March 14th, 2024

JOINT STATEMENT
City of Winnipeg 2024/2028 Budget

Members of the Executive Policy Committee

As you approach your vote on the next four-year budget cycle, we ask that you consider the City's core purposes as laid out in Section 5 of the City of Winnipeg Charter Act. These are:

a) To provide good government for the city;
b) To provide services, facilities or other things that council considers necessary or desirable for all or part of the city;
c) To develop and maintain safe, orderly, viable and sustainable communities;
d) To promote and maintain the health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants.

We the undersigned call on you, as the elected government for the City of Winnipeg, to fulfill these responsibilities through investing fully in your commitments to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, the MMIWG2S+ Calls for Justice, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Newcomer Welcome and Inclusion Policy, Newcomer Youth Employment Strategy, Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak – Indigenous Youth Strategy, Kikinaw Oma Strategy, the Community Energy Investment Roadmap, the Transit Master Plan and the like. Specifically, we call on all Councilors to look beyond your specific ward concerns and more fully consider the needs of the City as a whole.

We recognize your Charter authority to determine what is deemed "necessary or desirable", however, we urge you to prioritize the concept of "good government". Effective governance should be evidence-based economically efficient strategies aimed at addressing the social and economic issues confronting Winnipeg. Despite some investment in curative approaches, the City's tendency has been to prioritize managing symptoms over investing in long-term solutions. For example, the current draft budget for 2024/2025 alone proposes 42%, or $567,000,000, of its operating budget be spent on police, fire and paramedic services. This strategy has fallen short in fulfilling the Charter responsibility to "promote and maintain the health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants."

We acknowledge the fiscal restraints the City faces. Nonetheless, there are alternative methods to generate revenue, many of which are more progressive and equitable than simply resorting to flat percentage property tax increases, frontage levies and fees. We are celebrating our 150th year as an incorporated entity. What worked for some in the past, may not work today and into the future for the City, and all of its inhabitants, to prosper and grow. Should Charter amendments be required, we are ready to support those efforts.

We understand there are many competing priorities for the $1.36 billion the City will spend on operations in 2024/2025. Some individuals signing here may encounter competition with others for the resources essential to carry out their important work. However, our collective voices are calling on you to reject the old notion that the City has no responsibility to deliver the services

necessary to meet both the social and economic needs of its inhabitants as the Charter clearly stipulates that you do.

Truly,

Aurora Family Services
Bike Winnipeg
Cerebral Palsy Association of Manitoba
Community Education Development Association
Community Financial Counselling Services (CFCS)
Fearless R2W
Giganawenimaanaanig
Harvest Manitoba
Healthy Muslim Families
Independent Jewish Voices-Winnipeg
Islamic Social Services Association (ISSA)
Kikinaw Oma Strategy
Main Street Project
Make Poverty History Manitoba
Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO)
Manitoba Kairos
Manitoba Women for Women of South Sudan Inc.
Manitoba Harm Reduction Network (MHRN)
Mennonite Central Committee Manitoba (MCCM)
NEEDS Inc.
Northwestern Ontario
Old St. Boniface Residents Association
Point Douglas Residents Committee (PDRC)
Resource Assistance for Youth (RAY Inc.)
SEED Winnipeg Inc.
The Native Clan Organization (NCO)
West Broadway Community Organization (WBCO)
West Central Women’s Resource Centre (WCWRC)