Minutes – Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development – April 16, 2026

REPORTS

Item No. 10 Establishing a Reserve Fund to Support the Prevention of Residential Building Vacancy

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and recommended to Council:

1. That the Winnipeg Public Service be granted an extension of time to July 3, 2026 to report back with a plan to establish a new reserve to be funded by Empty Building Fee revenue that supports the use of the taking title without compensation enforcement tool, prevention of residential building vacancy, re-occupancy of vacant buildings, and re-development of vacant and derelict buildings for housing.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Dobson,

That the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service be concurred in and forwarded to the Executive Policy Committee and Council.

Carried

COUNCIL DECISION:

On December 4, 2025, Council adopted the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development which included the following:

10. That the Public Service report back in April 2026 with a plan to establish a new reserve to be funded by Empty Building Fee revenue that supports the use of the taking title without compensation enforcement tool, prevention of residential building vacancy, re-occupancy of vacant buildings, and re-development of vacant and derelict buildings for housing.

NOTICE OF EXTENSION REQUEST

Title: Vacancy to Vitality - Strategic Policy Options to Address Vacant and Derelict Properties

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head
J. Stewart	C. Fernandes

RECOMMENDATION

The Public Service requests that an extension to the July 3, 2026, meeting on Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development be granted on the following:

10. That the Public Service report back in April 2026 with a plan to establish a new reserve to be funded by Empty Building Fee revenue that supports the use of the taking title without compensation enforcement tool, prevention of residential building vacancy, re-occupancy of vacant buildings, and re-development of vacant and derelict buildings for housing.

REASON FOR THE EXTENSION

Additional time is required to complete interdepartmental review and confirm responsibilities to ensure a thorough and accurate report to Council.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY

On December 18, 2025, Council concurred in the recommendation of the Standing Policy Committee on Property and Development and adopted the following:

1. That the City enter into, execute, and deliver a partnership agreement with Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation, Purpose Construction, and Build Inc., and other social enterprises to increase affordable housing that emphasizes homeownership in Winnipeg's housing improvement zones.

2. That authority be delegated to the Chief Administrative Officer to negotiate and approve the terms and conditions of the partnership agreement in Recommendation 1, in accordance with this report, and such other terms and conditions deemed necessary by the City Solicitor/Director of Legal Services to protect the interests of the City.

3. That the partnership agreement initially target the William Whyte neighbourhood on a pilot basis.

4. That a City of Winnipeg owned vacant lot located at 400 Pritchard Avenue be transferred to Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation as an initial property to pilot the partnership agreement.

5. That the Chief Administrative Officer optimize the Public Service's use of the enforcement tool known as the "taking title without compensation" as a key mechanism to enforce compliance with the city's Vacant Buildings By-law (79/2010) and Vacant and Derelict Buildings By-law.

6. That the Province of Manitoba be requested to make the necessary legislative amendments to improve the efficiency of administering the taking title without compensation process by allowing for substitutional service.

7. That the eligibility period for properties to enter tax sale be reduced from the existing three years in arrears to two years, thereby reducing the duration of the overall tax sale process from approximately five years to four, effective January 1, 2027, and subject to financial review as part of the 2027 annual budget update process.

8. That the structure for the existing Empty Building Fee be revised from a flat fee of 2 percent of assessed property value per year beginning after a third Schedule A inspection, to 1 percent of assessed property value per year beginning after the first Schedule A inspection, and that the fee increase 1 percent per year to a maximum of 5 percent of assessed property value in year five of vacancy and beyond.

9. That the Director of Legal Services be directed to amend the relevant By-Laws and fee schedules, in accordance with Recommendation 8, and bring same directly to Council by way of communication within 30 days for all three readings.

10. That the Public Service report back in April 2026 with a plan to establish a new reserve to be funded by Empty Building Fee revenue that supports the use of the taking title without compensation enforcement tool, prevention of residential building vacancy, re-occupancy of vacant buildings, and re-development of vacant and derelict buildings for housing.

11. That the Public Service review the Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve (HRIR) and report back in December 2026 with recommendations to strengthen programs funded under the HRIR, including ways reserve funds could further support the prevention of residential building vacancy, re-occupancy of vacant residential buildings, and/or redevelopment of sites of vacant and derelict buildings for housing.

12. That the Chief Administrative Officer formalize and implement an acquisition program that establishes the conditions under which the City of Winnipeg would accept title to distressed residential properties from owners willing to transfer their residential property to the City of Winnipeg.

13. That the Public Service actively promote the acquisition program as an option available to owners of distressed residential properties in housing improvement zones as a means to supply property for the partnership with Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation.

14. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.