The Chamber
The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce

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June 15, 2026

City of Winnipeg
510 Main Street
Winnipeg, MB
R3B 1B9

Re: Housing Accelerator Fund – Semi-Annual Status Update and Future Program Plans

Dear Councillors:

On behalf of The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express our support for a New Vacant Building Grant. This initiative presents an opportunity for a meaningful response to address a gap in Winnipeg's efforts to build its housing stock.

Developers working in this space have told us that recent changes to vacant building fees, combined with the administrative burden associated with these projects, have made the rehabilitation of vacant buildings significantly less attractive. To date, the City has collected $878,710.70 in empty building fees – funds that, in the absence of adequate incentives, have not translated into meaningful reductions in vacancy.

This report outlines the scale of the issue, identifying 535 vacant buildings with active orders under the Vacant Building By-law. Left unaddressed, these properties contribute to reduced housing supply and can raise community safety considerations, placing additional costs on the City through issues such as fires and emergency responses.

While this grant will not create "net new" units, the City not only met but surpassed annual HAF targets in 2024 and 2025, and this funding will contribute to revitalization, a priority our members identified when developing our Community Safety Policy Position.

We encourage Councillors to support this proposal as a step toward bringing more housing units back into use. The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce welcomes the opportunity to discuss how this grant is rolled out to ensure it is effective and easy for businesses to access.

Thank you for your attention.



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