

# Housing

## Housing Stock Losses

Winnipeg has lost thousands of homes affordable to people living on low incomes and the new affordable and social housing currently in development will not replace them all. Between 2011 and 2016 there was a net loss of 18,458 rental units in the city priced below \$750 per month, including 976 subsidized units.

## Encouraging Signs

There are encouraging signs that Winnipeg is beginning to take its housing responsibility seriously. In 2022, the City approved the Affordable Housing Now (AHN) program, which relies on federal funding through the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. This program builds on the success of the federally-funded Rapid Housing Initiative, which

has funded 136 new affordable units in the city. Partnering with the federal government to deliver new affordable housing is a positive development, but the City can and must do more with its own resources and tools.

## Winnipeg could lead on safe, affordable housing.

Winnipeg's housing investments should support the development of new housing where rents are geared to income, as well as working to prevent the loss of private market units renting at rates affordable to people living on low-incomes. With political will behind effective policies and increases in the budget to maximize City capacity, Winnipeg can be a leader in creating a community where everyone has a safe home they can afford.

The Winnipeg Street Census notes that in 2018 there were more than 1,500 Winnipeggers without a home. An additional 34,625 households live in housing that is unaffordable, overcrowded, or in serious disrepair. Single parents, newcomers, Indigenous, and one-person households are most likely to be in core housing need.

Vancouver's SRA by-law requires that conversion, demolition, or alteration applications include a relocation plan and compensation for existing tenants and Toronto's rental housing demolition and conversion by-law further stipulates that affordable units must be replaced one-for-one with units renting at similar rents.

## The Alternative Municipal Budget proposes:

### 1. Increase HRIR Funding

The Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve (HRIR) funding supports housing programming led by Neighbourhood Renewal Corporations in Housing Improvement Zones. We propose that this fund be increased by \$21 million, for a total of \$22 million. This will allow for a contribution of \$15M each year to a reserve that can be used to purchase and/or transfer surplus City property and vacant or tax-foreclosed residential buildings to create social, non-profit, and Indigenous housing.

### 2. Creation of an Affordable Housing Office

Winnipeg has one of the lowest-staffed housing departments in major Canadian cities. We propose an

increase of funding to create an Affordable Housing Office with seven full-time employees to coordinate housing development and retention.

### 3. Housing replacement by-law

We propose the introduction of an affordable housing replacement by-law, requiring action from developers when there is conversion, demolition, or alteration of single room occupancy units. Winnipeg has suffered a tremendous loss of affordable housing through the demolition and conversion of affordable housing, particularly in *Single Room Accommodation* (SRA) units like rooming houses. In Winnipeg, a replacement by-law could potentially include opt-out fees in cases where developers cannot build replacement units, which could be recirculated into HRIR.

## Questions for your candidate:

- Housing policy is shared by all three levels of Government. What can the city of Winnipeg do to ensure that everyone has a safe home they can afford.
- Development of new affordable housing with rent geared to income will be key in addressing Winnipeg's housing challenges. What will you do to create more and truly affordable housing?
- How can the city retain existing affordable housing such as units renting in the private market at affordable rates?

**There are alternatives. Budgets are about choices.**  
See the Alternative Municipal Budget at [policyalternatives.ca](http://policyalternatives.ca)

