



December 3, 2025

Re: Support for *2025 Housing Needs Assessment Report*

To: Members of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development

The West Central Women's Resource Centre (WCWRC) is writing in support of the *2025 Housing Needs Assessment Report*. We participated on the volunteer Advisory Committee.

As noted in the report, the housing needs assessment (HNA) is intended to inform and guide future policies, programs, tools, and initiatives, and allow potential investments of limited resources to be targeted for the greatest impact.

Most of the women and gender-diverse people who access services at WCWRC are or have been impacted by housing insecurity and/or homelessness. The lack of access to safe, appropriate, and affordable housing is a massive barrier preventing women and gender-diverse individuals and their families from moving from where they are to where they want to be.

WCWRC is an active supporter of The Right to Housing Coalition which takes the lead on building awareness and organizing our community to advocate for stronger government action to address housing insecurity and homelessness.

Many of the policy implications that came forward in this report to meet housing needs in Winnipeg over the coming years echo recommendations that The Right to Housing Coalition have long put forward.

One of these policy implications is supporting the development of new rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing with supports.

- Specifically, the report estimates the need for an additional 20,743 RGI housing units over ten years to eliminate core housing need and homelessness, and address future population growth.
- Unlike market-based affordable housing, RGI housing is guaranteed to be affordable to the lowest income households including people experiencing homelessness because it ensures the tenant's rent is less than 30% of their income.
- In the last 5 years City of Winnipeg grant programs have supported the development of 3,432 non-market owned housing units (as of June 2025). Of these units, 44% rented at market rates, 34% rented at below market rates, and 21% (or 729 units) rented at RGI rates. When you add to this, the number of for-



profit owned housing units that the City of Winnipeg grant programs have supported, the percentages are skewed even more so in favour of market rates compared to RGI rates.

- We applaud the City of Winnipeg for its recent contributions to expanding the supply of non-market owned RGI housing in Winnipeg and urge it to ensure future contributions place greater emphasis on the development of RGI units as opposed to units rented at market and below market rates. This will ensure public investments are placed where they are most needed.
- We also urge the City of Winnipeg to support the development of RGI housing that is owned by public, non-profit, or co-op housing providers who intend to provide RGI housing in perpetuity. For-profit private providers of affordable and RGI housing often only need to meet affordability requirements for a specified number of years after which they are allowed to increase rents resulting in a loss of low-rent units.

Another policy implication identified in the report that The Right to Housing Coalition has long urged governments to prioritize is the need for policies to maintain and preserve Winnipeg's existing stock of non-market owned RGI housing and naturally occurring affordable housing.

- Efforts to expand the supply of RGI housing will not result in net gains if we fail to prevent the loss of existing RGI units at the same time. There are social housing units in Manitoba that sit vacant because of inadequate investment in capital repairs and maintenance. The HNA notes that Manitoba has the highest social housing vacancy rate in Canada, likely due to being in need of repairs.
- We urge the City of Winnipeg to join us in advocating to the Manitoba government to invest \$1.5B by 2034 to bring existing buildings up to standard, as identified by the Manitoba Non-Profit Housing Association.
- When it comes to naturally occurring affordable housing in the for-profit private rental market, we know that rent increases cause a major loss of affordable rental housing in Winnipeg. This is due to loopholes in Manitoba's rent control system allowing unreasonable rent increases. In 2022, the Residential Tenancies Branch permitted an average rent increase of 9.8 percent (an increase of \$125 more a month), but documented increases have been as high as 30 percent, 50 percent and 126 percent in recent years.
- We urge the City of Winnipeg to join us in advocating to the Manitoba government to pass a bill that would introduce stronger rent regulations in Manitoba to help protect affordable rental housing.



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Finally, we appreciate that the HNA includes a section on gender-based housing considerations. It is critical that we recognize how women and gender-diverse people uniquely experience housing insecurity so that solutions can respond to their unique needs. WCWRC echoes the HNA's emphasis on the need for RGI housing for larger households given the lack of affordable units with 3+ bedrooms, and for populations most impacted by core housing need, which includes single-mother led households who experience the highest rate of core housing need. The report also calls for more safe transitional and supportive housing for people who have experienced gender-based violence. It is critical that these units are owned by non-market housing providers who offer RGI rents so they can be accessible to low-income women and gender-diverse people in perpetuity.

Yours Sincerely,

Lorie English
Executive Director
West Central Women's Resource Centre

