



January 11, 2022

Dear Mayor Gillingham:

I am writing regarding the upcoming four-year City of Winnipeg Budget. The Right to Housing Coalition urges Winnipeg Council to make a significant investment to address the housing and homelessness crisis housing in the four-year budget by *preserving* our existing safe, adequate, and affordable housing; *preventing* more people from being displaced into homelessness; and *producing* new rent-geared to housing for people currently experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity.

In Winnipeg, 35,760 households are experiencing core housing need – living in housing that is unaffordable, overcrowded, or in serious disrepair. Between 2011 and 2016 there was a net loss of 18,458 rental units priced below \$750/month. The 2022 Street Census found 1,256 people living without homes. The most-cited reason for their most recent entry into homelessness was insufficient income to afford housing in the city.

A healthy and prosperous city is one in which people of all incomes can find a place to live and be a part of the community. We urge you to support the following key measures:

1. Triple the amount of stable funding for housing initiatives aimed at preserving low-rent housing in Housing Improvement Zones and create an acquisition fund to acquire property and ready it for non-profit housing development. Currently, the City earmarks \$1M to the Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve.
2. Create a Housing Office within the CAO and increase capacity and coordination between City departments; double current housing staff and make these positions permanent. With increased capacity Winnipeg can take a consistent, proactive approach to addressing housing needs and maximize the benefits of opportunities like the Federal Rapid Housing Initiative when they arise.

When asked how to improve the quality of life in Winnipeg, the most common answer by respondents in the 2021 City Survey was to invest in housing and social programs. Ending homelessness and creating a city where everyone has a safe, adequate home they can afford is possible – and Winnipeggers want it to happen. I hope that you share this vision and will support the investments and mandates necessary to make it a reality.

Sincerely,
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