POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY

Phase I Stakeholder Engagement Summary

October 2020

Background

The Poverty Reduction Strategy will become the foundation for the City of Winnipeg's (City) work in poverty reduction going forward, by clarifying the City's role, identifying priority short and long-term actions, and setting out an implementation plan that includes review and renewal.

Municipal governments across Canada are taking steps to reduce poverty as the level of government closest to residents. In spring 2019, the City documented measures that related to poverty reduction. A total of 146 measures that the City was undertaking at the time were documented. The following spring, the City began working with members of the community to develop a Poverty Reduction Strategy to guide City work going forward.

Engagement

The City partnered with Make Poverty History Manitoba and the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council (an initiative of United Way Winnipeg) to co-create (create together) the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Representatives from each organization and the City formed a core working team to help to oversee and provide guidance on the project and to develop the strategy.

The City is also engaging with other poverty reduction stakeholders. Phase 1 of stakeholder engagement focused on setting the direction and prioritizing themes for the Poverty Reduction Strategy. Meetings were held with poverty reduction-related organizations and those with lived experience of poverty and homelessness throughout summer 2020. The meetings gathered input on draft content for the strategy, including:

- The vision and mission
- Potential approaches and Indigenous worldview framing
- Guiding principles
- Key themes and areas for action

A summary of Phase 1 stakeholder meetings is in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Stakeholder Meeting Details

Date	Meeting	Stakeholder Type	Attendees
June 25, 2020	Lived Experience Circle (Peer support group)	Lived experience stakeholders	8
June 25, 2020	Make Poverty History Manitoba	Coalition of stakeholder organizations and advocates	13
June 29, 2020	Winnipeg Committee for Safety	Stakeholder organization	11
July 6, 2020	Poverty Awareness and Action Committee	Lived experience stakeholders	14
July 20, 2020	Winnipeg Food Council	Stakeholder organization	11
August 14, 2020	Indigenous Relations Division - Reconciliation Leadership Circle	City staff from various departments	8

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What We Heard

The stakeholder meetings began with a presentation of the preliminary strategy content, including the draft vision and mission, approaches, and Indigenous worldview framing. The presentation (Appendix A) was followed by a group discussion. The discussion was organized into two topics; preliminary strategy content, and implementation and priorities. Key findings from each topic are summarized below. Meeting notes are found in Appendix B.

Topic 1: Preliminary Strategy Content

After reviewing the preliminary strategy content with stakeholders, they were asked if the strategy seemed on the right track, if anything was missing, and for feedback on the best way to help people experiencing poverty. Themes were developed from stakeholders' input to highlight topics for the full Poverty Reduction Strategy to include. Figure 1 presents the five most frequently mentioned topics in the meeting notes, while a complete list of areas can be found in Appendix C.

Topic 2: Implementation and Priorities

The discussion on implementation and priorities was organized into two parts. Stakeholders were first asked to identify and discuss 'game changing' actions for poverty reduction in Winnipeg. These are actions that would cause a significant shift in the current approach to poverty reduction and make a large improvement in the lives of those experiencing poverty. The top four 'game changing' themes and associated actions for poverty reduction are:

#1 Commitment and Effective Implementation (9)
- Increase budget and resources (2)
- Political will to address poverty reduction (2)
- Address the lack of trust with government (2)
- Establish an advisory council for oversight (1)
- Monitor the strategy's success (1)
- Hand off responsibility to community organizations (1)

#2 Employment and Education (7)
- Create job opportunities (4)
- Increase childcare in City facilities (2)
- Create a life skills program (1)

#3 Good Health and Well-being (5)
- Provide mental health supports (3)
- Provide addictions support (2)

#3 Housing for All (5)
- Support affordable housing (5)

Figure 1: Topics to Include in the Strategy

#1 Good Health and Well-being (11)
- Mental health (6)
- Harm reduction (2)
- Addictions (1)
- Healing (1)
- Other (1)

#2 Intersectionality (when forms of discrimination combine or overlap) (10)
- Oppression and stigma (4)
- Racism (3)
- Ability (1)
- Ethnicity (1)
- Gender (1)

#3 Communication (8)
- Trust (3)
- Internal communications (2)
- Awareness campaign (2)
- Mandatory workshops for City staff (1)

#4 Housing for All (6)
- Supportive Transitional Housing (i.e. Housing First) (3)
- Affordable housing (1)
- Temporary vs. permanent housing (1)
- Municipal surplus land (1)

#4 Transportation Equity (6)
- Access to transit (4)
- Parking fees and fines based on income (2)

(x) represents the number of times an idea appeared in the meeting notes

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What We Heard (cont.)

Another key 'game changer' identified by stakeholders was for the City to apply poverty reduction, anti-oppression and anti-racism lenses to all levels of the organization (4). This includes shifting attitudes to ensure more consistent support for poverty reduction across the City. Consistent support can be accomplished through better coordination of City departments.

Stakeholders were then asked to identify and discuss 'low hanging fruit' to help the City prioritize poverty reduction actions. Low hanging fruit are easy to accomplish actions that can be done with minimal budget and resources. The top four easy to accomplish themes and associated actions are:

#1 Community Supports (5)
- Eliminate unwelcoming spaces (i.e. the use of sitting deterrents/hostile architecture) (1)
- Install public toilets (1)
- Improve network of public facilities also used as extreme heat/cold shelters (1)
- Provide mental health supports (1)
- Support the report on homeless encampments (1)

#2 Communications (4)
- Generate awareness (2)
- Create an awareness campaign (2)

#2 Employment and Education (4)
- Create bursaries (1)
- Implement social procurement (1)
- Implement a living wage for City employees (1)
- Increase childcare in City facilities (1)

#4 Transportation Equity (2)
- Improve access to transit (2)

A complete list of game changing actions and low hanging fruit can be found in Appendix C.

Next Steps

The draft Poverty Reduction Strategy will be created using the feedback collected in Phase 1 of stakeholder engagement. A verbal update will be provided to the Executive Policy Committee of Council September 21, 2020.

Phase 2 of stakeholder engagement is expected to begin in late fall 2020 and will seek input from various stakeholder groups on the draft strategy including short, medium, and long-term actions. Council will consider the strategy and implementation plan in early 2021 after the strategy is finalized.

Appendices

Appendix A – Meeting Presentation
Appendix B – Meeting Notes
Appendix C – Key Themes and Actions

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