

2025 Annual Report

Human Rights Committee of Council (HRCC)

City of Winnipeg

2025

TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND COMMITMENT TO ACTION

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 recognize our shared responsibilities rooted in treaty relationships.

We honour the water from Shoal Lake 40 and hydroelectric power from Treaty 5. We acknowledge the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and affirm that safety is a fundamental human right.

In alignment with the Calls for Justice, United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and international human rights obligations, we recognize that municipalities have a responsibility to act.

This acknowledgement is a commitment to action.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



2025 was a defining year for the Human Rights Committee of Council—and for Winnipeg as a growing Human Rights City. Through public dialogue, policy leadership, and global engagement, we elevated human rights from principle to practice—ensuring residents of Winnipeg directly shape how this city governs, plans, and delivers services.

As a Human Rights Committee of Council, we listened, showed up, and acted. I want to thank the many organizations, advocates, knowledge keepers, accessibility leaders, youth, community volunteers, and public service staff who worked alongside the Committee this year.

I want to recognize my Council colleagues and the Mayor for supporting initiatives that help move human rights principles into the everyday work of local government. The Compassionate Cities team deserves a great deal of thanks for their enthusiastic partnership. I also want to thank my colleague Markus Chambers who, like Brian Bowman before him, has been a longstanding advocate of human rights change.

At the beginning of the year, residents told us clearly what mattered and helped us set plans and priorities in line with our strategic plan. Their input was numerous and varied, but some highlights included direction to:

- Formalize Winnipeg as a Human Rights City and build accountability tools
- Expand public education on the expression of human rights at the municipal level
- Strengthen community outreach and partnerships, including with Council
- Advance equity, accessibility, and inclusion, including work to decolonize human rights and respond concretely to the anti-trans protests of 2024

We took that direction seriously and moved it forward. Here are some reflections on the top 10 wins we achieved together as the Human Rights Committee of Council in 2025. Winnipeg is not just talking about human rights—we are building them into how this city works. While there is much more to do, what follows is an annual report that underscores outcomes and impact.

In 2026, the work continues: deepening accountability mechanisms, advancing Age-Friendly work, strengthening the research partnership with Rainbow Resource Centre, and expanding community partnerships across Winnipeg.

Councillor Sherri Rollins

TOP 10 WINS IN 2025

1. Positioned Winnipeg as a Human Rights City
We advanced Winnipeg's leadership locally, nationally, and internationally, bringing the City of Winnipeg's longstanding work plan to the global stage and strengthening our identity as a city grounded in human rights.

2. Launched foundational work establishing a Formal Referral Mechanism
For the first time, Council can formally refer matters to the HRCC—cementing our role as a trusted advisory body and strengthening accountability.

3. Elevated Public Voice into Policy
Through Human Rights & Compassionate Cities dialogues and broader community engagement, we brought more residents, experts, and partners together to directly inform and influence the City's municipal human rights work.



Human Rights Café Conversation helped refine priorities and plans for 2025

4. Expanded Public Education and Awareness
We increased visibility of human rights issues through campaigns, events, and partnerships—making the work more accessible to residents.

5. Delivered a City-Wide Human Rights Dialogue Series
We brought together community, experts, and decision-makers to address food security, accessibility, safety, emergency services, and inclusion.

6. Advanced Accessibility in Real, Practical Ways
From snow-clearing reforms to emergency preparedness for the Deaf community, we removed barriers in how the City delivers services.

7. Strengthened Indigenous Partnerships and Decolonizing Work
We supported Indigenous-led solutions in partnership with Giganawenimaanaanig, extending the reach of their efforts on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, including action against human trafficking in Winnipeg.

8. Led on Human Dignity and Accessible Public Space
We championed dignity-centred infrastructure and services, recognizing that access to basic needs is a human right, and launched measurable online data with the Mayor and public service that can be tracked over time.

9. Elevated Winnipeg on the Global Stage
From Gwangju to Geneva, Winnipeg contributed to global human rights leadership—bringing local work in Winnipeg to international forums.

10. Advanced Accountability Through Governance
We embedded human rights more directly into decision-making by strengthening advisory pathways, community accountability, and the Committee's role in municipal governance.



Mayor and Council, 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHAIR



Through meaningful dialogue, stronger partnerships, and practical action, the Committee continued advancing human rights in ways that directly impact residents across our city, with a greater emphasis on dialogue and partnerships.

I want to recognize the work undertaken to elevate public voices into policy discussions, strengthen accountability mechanisms, expand accessibility initiatives, and deepen partnerships.

This year also positioned Winnipeg on the global stage, demonstrating that municipalities have an important role to play in advancing human rights locally and internationally. From community-based dialogues to international engagement, the work of the Committee has helped strengthen Winnipeg's reputation as a city committed to equity, dignity, and belonging.

Thank you to the Committee members, community partners, City staff, and residents whose collaboration and leadership made this progress possible.

I look forward to continuing this work together in 2026 as we deepen accountability, strengthen partnerships, and continue building a more inclusive Winnipeg for all.

Councillor Markus Chambers

MESSAGE FROM THE COORDINATOR



It has been an honour to serve as the Coordinator for the Human Rights Committee of Council since 2021. Over the past several years, the Committee has experienced significant growth, and 2025 proved to be one of the most remarkable years of progress and transformation.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our Chair, Councillor Sherri Rollins, whose leadership has played an instrumental role in strengthening the Committee. Under her guidance, we have seen meaningful momentum toward our shared goals. This year marked several important milestones, including formally establishing Winnipeg's recognition as a Human Rights City, strengthening relationships with international colleagues, including partners connected with the United Nations—and continuing to uphold our mandate through a wide range of public dialogue and educational initiatives. We also developed and implemented a formal referral mechanism, further strengthening the Committee's ability to respond to community concerns and advance equity within the city.

I am deeply proud of the work undertaken by the Committee and its subcommittees throughout 2025. I would like to thank the Chair of the Equity and Diversity Subcommittee, Cara McCaskill, for her leadership in advancing the subcommittee's strategic plan and guiding the development and implementation of a clear and actionable work plan. I would also like to extend appreciation to outgoing Chair Angie Conrad for her leadership in advancing the strategic priorities of the Accessibility and Inclusion Subcommittee.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to the Committee members who voted to have me continue serving as Coordinator for another year. I am truly honoured by your confidence and grateful for the opportunity to continue supporting this important work.

I am incredibly proud of the progress accomplished this year and grateful to all Committee members, partners, and community leaders who contributed their time and expertise. I look forward to working alongside the newly appointed 2026 members as we continue to remove barriers, achieve important milestones, and further position Winnipeg as a leader among human rights cities.

Aly Raposo

1. MANDATE AND ROLE OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

The Human Rights Committee of Council serves three core functions:

Advocacy

Acting as a **vocal advocate for human rights**:

- Locally through community engagement and campaigns
- Nationally through partnerships
- Internationally through global forums

Public Response

Addressing **community concerns related to human rights**, including:

- Accessibility and disability rights
- Age-friendly policy
- Safety, dignity, and peace

Advisory Role

Providing guidance to the Mayor and Council on:

- Emerging human rights issues
- Legislative alignment
- Policy development
- Civic operations

"Municipal government is where human rights are experienced daily—through services, infrastructure, and community safety."

2. PUBLIC PERSPECTIVE: WHAT WE HEARD IN 2025

The January 14 Café Conversation was incredibly valuable in supporting how we finalized and moved forward with the Human Rights Committee of Council strategic plan.

Key Priorities Identified

Formalizing Winnipeg as a Human Rights City

Residents called for clear recognition and leadership in line with Human Rights Cities and United Cities and Local Governments action.

Developing a Human Rights Framework and Accountability Tools

Participants expressed the need for a consistent framework to guide policy and accountability, including Human Rights Impact Assessments (HRIA) and a formalized way to access the Human Rights Committee of Council and work with decision-makers in both administration and Council.

Strengthening Public Awareness and Education

Making human rights visible, accessible, and understood.

Enhancing Community Engagement

Bringing conversations directly into communities.

Advancing Equity, Diversity, and Accessibility

Embedding inclusion across all City services.

"Residents didn't just ask for engagement—they asked for accountability."

3. GOVERNANCE AND ADVISORY IMPACT

Establishment of a Formal Referral Mechanism

In 2025, HRCC strengthened its institutional role through a formal referral process.

Purpose

- Enable Council and Committees to refer matters for HRCC review
- Strengthen evidence-based, equity-informed decision-making

First Referral

- Renewal of the Age-Friendly Winnipeg Action Plan

Impact

- Formalized HRCC's advisory role
- Improved responsiveness to public concerns
- Embedded human rights into governance structures



Dr. Kristi Kenyon is the Director of the Human Rights Program and Associate Professor at the University of Winnipeg. Her particular interest is in the role that non-governmental organizations and social movements play in promoting, protecting, and interpreting human rights and health. She has been instrumental in linking the HRCC with a global network.

Winnipeg's Human Rights Dialogues

presented by

WINNIPEG HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

Establishing a Refferal Mehcanism and Age- Friendly Winnipeg

To strengthen HRCC's integration within City governance, a formal referral mechanism was developed. This allows City Council, the Mayor's Office, and Standing Policy Committees to formally refer items to HRCC for consideration, advice, or collaboration.

We are pleased to share that the first official referral was received from the Executive Policy Committee (EPC), moved by Councillor Janice Lukes. The referral pertains to the development of an updated version of the 2014 Age-Friendly Winnipeg Action Plan. This milestone reflects the City's increasing recognition of HRCC as a vital advisory body in shaping equitable policy.



Age-Friendly Communities: encourage healthy, active aging by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security. The Age-Friendly Initiative integrates the social environment - the person part, with the built environment - the place part, and strives to change the culture of all organizations in a community, to improve inclusivity, and support people do the things they need and want to do. MASC is guided by the work of the WHO and other Canadian organizations that advocate for the needs and interest of older people. MASC continues to develop cooperative and collaborative relationships with many organizations, to enhance program and service delivery at the local, regional and provincial levels.

-Connie Newman, Executive Director
Manitoba Association of Senior Communities

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL
DIALOGUE SERIES

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Human Rights Dialogue Series

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL DIALOGUE SERIES

The HRCC hosted a city-wide dialogue series. The topics of human rights education included:

- Decolonizing human rights
- Showcasing Winnipeg's Leadership at the United Nations and within Peace & further democracy
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
- Partnership with Compassionate Cities
- Food security as a human right
- Accessibility and emergency preparedness
- Gender-based violence
- Age-friendly communities

Impact

- Strengthened City-community relationships
- Generated actionable insights to propel additional human rights work and focus
- Supported collaborative solutions



Mayor Gillingham speaks at the Human Rights Dialogue Launch alongside, Hilda Anderson Pyrz, Brennan Manoakeesick, Somia Sadaq, Reuben Garang, Matthew Cutler, Councillor Sherri Rollins, and Devon Clunis.

Human Rights Leadership in Dialogue

The photograph on the previous page captures a defining moment from the launch of the Human Rights City Dialogues in 2025 at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. More than a gathering, the event represented Winnipeg's commitment to bringing local, national, and international human rights leadership into conversation with residents, community organizations, and decision-makers.

The evening featured a gallery walk, panel discussion, and celebration of Winnipeg's partnership with Compassionate Cities International. It brought together leaders who had participated in United Nations work spanning Indigenous rights, newcomer inclusion, peacebuilding, poverty reduction, community development, and global advocacy.

Among those featured were Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, Chair and President of the National Family and Survivor Circle, who spoke about her advocacy for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit People and her recent work at the United Nations. She reflected on the ongoing challenges of implementing the National Action Plan and the need for continued accountability and action from all levels of government.

Brennan Manoakeesick of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) and Global Affairs expert on United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples shared insights from his participation at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York, highlighting the importance of Indigenous voices shaping local, national, and international policy discussions.

The dialogue also included Somia Sadaq, founder of Narratives, global peace advocate, and author; Reuben Garang, Director of Immigration Partnership Winnipeg; and Matthew Cutler, President and CEO of United Way Winnipeg. Together, they offered perspectives on belonging, reconciliation, migration, poverty reduction, community resilience, and the shared responsibility of building inclusive communities to advance human rights in the City.

The significance of this gathering? Connecting local action to global human rights movements. We are a Human Rights City when we gather to work on meaningful progress whether as diverse leaders, communities, or institutions, we can listen, challenge one another, and create a more just and compassionate city.



Devol Clunis Author and Founder of ONE Story of Hope and Chief of the Winnipeg Police Service (2012-2016) Championed the partnership between Human Rights Committee of Council and Compassionate Cities along with Gary Senft.



Mr. William Hammond (Youth Symphony Orchestra) performed movements from the Dragonetti double bass concerto and Vivaldi Cello Sonata No. 3.

The gallery walk (pictured below) highlights the work of the citizen committee on human rights across the City of Winnipeg including the Age-Friendly Initiative launched in 2025 and continuing throughout 2026, accessibility work on snow clearing and more.





Tammy Christianson Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre and Vincent Bartletta Harvest Manitoba Asihcikan Fire Side Chat was one of the most well attended dialogues in 2025. More food security action to come in 2026!

5. ADVANCING EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

Equity and Diversity Subcommittee

Focused on:

- Anti-racism
- 2SLGBTQIA+ inclusion
- Gender-based violence
- Housing and newcomer support

Key Outcomes

- Expanded partnerships and research
    - State of the Queer Collaboration with Rainbow Resource Centre
    - Compassionate Cities Partnership
    - Giganawenimaanaanig Partnership and Action
    - Deaf Centre Emergency Preparedness Dialogue
    - Immigration Partnership Winnipeg Welcome Fair





Host Doug Momotiuk (Human Rights Committee of Council Accessibility Sub-committee) and Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Staff at the Emergency Preparedness Dialogue at the Deaf Centre.

6. ADVANCING ACCESSABILITY AND INCLUSION

Accessibility and Inclusion Subcommittee

Focused on:

- Built environment
- Transit and mobility
- Communication access

Key Achievements

- Snow clearing accessibility improvements
- Transit Plus engagement
- Emergency preparedness for Deaf community
- Improved service access and communication



The Forks North Partnership is leading a formal re-development process fueling direct community dialogue. Crucially, their team is engaging Indigenous business, and family members of Missing, Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The site is also a memorial site for the Fontaine family. Mayor Gillingham and subcommittee members were on hand to consider the plans for the built environment.

"Accessibility is about dignity, independence, and equal participation."

Message from the Chair

Over the course of the last year, the Equity and Diversity and Accessibility and Inclusion Subcommittees have crafted and begun work on an ambitious multi-year work plan. Our main areas of focus are around 2SLGBTQIA+ rights, gender-based violence, public education, and newcomer support, to name a few. We have been pleased to have held or have been part of numerous dialogue events over the last year and engaged in several partnerships that will help us to achieve our goals as subcommittees. I greatly look forward to the upcoming year, and all the exciting work we have coming up.

Thanks,

Cara McCaskill (she/her)

7. ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

“Can You See Us?” Campaign

A city-wide campaign raising awareness of human trafficking and exploitation.

Impact

- Increased public awareness
- Focused on protecting Indigenous women and vulnerable populations
- Red Dress Alert



Tina Keeper at the launch of the ‘Can You See Us? Look Closer’ campaign against exploitation.

8. PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

The Human Rights Committee of Council worked collaboratively and in partnership with many organizations. We would like to thank the following partners for extending their rights-based work in partnership with the Human Rights Committee of Council.

Climate Action and Resilience Committee (CARC), Community Emergency Advisory Committee, Winnipeg Committee for Safety, Winnipeg Food Council



All Speakers

Mayor Scott Gillingham (November 12, 2025)

Reuben Garang

Somia Sadiq

Devon Clunis

Brennan Manookeesik

Hilda Anderson-Pyrz

Matt Cuttler

Rylee Nepinak

Tammy Christensen

Vince Barletta

Councillor Emma Durrand Wood

Doug Momotiuk

Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Services

All Partnerships

United Way Winnipeg

Rainbow Resource Centre

Probe Research

Manitoba Harvest

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

Centre of Human Rights Research

Immigration Partnership Winnipeg

Manitoba Deaf Association

Winnipeg Fire and Paramedic Services

ECCOE Manitoba

Kitchen Table Talks

University of Winnipeg Sustainable Development

Africanada

All grant recipient organizations

Heartwood Healing

Candace House

Manitoba Harvest

Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre

Human Rights Symposium

Manitoba Harm Reduction Network

Winnipeg Youth Orchestra

Can You See Us Campaign

9. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Global Engagement

- **2025 World Human Rights Cities Forum (Gwangju)**
    - The World Human Rights Cities Forum has been held in Gwangju, Republic of Korea since 2011 as an annual event, with the aim of realizing the vision of a city of human rights.
    - City of Winnipeg was invited to speak on its Human Rights Cities work as part of a panel on Cities Against Violence along with Maysoun Dawood (Jenin, Palestine), Aung Myo Min (City of Yangon, Myanmar), Benjamin Macadangdang (City of Baguio), Dorian Rommens (Programme Specialist at UNESCO), and Kalus Starl (Director of the UNESCO Centre for Promotion of Human Rights at Local & Regional Levels and PhD from the University of Graz).
    - Special thanks to Benedetta Cosco, UCLG Policy Officer, and the Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law.
    - The forum placed a strong emphasis on the legacy of the 1980 uprising against martial law, marking a turning point in Korea's democratization.

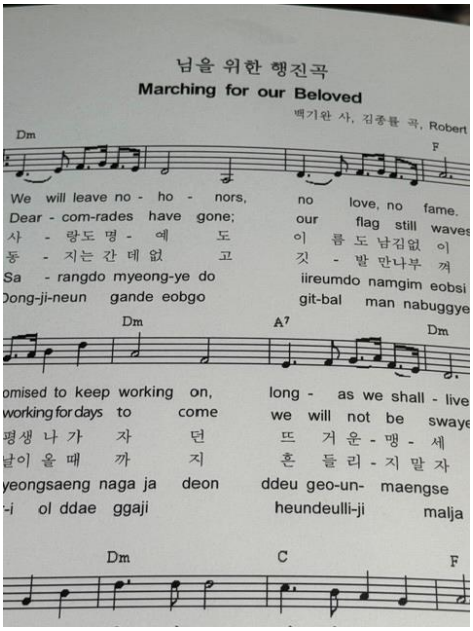
- **UN Engagement (Geneva): Local Governments and Human Rights at the Palais des Nations**
    - 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goal localization
    - UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights
    - Launch of the Human Rights Cities Guidance Framework for practical applications of human rights at the municipal level
    - City of Winnipeg was asked to present on Human Rights Budgeting and Social Procurement Policy

Impact

- Positioned Winnipeg as a global leader
- Shared local innovation internationally
- Strengthened global partnerships
- Gathered Winnipeggers who had been in Geneva in 2025



Winnipeg sign in Gwangju: 9,611 km.



Translation of Gwangju May 18th protest song.



Janica Puisto, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.



Monument and sacred fire recognizing the May 18 Democratic Uprising. There is a cemetery where the democratic movement is commemorated.

10. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The Human Rights Committee significantly restructured its budget to address new priorities and the revised work plan. Resources in 2025 supported:

- Local, national, and international work
- Public engagement and dialogues
- Community partnerships
- Policy and research development
- Awareness initiatives and grants

Approach

- Leveraged partnerships
- Aligned spending with community priorities
- Focused on measurable impact

Total Spent on Grants 7,760.00

Total Spent on Human Rights Dialogues and Learning Events 15,864.99

Total Spent on International Human Rights Work 6,885.95

