Human Rights Committee of Council

CITY OF WINNIPEG

The Human Rights Committee of Council acknowledges that we are gathered on Treaty One Territory and the homeland of the Red River Métis. We honour the Anishinaabe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene, and Métis Peoples, and honour the drinking water we receive from Shoal Lake 40, and hydro-electric power we receive from Treaty 5.

We acknowledge the Indigenous women, girls, and Two-Spirit, transgender, and gender-diverse people lost to violence in what the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls named a genocide. We honour survivors, families, and communities who continue to call for justice.

We recognize that safety is a fundamental human right. In alignment with the 231 Calls for Justice, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and Canada's obligations under CEDAW, we affirm that municipalities have a responsibility to act.

We acknowledge that trust in public systems — including policing, emergency response, and municipal services — has been deeply eroded, including here in Winnipeg. As a Human Rights Committee, we commit to advancing concrete action, accountability, and Indigenous-led solutions to uphold safety, dignity, and self-determination in all municipal systems.

This acknowledgement is a commitment to action.

Contents

1. Introduction 3
2. Strengthening Human Rights Structures and Governance 4
  2.1 Institutional Integration of Human Rights 4
  2.2 HRCC Referral Mechanism 5
3. Community Engagement, Education, and Dialogue 5
  3.1 Quarterly Dialogue Series 5
  3.2 Public Education & Communications 6
  3.3 Dialogue Series Continuation 6
4. Thematic Priorities for 2026 6
  4.1 Decolonizing Human Rights 6
  4.2 Gender-Based Violence Prevention & MMIWG2S Calls for Justice 7
  4.3 Accessibility, Universal Design & Disability Rights 8
  4.4 Housing, Homelessness & the Right to Adequate Shelter 9
  4.5 Newcomer Inclusion, Safety & Belonging 9
  4.6 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion, Safety & Equity 9
  4.7 Anti-Racism, Hate Prevention & Social Cohesion 9
  4.8 Social Determinants of Health & Community Well-being 10
  4.9 Human Rights Recognition, Awards & Civic Leadership 10
  4.10 International Engagement & Human Rights City Leadership 10
  4.11 Climate Justice, Biodiversity & Co-Governance 11
5. Age-Friendly Winnipeg & Older Adult Rights Focus 11
6. Political Barometer Project – University of Calgary 12
7. Conclusion 12
8. Priority Summary 13

Human Rights Committee of Council (HRCC)

2026 Draft Workplan

(Draft for discussion)

1. Introduction

Winnipeg's Human Rights Committee of Council (HRCC) advances Council's mandate to embed human rights across municipal governance, planning, and service delivery. As a designated Human Rights City, Winnipeg's work continues to be grounded in international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to name a few. These human rights obligations, in addition to the Human Rights Committee of Council terms of reference, shape the Committee's understanding of accountability, and the City's leadership role in promoting equity and justice.

This document provides context and detailed priorities to guide HRCC's work throughout 2026. It is proposed that the 2026 Workplan builds on multi-year commitments, community engagement from the *What We Heard Report*, and Council-directed initiatives. It focuses on improving how human rights are built into City decision-making by aligning policies, increasing transparency, working in partnership with Indigenous communities, and supporting meaningful participation from equity-deserving communities. The plan also reinforces Winnipeg's voluntary local review commitments through Peg City Indicators, integrating human rights measurement into sustainability data and municipal reporting.

The Human Rights Committee of Council (HRCC) enters 2026 with a strengthened mandate, informed by extensive community input gathered through the *What We Heard Report*, ongoing Council directives, and the City's commitments as a UCLG Human Rights City. The Committee's 2026 Workplan builds on multi-year initiatives, new partnerships, and the City's broader human rights and sustainability goals, while reinforcing institutional

structures that ensure accountability, transparency, and meaningful community impact.

This Workplan outlines the key priorities and deliverables for 2026. It is organized to help City Council and the public understand the Human Rights Committee of Council's strategic direction, the work of its subcommittees, its community partnerships, and efforts to create lasting change across City policies, budgeting, and service delivery.

2. Strengthening Human Rights Structures and Governance

Human rights structures are the foundation of a Human Rights City. In 2026, the Human Rights Committee of Council will focus on strengthening how the City aligns its work with international human rights standards. This will include building stronger partnerships, expanding human rights education, and working more closely with City Council.

This work will support decolonizing municipal governance, aligning sustainability efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals, and using international human rights treaties to help guide local decision-making.

Through strengthened structures, the HRCC aims to ensure that human rights considerations are not reactive or symbolic, but proactive, systematic, and measurable.

Directive: United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Sustainable Development Goals—particularly Goals 5 (Gender Equality), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 11 (Sustainable Cities), 13 (Climate Action), and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

2.1 Institutional Integration of Human Rights

- Deepen human rights work by engaging in meaningful next steps in conducting Winnipeg's second voluntary local review in collaboration with Peg City Indicators among other partners.
- Embed human rights considerations across municipal planning and policy.
- Trial the use of Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIAs) to strengthen monitoring and reporting structures, including quarterly updates and an expanded annual report to Council.

2.2 HRCC Referral Mechanism

- Promote systematic use of the HRCC referral mechanism to Standing Policy Committees and Council.
- Provide increased reporting to Council on guidance and follow-up tools to Standing Policy Committees to ensure that HRCC advice is tracked and integrated.
- Improve the annual report and other communication tools to clearly share Council-wide information on human rights considerations, priorities, and plans. This includes explaining how the public service consulted the Committee, how the Committee's advice was used in departmental decision-making, and ensuring follow-up and recognition of public service efforts.

3. Community Engagement, Education, and Dialogue

Community participation is a core human rights principle recognized across many international frameworks, which call for inclusive institutions and participatory decision-making. As a Human Rights City, Winnipeg commits to meaningful engagement that ensures residents—especially from equity deserving groups—shape municipal human rights priorities. The HRCC's community engagement work is rooted in accessibility, cultural safety, and shared ownership of solutions.

Directive: ICCPR, ICESCR, UNDRIP, and SDG 16

In 2026, the Committee will continue to deepen its multi-year commitment to dialogue-based engagement by expanding place-based conversations, strengthening communications tools, and ensuring transparent reporting back to communities and Council.

3.1 Quarterly Dialogue Series (with the exception of the 2026 writ/election period)

- Deliver four community-hosted dialogue sessions in neighbourhood-based settings.
- Focus on inclusion for Indigenous communities, newcomers, youth, disability advocates, ethno-cultural groups, and 2SLGBTQIA+ residents.
- Produce public reports summarizing findings and recommendations.

3.2 Public Education & Communications

- Expand earned media, social media, and research partnerships to increase awareness of municipal human rights initiatives, plans, and priorities.
- Issue annual summaries of dialogue themes, human rights trends, and local challenges and work.
- Develop plain-language briefings for the public service providers, community, and Council.

3.3 Dialogue Series Continuation

- Continuing the multi-year dialogue series launched in 2025, including thematic dialogues on housing, public safety, climate justice, economic equity, food security, and emergency management.
- Collaborate with Rainbow Resource Centre, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata, Harvest, Filipino Community, Iranian Community, Sudanese Community among others, and Compassionate Cities Network on co-hosted and/or collaborative events.

4. Thematic Priorities for 2026

HRCC's thematic priorities for 2026 reflect international human rights commitments, as well as national and local planning priorities:

4.1 Decolonizing Human Rights

Decolonizing human rights remains central to HRCC's mandate. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) affirms the right of Indigenous peoples to be involved in decisions that affect them. Municipal governments, as the level of government closest to daily community life, have a responsibility to support these rights through shared decision-making, co-governance, and policies grounded in Indigenous cultures and knowledge.

In 2026, the HRCC will continue to strengthen partnerships with Indigenous leaders, as well as Indigenous knowledge keepers. The Committee will support and promote the continued co-development of the biodiversity policy and will explore emergency management approaches that reflect Indigenous laws, teachings, and relationship-based governance.

Directive: UNDRIP, the Indigenous Relations Division (IRD), Entitlement First Nations, Métis and Inuit governments, and Indigenous organizations such as Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata and the Indigenous Executive Circle.

- Advance co-development and co-governance structures and initiatives with Indigenous governments and leaders.
- Initiated in 2025, strengthen relationships by partnering on joint learning activities with human rights organizations in the Philippines and Korea.

4.2 Gender-Based Violence Prevention & MMIWG2S Calls for Justice

In 2026, the HRCC will continue to operationalize the City of Winnipeg's human rights and reconciliation obligations through a trauma-informed, rights-based framework grounded in Indigenous self-determination and the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

This work will prioritize dignity, safety, and systemic accountability by embedding survivor-centered approaches into municipal policy, public education, and service delivery. Recognizing the ongoing impacts of colonial violence and intergenerational trauma, the HRCC will advance coordinated, prevention-focused strategies that reduce harm, strengthen trust in public institutions, and uphold the inherent rights of Indigenous women, girls, Two-Spirit, and gender-diverse people.

2026 Priority Actions

- **Deepen Indigenous-led collaboration**
  Strengthen formal partnerships with IRD, and Indigenous-led organizations including, Giganawenmanaanig, Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, and AFN (Assembly of First Nations) to ensure community expertise, lived experience, and cultural knowledge guide implementation. Decision-making processes will reflect principles of free, prior, and informed participation, accountability, and shared governance.
- **Expand trauma-informed public education**
  Broaden the reach of the *Can You See Us?* campaign to advance

public awareness of gender-based violence, systemic discrimination, and collective responsibility. Educational initiatives will center survivor safety, reduce stigma, and promote bystander accountability while reinforcing that safety is a human right.

- **Advance safety in public spaces, nightlife, and transit**
  Implement coordinated safety measures grounded in prevention, cultural safety, and trauma-informed practice. This includes strengthening training for frontline staff, improving environmental design and reporting mechanisms, and embedding rights-based safety standards across municipal systems.
- **Align with international human rights frameworks**
  Strengthen partnership with UN Safe Cities to situate Winnipeg's efforts within global best practices for gender-responsive urban safety, ensuring measurable progress toward safer, inclusive, and equitable public spaces.

The HRCC will advance the City's obligation to uphold human rights not as aspirational commitments, but as enforceable standards requiring systemic action. Through Indigenous-led solutions, trauma-informed implementation, and measurable accountability mechanisms, Winnipeg will move toward a municipal model where safety, equity, and dignity are actively protected—particularly for those most impacted by colonial and gender-based violence.

4.3 Accessibility, Universal Design & Disability Rights

Disability rights are affirmed in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), which highlight accessibility, inclusion, and equal participation. Municipal governments play a critical role in creating barrier-free environments and ensuring access to public services.

In 2026, HRCC will continue advancing accessibility as a cornerstone of human rights governance. This includes supporting Council-directed accessibility initiatives, strengthening universal design practices, and ensuring that residents with disabilities, especially Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities, help shape City policies and emergency preparedness systems.

4.4 Housing, Homelessness & the Right to Adequate Shelter

The right to housing is recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and reinforced by SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities) and SDG 1 (No Poverty). Winnipeg's housing and homelessness crisis underscores the urgency for a human right–based approach rooted in dignity, equity, and community safety.

In 2026, HRCC will deepen partnerships with advocacy organizations, Indigenous service providers, among other partners, to advance housing as a human right. This includes a Housing Dialogue and contributing to systems-level work on homelessness prevention with partners.

4.5 Newcomer Inclusion, Safety & Belonging

International human rights law affirms the rights of migrants, refugees, and newcomers to safety, participation, and non-discrimination. Locally, newcomer communities remain vulnerable to exploitation, racism, language barriers, and exclusion. In 2026, the HRCC will expand partnerships with Immigration Partnership Winnipeg and community-based agencies to promote newcomer inclusion through public education, safety campaigns, and culturally grounded events.

4.6 2SLGBTQIA+ Inclusion, Safety & Equity

The Yogyakarta Principles and SDG 10 reinforce the right to live free from discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression. Winnipeg, as a Human Rights City, affirms these protections and commits to strengthening inclusive policies and community partnerships.

HRCC's 2025 partnership work with Rainbow Resource Centre will continue by advancing 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion through research, dialogue initiatives, and collaboration. In 2026 this will include structured knowledge sharing with the City, community and council.

4.7 Anti-Racism, Hate Prevention & Social Cohesion

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) and SDG 16 call for strong institutions that actively

prevent hate, discrimination, and violence. Municipal leadership is essential in building social cohesion and counteracting rising hate incidents.

In 2026, HRCC will strengthen monitoring, education, and policy development related to anti-racism and hate prevention, including supporting the creation of Winnipeg's first municipal hate prevention strategy.

4.8 Social Determinants of Health & Community Well-being

Human rights to health, housing, food, and adequate living standards are recognized under ICESCR and embedded within SDGs 1, 2, and 3. Addressing the social determinants of health requires collaboration across governments and community sectors.

Throughout 2026, HRCC will continue working with Harvest and Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata along with partnership organizations building on the phase 1 work in 2025 to address food security, income equity, community safety, and the underlying conditions that shape health disparities.

4.9 Human Rights Recognition, Awards & Civic Leadership

Celebrating human rights leadership is consistent with SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) and strengthens civic participation, volunteerism, and community innovation.

In 2026, HRCC will explore existing awards and recognition opportunities that highlight outstanding contributions to advancing human rights. This will include reconnecting with HRCC alumni, community volunteers, and individuals or organizations demonstrating exceptional leadership to better understand what recognition options already exist and, how HRCC could support or participate in them.

4.10 International Engagement & Human Rights City Leadership

As part of the global Human Rights Cities movement, Winnipeg participates in international exchanges grounded in the UDHR, UNDRIP, the SDGs, and shared municipal best practices.

HRCC will continue international engagement in 2026, including contributing to the World Human Rights Cities Forum, sharing Winnipeg's human rights budgeting and evaluation tools abroad, and advancing knowledge exchange with partner cities.

4.11 Climate Justice, Biodiversity & Co-Governance

Climate justice is recognized in SDGs 13 (Climate Action) and 15 (Life on Land) and is inseparable from Indigenous rights under UNDRIP. Municipal climate governance must prioritize equity, intergenerational justice, and Indigenous leadership.

In 2026, HRCC—supported by a dedicated Human Rights Committee of Council Climate Intern in partnership with Climate Action, will continue co-development work with Indigenous partners on biodiversity, climate adaptation, and nature-based solutions. Dialogue sessions will highlight Indigenous-led climate governance, emergency management maturity, and food sovereignty.

5. Age-Friendly Winnipeg & Older Adult Rights Focus

An age-friendly city aligns with guiding principles, which emphasize inclusion, accessibility, and healthy, connected communities for all generations.

Winnipeg's older adults consistently highlight safety, mobility, housing, transportation, accessibility, and social inclusion as priority human rights concerns.

In 2026, HRCC will continue work to elevate Age-Friendly initiatives as a standalone priority, in alignment with City Council direction and the motion directing updates to the Age-Friendly Guide. The Committee will:

- Lead Age-Friendly consultations, surveys, and engagement sessions across neighbourhoods.
- Develop updated Age-Friendly community-informed materials.

- Partner with community organizations, in particular ethno-cultural organizations in community serving older adults to identify emerging human rights concerns.
- Support accessibility upgrades in partnership with Council on public spaces and City buildings, including advancing the Wheelchair Accessibility Symbol.
- Consider recommendations on where cross-department collaboration can work to ensure Age-Friendly principles better inform municipal planning, programming, and infrastructure.

This focus recognizes aging as a human rights issue and reaffirms Winnipeg's commitment to creating an accessible, inclusive, and supportive city for all older adults.

Directive: World Health Organization's Global Age-Friendly Cities Framework, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, and SDGs 3 and 11.

6. Political Barometer Project – University of Calgary

HRCC will support the development of a working relationship with the University of Calgary regarding its Political Barometer Project, which examines public attitudes, democratic trust, and civic engagement.

This partnership would strengthen HRCC's evidence-based approach by exploring Winnipeg-specific political and human rights metrics. The Committee will:

- Support the foundation of a working relationship with the University of Calgary regarding their political barometer project
- Explore opportunities for new research regarding local/Winnipeg political metrics
- Collect and collate data to support HRCC objectives and bring in-depth perspectives to human rights concerns for the City of Winnipeg

7. Conclusion

Winnipeg's commitment to becoming a leading Human Rights City is both ambitious and essential. The HRCC's 2026 Workplan strengthens municipal

structures, deepens community partnerships, and advances equity across all areas of civic life. The priorities outlined in this plan reflect the voices of residents, the direction of Council, and some of the urgent human rights challenges facing our city.

Throughout 2026, the HRCC will continue fostering inclusive governance, transparent reporting, collaborative problem-solving, and meaningful participation from communities most affected by human rights inequities. The Committee's role remains clear: to help ensure that human rights considerations are embedded in municipal decision-making, that our systems become more just and accountable, and that Winnipeg continues to grow as compassionate, sustainable, and rights respecting city.

Priority Summary

1. Advancing Human Rights Across City Government

In 2026, HRCC will advance Winnipeg's role as a Human Rights City by ensuring that embedding human rights are championed by City governance, planning, and service delivery. The Workplan builds on community input, Council direction, and international commitments to strengthen accountability, transparency, and meaningful participation across City decision-making.

2. Strengthening Human Rights Structures and Governance

HRCC will strengthen municipal systems that ensure human rights are consistently considered in policies, planning, and decisions. Priorities include aligning City work with international human rights standards, strengthening reporting and accountability, improving how HRCC advice is integrated into Council and departmental decision-making, and building internal capacity for human rights governance.

3. Community Engagement, Education, and Dialogue

HRCC will deepen its commitment to inclusive, accessible, and dialogue-based community engagement. Through ongoing conversations, public education, and transparent reporting, the Committee will ensure residents, especially equity-deserving communities, shape municipal human rights priorities and solutions.

4. Thematic Priorities for 2026

HRCC will focus on key human rights issues where municipal leadership can advance equity, safety, and inclusion. These priorities include decolonizing human rights and co-governance with Indigenous partners; preventing gender-based violence; advancing accessibility and disability rights; addressing housing and homelessness; promoting newcomer inclusion; supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ equity; preventing racism and hate; strengthening community well-being; advancing climate justice; supporting civic leadership; and contributing to international Human Rights City efforts.

5. Age-Friendly Winnipeg & Older Adult Rights

HRCC will elevate Age-Friendly Winnipeg as a standalone priority, recognizing aging as a human rights issue. The Committee will lead engagement with older adults, strengthen partnerships, support accessibility improvements, and ensure Age-Friendly principles are better reflected across City planning, services, and infrastructure.

6. Data Gathering and Partnership Building

Strengthening democratic trust, civic engagement, and data-informed governance is essential to advancing Winnipeg's commitments as a Human Rights City. By partnering with the University of Calgary and leveraging research-based political metrics, HRCC can better understand public perceptions of equity, inclusion, and institutional accountability. This work supports more transparent, evidence-based decision-making and helps ensure that municipal human rights efforts are responsive to community experience.