of community centres. • Engagement with Community Centre Boards to collect input and revise the process accordingly. • Communicate requirements to community centres and develop review cycle/schedule, including all standardized templates (budget, operating plan, programming plan, etc.) • Implement an annual assessment process using GCWCC staff (new hires) for organizational health in coordination with City of Winnipeg staff for facility health. • Implement a centralized online reporting tool to assist with submitting annual organization and program assessment information. • Explore the feasibility of an online program registration tool to provide easier access to available programs city-wide and enable centralized access to program and utilization data for all community centres.	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy
5. Optimize and Support Operating Models	City & GCWCC	Utilize regular Assessments to identify the appropriate operating model for each centre (Independent Operations, Supported Operations, GWCCC Interim Operated, Alternative Operations). • Determine criteria for each operating model and level of support required for each. • Establish options that must be exhausted within the GCWCC Interim Operated model before exploring Alternative Operations. • Establish process, criteria and decision-making factors for taking legal control of a Community Centre board - built into City-GCWCC Management Agreement and agreement between the City of Winnipeg and each community centre and in required terms of constitutions/by-laws. General definition of operating models include: **Independent Operations**: • Assessment process shows low risk • Board is in good standing (Companies Office, Board positions, By-Laws & Minutes on file) • Operating Plan provided to GCWCC • Reporting/Accountability requirements may be reduced to suit the risk to GCWCC and the City **Supported Operations**: • Assessment process shows between low and medium risk • Board is in good standing (Companies Office, Board positions, By-Laws & Minutes on file) • Operating Plan provided to GCWCC and City for review and approval • Tailored support based on Assessment **GCWCC Interim Operations:** • Assessment process shows high risk in one or more areas & support does not fully resolve the issue • Advisory Board to act as a legal entity • GCWCC is given the authority to operate • Need formal confirmation agreement with City • Goal is to Review, Reset, and Return to volunteer-governing board as soon as possible **Alternative Operations:** • Assessment process shows high risk in one or more areas • GCWCC Interim Operations and return to volunteer-governing board is not viable over the long term. • Need to explore alternatives, including amalgamations or consolidations with neighbouring centres, partnerships with other community organizations, and possibly City-run, pending required resources	
6. Promote Board Diversity	GCWCC	Ensure community centre boards have a full slate of volunteers with diverse skills, experiences and backgrounds that reflect the communities they serve. • Actively recruit diverse skillsets and representation of underrepresented groups. • Provide tools and leading practice supports to reduce barriers to participation for underrepresented groups (timing, frequency and format of board meetings). • Consider constitution/by-law revisions to set board representation goals (e.g. Winnipeg Youth Soccer Association and Maples Community Centre each recently implemented constitution/by-law amendments setting standards for representation of gender and historically under-represented communities or groups).	

4.3 SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERS

Plan 2045 recommendations include strategies for improved support for community centre volunteers. These recommendations come from Brenda Robinson's (RobCan Group) presentation at the 2024 GCWCC Annual General Meeting. The accompanying 'Volunteerism' workshop added to the understanding and supported their strategic development for volunteer programs. Brenda has outlined the following efforts in three key areas to achieve a more sustainable volunteer base for community centres:

- Recruitment and retention
- Engaging and involving volunteers
- Motivating today's volunteers

Practical and applicable information on these three areas is available in Appendix H. These have been designed for use by community centres to support this work.

Plan 2045 recommends the following initiatives and actions to improve support for community centre volunteers:

Strategic Goals & Objectives	Lead	Key Initiatives/Actions	City Policy Alignment
1. Develop and Share New Approaches in Volunteer Recruitment	GCWCC	Conduct regular education sessions and information sharing on best practices for volunteer recruitment, motivation and coordination. • Develop content and best practices for a sustainable volunteer model focusing on recruiting, retaining, guiding, training and motivating a 'team' of volunteers • Focus on outcomes, shared benefits, and positive experiences with emphasizing rewards from a social, emotional and self-fulfillment perspective. • Continue to recruit individual volunteers and develop strategies for recruiting teams, work groups and family or social groups.	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy
2. Utilize Paid Staff to Recruit and Coordinate Volunteers	GCWCC	Explore opportunities for clusters of community centres to share a paid volunteer coordinator or co-coordinator. Include volunteer coordination staff eligibility for Program and Staffing support grants. Establish new Volunteer Coordinator position at GCWCC.	
3. Motivate New and Returning Volunteers	CC's	Provide shorter commitment volunteer opportunities that are project or event-focused. Provide opportunities to work in pairs, small groups or focused teams. Provide child-minding and activities for children. Provide tasks that align with volunteers' skills and passions to ensure they find their work meaningful and impactful. Provide opportunities for co-positions to share commitments and promote succession. Provide more remote/virtual opportunities and less structure. Encourage creativity and new ideas. Implement formal and informal recognition programs.	
4. Increase Staffing Levels at City and GCWCC to Reduce Burden on Volunteers	City/ GCWCC	Increase support for GCWCC in marketing, communications, business planning, governance, programming support, volunteer coordination and renovation project support. Increase City resources for building assessments/asset management, grant support & project management, insurance & claims support.	

4.4 RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING

Winnipeg's community centres have been adapting to changes in the needs of their communities for some time now. Changes in demographics, sports delivery, and community needs demand that centres be flexible and responsive to their communities.
Plan 2045 recommends the following initiatives and actions to enable more responsive programming at community centres:

Strategic Goals & Objectives	Lead	Key Initiatives/Actions	City Policy Alignment
1. Engage the Community	CCs with support from GCWCC and City	Use regular community engagement and outreach to inform each community centre's program priorities, organizational vision, and strategic planning efforts. Connect with the community at least yearly, utilizing events and celebrations to promote community centre roles and programs, connect with community organizations, and partner on programming and volunteer efforts. • Develop relationships and partnerships with other community, cultural and service organizations to enable broader use of community centre spaces, sharing of volunteers and provision of diverse programming that reflects community needs.	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy
2. Broader Definition of Recreation	CCs with support from GCWCC and City	Expand the traditional recreation focus of community centres to include intellectual, creative, cultural and social pursuits that enhance individual and community well-being.	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy
		Provide neighbourhood programming to reduce travel and cost barriers to participation, with increased support for community centres in areas experiencing higher levels of poverty.	Poverty Reduction Strategy
		Sport and other recreation programming is focused on local community access, skill & social development, and community connections.	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy
3. Program Supports	GCWCC (City Supports)	Program planning and development is supported by paid, trained staff shared by clusters of centres where feasible and further supported by the City of Winnipeg.	Poverty Reduction Strategy
	GCWCC & City	City of Winnipeg Recreation Services may provide programs in community centres where gaps in service are identified, space is available, and within Council-approved staffing resources.	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy
4. Establish Programming Metrics	GCWCC & City	Develop metrics for a base level of programming determined by size and catchment of community centres, and includes consideration of a diversity of registered and non-registered programs, rentals, access to amenities (e.g. outdoor rinks), and overall utilization.	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy

4.5 CONTEMPORARY & MAINTAINED FACILITIES

One of the key challenges facing community centres is the age, condition and functionality of community centre facilities. The lack City of Winnipeg funding dedicated towards community centre facility maintenance results in an inordinate amount of volunteer time and energy expended towards asset management planning, grant applications, and project management. Recommended actions related to facilities are the direct result of feedback from community centre volunteers and staff through various meetings, workshops, and surveys, as well as the input of the Plan 2045 facility Development Sub-Committee.

Plan 2045 recommends the following initiatives and actions to for contemporary and well-maintained community centre facilities:

Strategic Goals & Objectives	Lead	Key Initiatives/Actions	City Policy Alignment
1. Restore City of Winnipeg Capital Maintenance Funding	City	Provide City of Winnipeg-led (Municipal Accommodations) facility maintenance program supported by appropriate levels of capital and operating funding to enable proactive maintenance and renewal of community centre facilities that fulfill the City's facility maintenance obligations defined under the UFF Responsibilities Document. • Submit Business Case and Capital Maintenance requirements as part of the annual City of Winnipeg Budget process. • Include inputs from individual community centres when determining facility maintenance requirements.	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy
	City	Ensure that City staffing levels support facility evaluation, asset maintenance and project management and are sufficient and not entirely reliant on volunteer efforts. • Evaluate staffing needs to support facility evaluations asset management/maintenance planning, and project management to implement community centre projects. • Submit incremental FTE requirements as part of annual budget processes.	
2. Efficient Grant Processes	City	Find potential efficiencies in Community Centre Renovation Grant Program application, administration and plan approval processes. • Review current processes and requirements and make adjustments to criteria and processes as needed. • Review requirements for legal agreements for City of Winnipeg capital grants under $100,000 and possibly replace them with a letter of intent/grant award letter that outlines key terms and responsibilities (plan approval, insurance, inspections, etc.)	
3. District Plan Opportunities	GCWCC with City supports	Utilize the identified project opportunities for each district in Appendix D as a starting point for further facility planning, feasibility, need assessment and capital allocations, and update on a regular basis as new needs and opportunities are identified.	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy
4. Community Centre Investment Fund	City	Reinstitute a Community Centre Investment Fund that can be used for major facility development and amalgamation projects, that leverages funding from other levels of government to support contemporary, optimized community centre facilities.	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy
5. Prioritization of Projects	City with GCWCC supports	Establish a Facility Development Sub-Committee comprised of City and GCWCC staff and community centre representatives to review major facility development proposals and provide prioritization input on projects utilizing the Target Levels of Service in the Winnipeg Recreation Strategy and criteria ranked by community centre volunteers at workshops in 2019, including: • Socio-economic need • Larger population served/catchment • Facility condition and age • Opportunity to rationalize/consolidate • Meet programming space needs (functionality) • Other capital funding secured • High board & volunteer capacity • Meet residential growth/ densification demands • Climate action and resiliency	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy
6. Plan for Growth	City	Ensure coordinated efforts of GCWCC, Community Services and Planning, Property and Development to plan for future community centre facility needs to meet target levels of service in New and Recent Communities, as well as new service demands through infill development and densification. Includes anticipated future community/recreation centre infrastructure requirements for Wilkes South, Precincts B & D and South Transcona.	Complete Communities 2.0
7. Consider Climate Resiliency	City	Consider and educate community centres on climate resiliency opportunities and risks, including: • Adaptation of buildings to alternative energy to meet 2050 carbon reduction targets. • Provision of heating and cooling centres in extreme weather events • Strategies for outdoor rinks in consideration of warmer winter temperature projections. • Other issues, as identified.	Winnipeg Recreation Strategy

5.0
IMPLEMENTATION

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

Plan 2045 has examined the current community centre model, and the roles of all players including the City, GCWCC and individually incorporated, volunteer led boards. Through extensive engagement with volunteers, staff, City Councillors and other organizations, the plan identifies key strategies and actions to enable a more sustainable model. Many of these actions require additional staff or financial resourcing in order to accomplish their goals.

In April 2023, Council adopted the Strategic Priorities Action Plan (SPAP) as its four-year strategic plan. One of the key Priority Actions within the SPAP is 'Increase funding to implement the Winnipeg Recreation Strategy' with an Outcome of 'Improve access to library and recreation services and facilities'.

Community Centres are a vital, grassroots led component of Winnipeg's overall recreation service system. In order to provide a more sustainable community centre model that meets the level of service targets and recommended investments in the Council adopted Winnipeg Recreation Strategy, additional human and financial resources are necessary.

The following recommended Implementation Plan highlights key action and applicable required resourcing based on short, medium and long-term time horizons, aligned with the City's multi-year budget process. The implementation plan also considers Winnipeg's election cycle and recommends regular review of the Plan over its' lifespan to ensure it remains relevant and is achieving its desired results.

RECOMMENDED FUTURE STAFFING

GCWCC

Current Staffing

Full Time (4)

- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
- FINANCE OFFICER
- FACILITY COORDINATOR
- COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Part-Time (1)

- ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR

Future Staffing Needs (2)

- PROGRAM COORDINATOR
- VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

CITY OF WINNIPEG

Community Services

Full Time (7)

- ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR
- COMMUNITY CENTRE COORDINATOR
- CC LIAISONS (3)
- FINANCE (1 FTE equivalent)

Future Staffing Needs (2+)

- COMMUNITY CENTRE LIAISONS (TBD)

Municipal Accommodations

- COMMUNITY CENTRE MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR
- COMMUNITY CENTRE PROJECT COORDINATORS (2)

Figure 15. GCWCC and City of Winnipeg current staffing and future needs.

ACTIONS	PLAN 2045 TIMEFRAME					REQUIRED RESOURCES	NOTES
	Short Term (2025-2027)	Medium Term (2028-2031)	Long Term (2032-2045)				
	Multi-year budget						
	2024-2027	2028-2031	2032-2035	2036-2039	2040 & beyond		
	Civic Election						
	2026	2030	2034	2038	2042		
IMPROVED GOVERNANCE							
Transition the majority of community centres to governing boards	●	●				Request additional Programming/Wage Subsidy Grant resources in 2026/27	Where feasible and subject to adequate resourcing
Amend and update board by-laws for meeting frequency, board sizes	●						
Revise the Management Agreement between City of Winnipeg and GCWCC		●		●			The current 10-year Management Agreement expires in 2029
Establish Management Agreements between the City and each Community Centre		●		●		Request additional funding for GCWCC to retain external Legal advice to enable informed agreement by all community centres	
Re-envision District Boards as 'District Committees'	●						Includes possible sub-committees for similar community centres city-wide
Conduct a review of the Universal Funding Formula	●	●		●			The current UFF Agreement expires in 2029
Replace/remove current accountability and reporting requirements that do not add value or reduce risk	●						
Establish a regular Assessment Process and Tools to evaluate the Health/Risk levels	●						
Utilize regular Assessments to identify the appropriate operating model for each centre	●						
Ensure community centre boards have a diversity of skills, experiences and backgrounds	●	●	●	●	●		

ACTIONS	PLAN 2045 TIMEFRAME					REQUIRED RESOURCES	NOTES
	Short Term (2025-2027)	Medium Term (2028-2031)	Long Term (2032-2045)				
	Multi-year budget						
	2024-2027	2028-2031	2032-2035	2036-2039	2040 & beyond		
	Civic Election						
	2026	2030	2034	2038	2042		
SUPPORTED VOLUNTEERS							
Conduct regular volunteer training/ education information	●	●	●	●	●	Addition of a GCWCC Volunteer Coordinator position.	
Explore opportunities for clusters of community centres to share a paid volunteer coordinator	●	●	●	●	●	Increase Programming & Janitorial Wage Subsidy Grant funding	
Ensure proper staffing levels at City and GCWCC to reduce burden on volunteers		●				Consider additional Community Centre Liaison positions; add Municipal Accommodations Project Coordinators (2); add GCWCC Volunteer Coordinator & Program Coordinator	
RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING							
Use regular community engagement to inform program priorities, organizational vision, and strategic planning efforts	●	●	●	●	●	Addition of a GCWCC Program Coordinator position	
Program planning and development is supported by paid, trained staff shared by clusters of centres where feasible, and further supported by the City of Winnipeg	●	●	●	●	●	Consider additional Programming/ Wage Subsidy Grant funding in 2026/27.	
Develop metrics for base level of programming based on size and catchment of community centres	●						

ACTIONS	PLAN 2045 TIMEFRAME					REQUIRED RESOURCES	NOTES
	Short Term (2025-2027)	Medium Term (2028-2031)	Long Term (2032-2045)				
	Multi-year budget						
	2024-2027	2028-2031	2032-2035	2036-2039	2040 & beyond		
	Civic Election						
	2026	2030	2034	2038	2042		
CONTEMPORARY & MAINTAINED FACILITIES							
Re-establish City of Winnipeg led (Municipal Accommodations) Communiy Centre Capital Maintenance program	●	●				Funding need to be confirmed annually through the City of Winnipeg investment Planning and Budget processes	10-year investment need of $273M as per 2024 Infrastructure Plan
Increase City staffing levels to support facility evaluation, asset maintenance and project management		●				Additional Municipal Accommodations Project Coodinator positions (2)	
Find potential efficiencies in Community Centre Renovation Grant Program processes	●						Includes grant application, administration and plan approval processes
Utilize Appendix D: District Facility Opportunities for further facility planning, and capital allocations	●	●	●	●	●		Facility opportunities should be updated regularly through District consultations
Reinstitute a Community Centre Investment Fund (CCIF)	●	●	●			City of Winnipeg 2024 Infrastructure Plan identifes funding need of $10M every second year from 2024-2033 for a total of $50M	City of Winnipeg funding to be leveraged with other levels of govenment for major projects
Establish a Facility Development Sub-Committee to review & prioritize major community project proposals	●						Evaluation criteria ranked by community centre volunteers in 2019
Coordinate planning for future facility needs due to growth and infill	●	●	●	●	●		As per Complete Communities 2.0
Consider, educate and support community centres on climate resiliency opportunities and risks	●	●	●	●	●		
Support facility amalgamations where supported by the community	●	●	●	●	●		As per Winnipeg Recreation Strategy Level of Service targets

APPENDICES (SEE SEPARATE DOCUMENT)