State of the
INNER CITY

CALL TO ACTION
FOR A JUST TRANSFORMATION
16 REPORTS BEHIND US AND ACTION BEFORE US!

CCPA
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES
MANITOBA

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Call to Action

We Call For:

- renewed public investment in the social, economic, and physical infrastructure of Winnipeg's inner city to benefit current residents; and

- the convening of a table of Indigenous and community leaders to identify strategies and structures to address the crisis in the inner city through renewed public investment.

Principles to Guide Action:

- *Community leadership*: the communities of the inner city know what they need. Any planning for the inner city must have substantial leadership from inner city communities and organizations.

- *Indigenous self-determination*: Indigenous peoples have distinct rights, including the right to self-determination. Any planning for the inner city must uphold Indigenous self-determination, to create neighbourhoods and communities that reflect Indigenous peoples' rights, priorities, concerns and ways of life.

- *Social determinants of health*: Social determinants of health are the social and economic factors that shape individual and community

health outcomes. Any planning for the inner city must address the social determinants of health, to ensure that all inner city residents have the best possible health outcomes.

- *Intersectionality*: There are many different identities that shape individual and community experiences; the overlaps or intersections of these varied identities results in new and distinct identities and experiences. Any planning for the inner city must reflect the intersectional diversity of individual, household and community needs and priorities.

An Urgent Need for Change in the Inner City Today

A RADICAL SHIFT is needed for the inner city. If one part of the city is suffering, then the whole city is suffering. The 2021 State of the Inner City (SIC) report "Placing Community at the Heart of a Just Recovery", called for a just recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, community organizations said a just recovery is not enough; what is needed is a transformation in social and economic justice that includes Indigenous self-determination.

Community members and community organizations are calling for action to respond to the multiple crises in the inner city of Winnipeg. Poverty, housing need, drug overdoses, cost of living increases, safety concerns and crumbling infrastructure are growing in a context long shaped by colonialism and injustice. The current system is not working: inner-city organizations are seeing more and more overdoses, and increasingly desperate poverty. Staff are nearing burnout and are dealing with intense stress and mental health issues. People and communities are in crisis and in pain, as described in a recent open letter from North End Women's Centre's director (see Appendix B). Unless action is taken, the situation will only worsen, with more suffering and human lives lost.

Since 2005, the *State of the Inner City* report has highlighted both the challenges faced by inner-city neighbourhoods and communities and the

PHOTO 1 Circle of Life Thunderbird House

incredible work being done by community organizations in the inner city. Over 18 years of research have documented what Winnipeg's inner city needs to advance social inclusion, fight colonialism, and support community well-being; now, we need investment and action to make it happen.

This year's *State of the Inner City* report's objective is to advance the inner-city community's vision of social and economic transformation through the creation of a community-based call to action that can be used to advocate for the inner city to the governments of Winnipeg, Manitoba and Canada. The call to action builds on past *State of the Inner City* report research and feedback from community organizations, including a community engagement held on May 11th, 2023 at Sergeant Tommy Prince Place (see Appendices C and D for more detail). The process of developing the Call to Action and of bringing the organizations together was led by an advisory committee convened by the CCPA-MB. The advisory committee comprised leaders from nine inner-city Community-based Organizations (CBOs) that shared insight and supported the engagement event to envision a transformation in the inner city and draft the calls to action.

The Role of CBOs and Why They're Important in the Future of the Inner City

LEADERS OF INDIGNEOUS and non-Indigenous Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) will be central to the transformation of the inner city.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit governments represent their citizens who live in Winnipeg. Local Indigenous organizations also serve as hubs for community-based decision-making and governance, including for Indigenous people who may not have status or ties to a particular nation. Decolonization requires the return of land to Indigenous jurisdiction (#LandBack), as well as the creation of new structures, policies and practices that support reconciliation and Indigenous self-determination. Inner-city CBOs have already been leading the work of reconciliation. The 2016 SIC report pointed out that

> Individuals and organizations in Winnipeg's inner city have already been performing significant acts of reconciliation for decades... Leading this effort are groups and individuals in Winnipeg's inner city who engage, create and re-create actions that embody healthy relationships in everyday work, policy and practice. These challenge and undermine Canada's historical hierarchies with Indigenous peoples, while also suggesting models and templates for other communities in the city and country. (4)

PHOTO 2 Sākihiwēwin Lodge under construction

As well, community-based organizations play an important role as a bridge between residents and community members, and government services. Inner city CBOs include neighbourhood renewal organizations, Indigenous-led organizations, family centres, women's centres, and organizations providing a wide range of housing, education and training, health and wellness, and community development programs. As the 2005 State of the Inner City report noted, "Where strong and effective community-based and

PHOTO 3 Field in the West End of Winnipeg

community-controlled organizations emerge, and where these community-based organizations (CBOs) are adequately funded, positive change begins to occur" (2005, 2). The crisis of the pandemic highlighted the essential role of CBOs as they scrambled to provide food, shelter, up-to-date information and other basic necessities as walk-in access to public services shut down. As the 2020 SIC report noted:

> Whether in healthcare, education, income assistance or housing, current and historical systemic injustices like racism, discrimination and colonialism result in marginalized groups often feeling and being inadequately supported by and disconnected from governments. As a result, Lorie English at West Central Women's Resource Centre pointed out, "people who are on the margins and have been disrespected and discriminated against in systems, don't trust systems." (2020, 56)

Residents trust the people and organizations that they see doing daily work of supporting the community. Community-based organizations are democratically controlled and accountable to the communities they serve.

PHOTO 4 Boarded Building in the Inner City of Winnipeg

They undertake substantive planning and community engagement to ensure that the resources and programs they offer meet the needs of the affected communities, including through neighbourhood and strategic planning processes.

However, despite these decades of advocacy and community-led organizing, and the relationships of trust and collaboration demonstrated by CBOs, they

> often lack the infrastructure, staffing and finances to serve their communities safely. This fact is part of the organized abandonment of the inner city and other low-income neighbourhoods. The de-prioritizing of the essential work done by CBOs is also a de-prioritizing of the lives of the most vulnerable people CBOs serve. (73)

For these reasons, CBOs must be engaged in planning and decision-making about the inner city. As the 2020 SIC report concluded that

> CBOs not only need to be better supported in this work, they also need to be better consulted... There is an incredible amount of knowledge and expertise

PHOTO 5 Spence Neighbourhood Association

[within CBOs] that should be centered in the political decision making that shapes the conditions they are operating in. (75)

Public investment and action will only be successful if it is sustained over the long term, and if the communities of the inner city direct it. A decision-making mechanism to ensure that community voices direct investment decisions is essential. Plans created by community organizations should lay the foundation for decision-making, including those created by neighbourhood renewal corporations and the Winnipeg Indigenous Executive Circle.

Changes and Patterns in Winnipeg's Inner City

TO BETTER UNDERSTAND some continued challenges, changes and patterns in the inner city, we compared various indicators from Census data from 2001, 2016, and 2021. The 2001 Census data were included in the first *State of the Inner City* report in 2005. The 2016 and 2021 Census data provide a recent depiction of the inner city, both prior to and during the pandemic.

In the ten years leading up to 2001, the inner-city population decreased by 7.4 percent, from 128,495 people in 1991 to 119,670 in 2001. Since 2001, the population has grown, experiencing around a 3.5 percent change every ten years. The population of the inner city in 2021 was 129,360, the highest recorded population since 1986 (see *Figure 1*). The proportion of the population under 15 decreased from 18.3 percent of the population to 16.5 percent from 2001 to 2021, while the number of youth under 15 years old remained fairly consistent (21,950 in 2001 to 21,405 in 2021). The proportion of seniors (65 years and over) decreased by 2.0 percent (1,670 people) between 2001 and 2016 before increasing by 1.3 percent (2,000 people) to 16,535 in 2021 (see *Table 1*).

The recent immigrant population (those who have arrived in the last 5 years) increased substantially between 2001, when 4,540 people were recent immigrants, and 2021, when 8,750 people were counted as recent immigrants. The peak of recent immigration was in 2016, with 12,385 recent immigrants. The inner city has seen an increase in what Statistics Canada terms "visible minority" populations, those other than Indigenous people who are non-
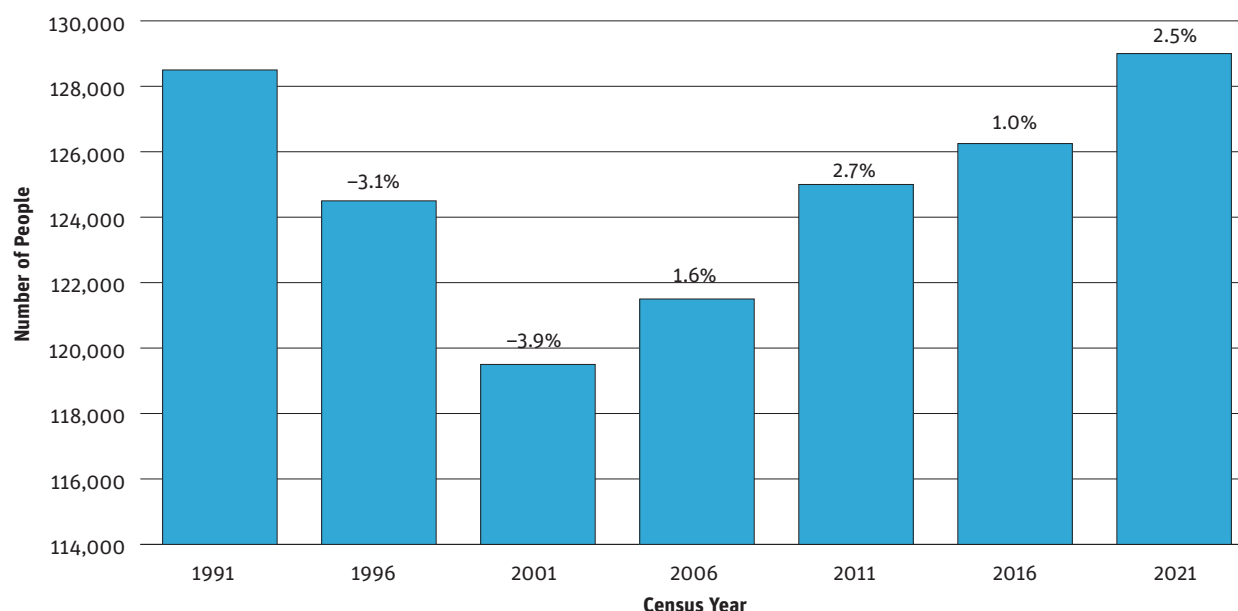
Source: Statistics Canada 2001, 2016, 2021; City of Winnipeg 2001, 2016, 2021

TABLE 1 Demographic Indicators — Inner City Compared to the City of Winnipeg

Selected Indicators	Winnipeg's Inner City						City of Winnipeg
	2001		2016		2021		2021
	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Population		119,670		126,160		129,360	749,607
Population Change (from the previous 10 years)	−7.4%		3.7%		3.5%		
Population under 15 years of age	18.3%	21,950	17.4%	22,010	16.5%	21,405	16.8%
Population over 65 years of age	13.5%	16,150	11.5%	14,480	12.8%	16,535	16.1%
Indigenous population as % of total	19.2%	22,995	21.7%	27,355	22.0%	28,500	12.4%
Recent immigrant population (arrived Canada within last five years)	3.8%	4,540	9.8%	12,385	6.8%	8,750	6.0%
Visible minority population as % of total	20.0%	23,940	33.2%	41,855	37.1%	48,005	34.4%
Lone-parent families (both sexes) as % of all families	29.6%	8,220	28.5%	8,540	27.4%	8,250	17.8%
Lone-parent families (both sexes) as % of all families	29.6%	8,220	28.5%	8,540	27.4%	8,250	17.8%

Source: Statistics Canada 2001, 2016, 2021; City of Winnipeg 2001, 2016, 2021

TABLE 2 Labour Force Activity — Inner City Compared to the City of Winnipeg

Selected Indicators	Inner City						City of Winnipeg
	2001		2016		2021		2021
	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Unemployment rate (15 years and over)	9.0%	2220	9.0%	5715	11.8%	8095	9.0%
Employment rate (15 years and over)	57.3%	56035	59.0%	61785	56.2%	60675	60.0%
Participation rate (15 years and over)	63.0%	61585	65.0%	67500	63.7%	68765	66.0%

Source: Statistics Canada 2001, 2016, 2021; City of Winnipeg 2001, 2016, 2021

white, from 23,940 people (20 percent of the population) in 2001 to 48,005 people (37.1 percent of the population) in 2021. The Indigenous population has risen from 19.2 percent to 22 percent.

The 2021 Census shows an increase in the unemployment rate and a decrease in the employment rate compared to 2016, likely attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic. The unemployment rate remained the same in 2001 and 2016 at 9 percent, though more than double the number of people were unemployed in 2016 with 5,715 compared to the 2,220 in 2001, reflecting the overall increase in population. In 2021, the unemployment rate was almost three percentage points higher in the inner city compared to the city as whole (11.8 percent compared with 9 percent in Winnipeg).

The rate of low-income households is much higher in the inner city compared to the city as a whole. Poverty is concentrated in the inner city, highlighting the need for funding and services to support access to basic necessities. In 2021, 23.2 percent of the inner-city population lived in low-income household (based on the after-tax, low-income measure), compared with 12.9 percent in Winnipeg as a whole. Similarly, the child poverty rate in the inner city is 31.1 percent, a decrease since 2001, yet it remains in stark contrast to the city's child poverty rate of 17.4 percent. In 2001, the child poverty rate in the inner city was 50.4 percent, while in 2021, 31.1 percent of children in the inner city lived in low-income households, compared with 17.4% of children in Winnipeg as a whole. Child poverty remains concentrated in the inner city of Winnipeg.

The Census shows that the median household income in the inner city in 2000 was $37,640; in 2015 it was $49,025 and in 2020 it was $56,000 (in 2020 constant dollars). Between 2000 and 2020 the inner city's median income saw a 49 percent increase. However, the 2021 median household income of

| | Inner City | | | | | | City of Winnipeg |
| | 2001 | | 2016 | | 2021 | | 2021 |
Selected Indicators	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Population by after-tax low income measure (LICO-AT)			30.3%	38280	23.2%	29965	12.9%
Household poverty rate	44.1%						
Child poverty rate (under 18 years)	50.4%		44.2%	11575	31.1%	7905	17.4%

Source: Statistics Canada 2001, 2016, 2021; City of Winnipeg 2001, 2016, 2021

TABLE 4 Median Income and Average Rent — Inner City Compared to the City of Winnipeg

| | Inner City | | | City of Winnipeg | |
Selected Indicators	2001 Census	2016 Census	2021 Census	2001	2021
Median household income $	$37,640	$49,025	$56,000	$61,840	$80,000
Average gross rent $	$700	$883	$978	$771	$1,137

* All amounts held in 2020 constant dollars
Source: Statistics Canada 2001, 2016, 2021; City of Winnipeg 2001, 2016, 2021

$56,000 is still much lower than the Winnipeg median household income of $80,000.

The average gross rent has also increased, from $700 in 2000 to $883 in 2015 and to $978 in 2020 (in 2020 constant dollars). The change in average gross rent was a 26 percent increase between 2000 and 2020, which is the same as the city as a whole during those same years.

The Census data demonstrates that change is slow and the inner city requires additional supports to break cycles of poverty. The authentic inclusion of community voices within decision making processes will help to ensure that local needs are adequately addressed. The next section highlights an analysis of existing participatory programs and models for inclusion of local residents in matters such as budget allocation, policy and program development, which offer possibilities for the inner city.
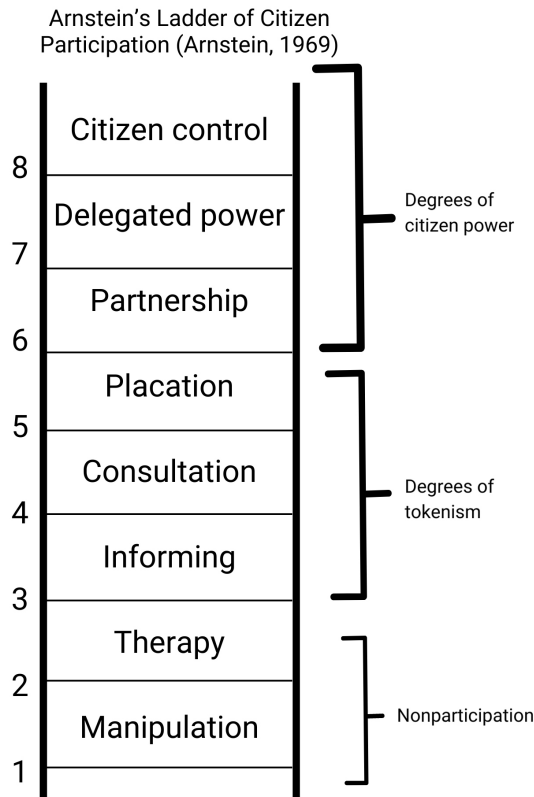
How Other Places are Building Inclusive Cities

THIS YEAR'S STATE of the Inner City report uses precedent studies to identify funding models that foreground community leadership to advance the inner-city community's vision of social and economic transformation. The Ladder of Participation was developed by Sherry Arnstein in 1969 as a model for assessing democratic public participation (Arnstein, 1969; Organizing Engagement, n.d.). The ladder has eight rungs encompassed by three overarching forms of participation in democratic decision-making: nonparticipation, degrees of tokenism and degrees of citizen power. As you move further up the ladder, the level of citizen participation and power increases.

Drawing on Arnstein's Ladder of Participation, this research considers the strengths and weaknesses of inner-city programs and funding initiatives across North America and how community members are engaged in funding allocation and decision-making.

Each of these models has its own distinct strengths and weaknesses. Overall, these models attempt to move beyond typical community engagement by seeking more meaningful input from the impacted community. As Grant (2019) argues about the Downtown East Side of Vancouver, each individual community should determine its specific needs, goals, and objectives and the most suitable methods for meeting their goals. Winnipeg's inner city can consider how these models may be useful or not to the communities and neighbourhoods that make up the inner city.

FIGURE 2 Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation

Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen
Participation (Arnstein, 1969)

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      ┌──────────────────┐
      │  Citizen control │
   8  ├──────────────────┤  ┐
      │  Delegated power │   │ Degrees of
   7  ├──────────────────┤   │ citizen power
      │    Partnership   │   │
   6  ├──────────────────┤  ┘
      │     Placation    │  ┐
   5  ├──────────────────┤   │
      │   Consultation   │   │ Degrees of
   4  ├──────────────────┤   │ tokenism
      │     Informing    │   │
   3  ├──────────────────┤  ┘
      │      Therapy     │  ┐
   2  ├──────────────────┤   │ Nonparticipation
      │   Manipulation   │   │
   1  └──────────────────┘  ┘
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Source: Arnstein, 1969

The core strength of these models (*Table 6*) is community capacity building by creating opportunities for residents to become involved in local politics and decision making. Residents become more actively engaged by participating in research and funding allocation in their community. Board diversification, neighbourhood councils, participatory budgeting, community resource boards, and participatory action research seek and enable greater participation by allocating decision-making power to community members and groups.

However, these models also present challenges. Methods to include diverse voices can easily become tokenized or co-opted by the loudest voices. Several of these models rely on community votes or volunteers, where a set of 'louder voices' that represent only a small part of the community may potentially silence other voices. In Winnipeg's inner city, many residents are low-income, which may result in less capacity and resources to become involved in community activities. Fainstein (2010) finds that resident participation in democratic decision-making often starts with low-income groups seeking

TABLE 5 Participatory Programming or Models

Name of Initiative	Where is it Located?	How Does it Work?	Strengths	Weaknesses
Board Diversification[i]	Multiple cities	Board diversification works to ensure that various identities are represented in board governance. Strategies include the volunteer efforts of non-profit and public sector employees and recruitment and training for community members to be involved in governance (Grant, 2019).	Fairly easy to implement, can lead to more diverse leadership, non-profit and public sector governance, policies and operations may benefit	Exclusion of people under 18 years, exclusion of those who have filed for bankruptcy or committed certain crimes, evaluation of potential participants based on educational background excluding those with lived experience, board diversification does not equate to a change in government structure and operations.
Inclusive Board Governance	Vancouver, BC[ii]	Reducing barriers for residents to be engaged with nonprofit board governance impacting their community.	Seeks to discuss and address lack of representation and socio-economic diversity on boards.	Ensuring engagement and representation of diverse community and underrepresented community, getting people out to participate. Does not encourage relationship building between community organizations.
Neighbourhood Councils	Montreal, QC[iii] - Called 'Borough Councils' Each of the 19 boroughs have their own 'mayor' in addition to the city councillors.	NCs form the grassroots level of the government. Board members are volunteers that are voted in by community members. Advocates for interests and priorities identified by the local community. Often have some level of official standing to be heard by local government in municipal issues.	Development of alliances between community partners, entry point to municipal politics and community leadership, independent neighbourhood advocacy body.[iv]	May not have funding resource or control, ensuring the engagement and representation from diverse and underrepresented community members, can be difficult to gain support from municipal government and maintain mandate across government cycles.[v]
Participatory Budgeting	Started in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Implemented in several cities across the world. Including Guelph, ON.	Public votes on budget allocation. Public budget is allocated to PB process. Community engagement is held to gain project ideas, municipal employees support the process but do not get to vote.[vi] Popular ideas shared with committee, budget ideas are released and voted on.	Development of alliances between community partners, accessible entry point to local politics and community leadership, promotes accountability and transparency in funding allocation,[vii] provides independent neighbourhood advocacy body.	Ensuring the engagement and representation from diverse and underrepresented community members, can be difficult to gain support from municipal government.[viii]
Community Resource Boards	British Columbia	Community Resource Boards were offices that sought to decentralize, integrate, and increase public participation in planning and delivery of social services to improve neighbourhood quality of life. The boards were mandated by[ix] the provincial government.	Accessible entry point to local politics and community leadership, straightforward mechanism for community input into allocation of public funds	Securing funding for wages, compensation for low-income leadership, operations. Ensuring engagement and representation of diverse community and underrepresented community, establishing support from local govt, preserving funding and mandate across govt cycles.[x]
Participatory Action Research	Collaborative project between Carleton College and Faribault, Minnesota[xi]	Bottom-up approach to addressing community concerns/needs where community members conduct the research on how to address concerns.	Community generated knowledge, bottom-up approach that builds capacity in the community to collaborate and conduct research.	Alignment with institutional partner may cause power imbalances and co-option by dominating structures.[xii]

i Grant. (2019).
ii Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House. Let's Speak up! Initiative. https://www.dtesnhouse.ca/lets-speak-up
iii Leavitt, S. (2017). Borough vs. city council: Who decides what in Montreal? CBC News. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/borough-vs-city-council-1.4369965
iv Grant. (2019).
v Grant. (2019).
vi Pinnington et al. (2009). Participatory Budgeting in North America: The Case of Guelph, Canada.
vii Pinnington et al. (2009).
viii Grant. (2019).
ix Hepworth, H.P. (1976). Developments in the social service delivery systems in Canada. Canadian Journal of Social Work Education, 2(3), 32-46.
x Grant. (2019).
xi Carleton College. PAR. https://participatoryactionresearch.sites.carleton.edu/about-par/
xii Cornish et al. (2023). Participatory action research. Nature Reviews Methods Primers, 3(34).

involvement but over time, becomes a "vehicle for middle-class interests" (p. 66). This could be due to 'loud voices' or tokenization; in either case the result is decreasing participation by low-income groups. As well, the adoption of participatory methods or models requires significant efforts to ensure that participation is equitable across the community. Governments (and government funding) play a key role in the success of these programs, and changes to government may result in reduced funding and capacity for participation.

These findings demonstrate the challenges of adequately and authentically engaging with underrepresented community members (Grant, 2019). However, they also point to possibilities: they highlight the strengths of organizations like Winnipeg's existing neighbourhood renewal organizations, which provide opportunities for community members to collaborate and offer direction in their own neighbourhoods to address local concerns.

Conclusion

THE EMERGENCY PHASE of the COVID-19 pandemic is generally considered to have passed, but the crises that have their roots long before the pandemic continue to grow. Housing need, poverty, overdoses and a growing frustration with the lack of public investment continue to shape the neighbourhoods in Winnipeg's inner city. The past 18 years of research conducted through the *State of the Inner City* reports demonstrate the strength and resilience of the individuals and communities that make up the inner city. At the same time, the statistical data in this report has demonstrated minimal change over the years in several demographic categories, and the inner city's poverty level remains high.

This *State of the Inner City* drew on many voices to collaborate and consider various priorities for the inner city, resulting in a call to action to support inner-city residents and CBOs. Chris Leskiw spoke of the importance of having a leader who can advocate to governments; this could be an individual or a group from the community that can encourage community engagement in these processes and rally the government for funding. We hope that this year and past years of the *State of the Inner City* report can help to guide action towards increased investment in the inner city. Including community voices in budgeting, policy and program development is key to effecting real change in community.

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Make Poverty History Manitoba Goals

MAKE POVERTY HISTORY Manitoba has ten priority areas with the following demands for action to end poverty in Manitoba:

1. Manitoba must act on Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and MMIWGTS+ Calls to Justice

   1.1 The Manitoba government must develop and implement a comprehensive implementation plan, in meaningful partnership with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities to act on the TRC Calls to Action and MMIWG Calls to Justice with a priority on ending poverty among Indigenous peoples in Manitoba.

   1.2 The Manitoba government should legally adopt UNDRIP.

   1.3 The Manitoba government should not enact policies, programs or other actions that go against the TRC and MMIWG Calls and UNDRIP.

2. Mantioba poverty reduction legislation, strategy, target and timeline

   2.2 The Province of Manitoba immediately establishes a bold target and timeline within a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy to end poverty and social exclusion in Manitoba.

2.3 The province ensures accountability and transparency in implementing the plan, with meaningful community representation, including one representative from Make Poverty History Manitoba and annual reporting back to the community. Any consultation should be meaningful, including Indigenous simultaneous translation and proper accessibility measures like ASL.

3. Employment Income Assistance transformed into Liveable Basic Needs Benefit

3.1 The Province of Manitoba will transform Employment and Income Assistance into a livable basic needs benefit within 18 months, as part of a comprehensive poverty reduction plan. As a province with high persistent levels of child poverty, Manitoba should provide leadership at the Council of the Federation to advocate the federal government to ensure Manitobans and all Canadians have benefits at or above the poverty line.

4. Employment: advance inclusive, equitable, decent employment

4.1 Make the minimum wage a living wage in Manitoba by adopting the living wage methodology developed by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and

4.2 Including living wages in Manitoba contracted and subcontracted services, include a legally binding clause requiring contracted service workers, including those working for subcontracted companies, to be paid the living wage for Manitoba.

4.3 The provincial government update the Employment Standards Code to ensure all workers have 10 days of mandatory paid sick leave per year.

4.4 The province support inclusive and equitable economic development strategies that emphasize poverty alleviation through:

- A Community Economic Development Framework & Lens
- Supporting social enterprises, particularly those focused on workforce development as a key outcome, through a provincial Social Enterprise Strategy
- Increase workforce training funding for organizations and social enterprises who work alongside low-income individuals facing barriers to employment
- Implementing Social Procurement and Community Benefits Agreements

5. Housing

    5.1 The province should act to end homelessness and core housing need through a comprehensive strategy that includes protecting and expanding the social housing supply, providing tenants in social housing with access to comprehensive supports, supporting private market renters, and creating training and job opportunities through social housing.

6. Education and Early Learning and Childcare

    6.A.1 Create an adequately funded school nutrition program in all Manitoba schools, including breakfast, lunch and snacks.

    6.B.1 Manitoba act immediately on the MCCA Roadmap to a High-Quality Early Learning and Child Care System in Manitoba.

    6.C.1. Double the annual budget for Adult Literacy and Learning, which is flat and is less than one percent of what we spend on K-12 education, and less on a per capita basis than what we spend on prisons and prisoners. To double the annual budget would cost an additional $20 million.

    6.C.2. Ensure that the Manitoba EIA program switches from a "work first" orientation to "adult education wherever possible" approach to support recipients to improve literacy and education levels.

    6.C.3. Move rapidly toward the creation of "adult learning hubs," which would combine Adult Learning Centres, Adult Literacy Programs, and a childcare centre. Many in need of adult basic education have young children. The availability of childcare would make it possible for them to improve their education. Manitoba is rolling out the universal, affordable childcare program, and so should locate childcare centres to meet this need.

    6.D.1 Immediately establish a timeline for transitioning provincial student loans into provincial student grants.

    6.D.2 Increase the minimum annual living allowance of Manitoba Student Aid to the official poverty line.

    6.D.3 Eliminate full-time status criteria as an eligibility requirement for Manitoba Student Aid loans and bursaries.

    6.D.4 Re-establish Manitoba's ACCESS programs can meet the needs of the growing Indigenous and second-chance learner student body in Manitoba.

7. Mental Health Care

    7.1 Increase funding to mental health and harm reduction by approximately $500 million to bring it to the recommended 12% of total healthcare expenditure, including safe consumption.

    7.2 Advance mental health through the Community Health Centre model in vulnerable communities. Approach mental health services with a harm reduction lens.

8. Justice

    8.1 In the first post-election budget, the Province of Manitoba should double the funding available to community-based restorative justice programs as the first step towards transforming Manitoba's current legal system to one fully based on restorative justice values and practices. Funding priorities should emphasize programs that offer evidence-based and culturally appropriate supports that address the root causes of crime.

    8.2 Direct Manitoba Justice to immediately engage with community partners to develop an action plan with targets and timelines to move away from the current system that emphasizes incarceration and not rehabilitation. This will necessitate yearly funding increases available to community-based restorative justice programs.

9. Child Welfare

    9.1 Increase funding to child welfare authorities by $30 million, replacing funding that had been cut in 2019 when the province shifted to a single envelope block funding model.

    9.2 Youth aging out of care will have access to a wide variety of supports up to at least age 25, providing assistance with education, training, income support, employment and system navigation.

10. Transportation and Transit

    10.1 As the province transitions to an LBNB, increase funding to the City of Winnipeg to support increasing the WINNpass subsidy to 80 percent off the cost of a monthly pass and support equivalent programs in communities outside Winnipeg, alongside quality public transportation development in the province.

    10.2 Provide funding to municipalities to support piloting fare-free public transit.

10.3 The province explores a new publicly-owned inter-provincial transit service for rural and northern transportation.

For more information on Make Poverty History Manitoba, please visit: https://makepovertyhistorymb.com/

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Statement from NEWC:

June 1, 2023

In the last week, within four business days, we've responded to five overdoses/drug poisonings. Five.

These beloved community members, our relatives, are having to be revived from near death with multiple doses of naloxone; more than a whole kit's worth. In these 5 situations, 3-10 doses of narcan were needed to save each person's life. **There is currently a shortage of naloxone in Winnipeg and we are not paramedics**. *Paramedics do amazing work but their response time has become longer because of the workload, leading to community workers needing to administer most of the naloxone doses before paramedics arrive to clear or take the person to hospital. This is not the job of not-for-profit agencies or the social service sector. We can't keep up. Winnipeg needs safe consumption sites (SCS) and safe supply now.*

NEWC's community work has been to prioritize a resource centre, transitional housing and a social enterprise for community. We provide counselling, parenting, CFS & housing advocacy, settlement programming, outreach, healing and wellness, financial literacy and more…however we have had to pivot daily to respond to this ever-increasing overdose crisis. In the absence of safe consumption sites, safe supply and sufficient detox/treatment options, word of mouth is that we, and many of our partner agencies, are a safe space to use in case the drug supply is toxic. It is not sustainable for us to respond to this ever-increasing need. We are not trained, resourced, or funded to do so.

Sitting in circle with our teams, debriefing these life-saving critical incidents, we see and hear the impact on our staff (who we are only funded to pay $20/hour) in their voices and faces. Anxiety is high. What if one day we are unable to save our relatives? We are so fearful about what we are going to come into every day now. We are doing our best to take care of community and each other, but the signs of burnout are becoming more and more evident within our team. THIS IS NOT SUSTAINABLE. Just this morning, a staff who was involved in recent incidents, told us that she came across someone experiencing an overdose on her way home from work and that when she had to come to work today, she felt panic. We are all afraid that we are going to come to work and find someone **DEAD**. *How would you feel if this was your child at their first job or your mother at the end of her career, who had to literally bring people back from the dead by injecting up to 10 doses through a needle, hoping that they revive each time they inject narcan? How have we come to a point that people are walking and driving past people on the street who may need help and who will die if they do not get help? How have we become so desensitized to human beings that deserve to be treated with dignity, love and compassion?*

We are losing Winnipeggers every day to this crisis and we need help now. We urge you to action Manitoba Harm Reduction Network's recommendations on page 4 of their REPORT CARD ON MANITOBA'S RESPONSE TO THE TOXIC DRUG SUPPLY CRISIS Getting To Tomorrow: *https://static1.squarespace.com/static/561d5888e4b0830a0f1ed08b/t/64761e98e72b955649a0e439/168546 2682500/MB+Final+Report+- +April+2023+%281%29.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3RF_kOCU_LGJ8crJr78iE2s3haUlwlkNq7iVmRye- VK9nA7y9RC2VqUMg* .

Additionally, I am including the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic (WFP) data from the time period I am referencing above which shows the number of times naloxone was deployed.

Date	# of times naloxone deployed
May 22	9
May 23	9
May 24	4
May 25	9
May 26	10
May 27	13
May 28	13
May 29	11
May 30	12
May 31	17

As you can see, we are hitting a crisis point at North End Women's Centre and in our city around toxic drug overdose. Our community is struggling and social service agencies need support NOW. The continued dismantling of our social safety net over the last years as well as the impact of covid are hitting harder than ever before.

People are not doing well. We have more folks coming in who are living in the most horrible situations, entering our Centre with no clothes and shoes on, people trying to access detox or treatment but can't get in, people suffering severe mental health issues getting formed then released into the streets 12 hours later, people released from jail with no exit plans dropped right outside our doors, unsheltered people released from hospital into the streets, women and gender diverse folks still do not feel safe in shelters, often times they are full anyway; we have people needing access to gender-based violence shelters but the ones in Wpg are often full, children apprehended constantly within structurally racist systems that fail community….this list is exhausting, but not exhaustive.

I am very concerned for community, NEWC and other agency staff, who are being thrown into saving lives when it is not what they were hired to do. We do it because we love our community and relatives but it is not sustainable. Agencies like NEWC are all experiencing this concerning increase in the last few weeks. We

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have reached out collectively many times and have had little to no support as a sector. We are at a breaking point.

We will be sharing this statement more widely. I can be reached at cynthia@newcentre.org or 204-227-4414 and await your response.

Cynthia Drebot

Executive Director

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Appendix C:

Community Engagement Processes

Summary of Discussions

The CCPA-MB hosted a knowledge translation and mobilization event, *Visioning a Just Transformation in Winnipeg's Inner City*, to gather feedback from inner city leaders. The event occurred on May 11th, 2023, at Sergeant Tommy Prince Place. Bringing together leaders from organizations across the inner city, the intent was to help develop calls to action for governments, strategize next steps and celebrate the work of CBOs during COVID-19. Using previous research, we developed a draft call to action meant to provoke action and discussion towards a just transformation for Winnipeg's inner city, and identified nine key areas requiring increased public investment.

Summary of the Engagement Process

Upon welcoming guests, Molly McCracken provided the group with a brief history of the SIC report, sharing that the initial goal of the report was to highlight and share information about the many community initiatives occurring in the inner city that were unknown to the mainstream.

Sarah Cooper shared more details about the SIC reports from the past two years, which focused on COVID-19's impact on the inner city. These previous reports informed the draft call to action.

Chris Leskiw, a retired consultant involved in past tri-level agreements, then discussed the Core Area Initiative (CAI). We wanted to explore tri-level funding and share more information about previous initiatives with community groups to consider the possibility of a future tri-level agreement.

Chris spoke about previous public investment projects from the Core Area Initiatives and the tri-level agreement between municipal, provincial and federal governments that funded them. Chris discussed the importance of having a political champion to push the community's agenda and rally to governments for funding (for the CAI this person was Lloyd Axworthy). Additionally, Chris recommended having a central office independent of governments and more associated with the community. Thirteen different program areas were created, from an Exchange District Heritage program to Commercial Development to Community Services and Facilities. Major program evaluation was completed throughout the projects to assess program success or shortfalls.

What We Heard: The Draft Call to Action

A draft call to action was introduced to those in attendance which was based on past SIC report research. The 2020 report documented how CBOs responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and what's needed to support their work (Strengthening Community in a Time of Isolation). "Placing Community at the Heart of the COVID Recovery" in 2022 looked at what's needed for a just recovery from COVID, based on a scan of 75 organization's documented priorities.

The draft call to action read:
We call on the federal, provincial and municipal governments to:

- Work with communities of Winnipeg's inner city,

- Invest in the social, economic, and physical infrastructure of Winnipeg's inner city that benefits residents,

- Support a thriving, healthy, climate-resilient, just, and equitable inner city that builds on Indigenous and community leadership.

Areas for Discussion

Participants were then invited to discuss, in small groups, the draft call to action and potential directions and to report key ideas or thoughts back to the larger group. The first discussion asked: *Does the draft call to action convey what it needs to?* Participants were also asked to share feedback, including what they liked about it and what should be added or changed or removed.

Responses to the Call to Action from the group discussion:

- The critiques of the proposed call to action was that it is too broad, and not specific enough. One group noted that making the call to action less specific lets governments off the hook and makes it too easy for them. Another response was that it is not overly inspiring, requiring more clarification on how the community is involved in how investments are spent.

- Another critique regarded who is included in decision-making and visioning for an inner-city transformation. Participants suggested that Indigenous governments should be at the table (e.g., SCO, MKO, AMC, Treaty 1). Another group said that the community must be included and make decisions instead of governments doing that on their behalf.

- The third point in the call to action should be changed to represent an action instead of an outcome. Groups noted that the third point *(Support a thriving, healthy, climate-resilient, just, and equitable inner city that builds on Indigenous and community leadership)* is the outcome of the investments required.

- Some groups noted that the first point (Work with communities of Winnipeg's inner city) and second point (Invest in the social, economic, and physical infrastructure of Winnipeg's inner city that benefits residents) are a good summary of the investments required in the inner city.

During this discussion, participants also shared some specific examples of changes they would like to see for the inner city:

- Funding indexed to Canadian Price Index (CPI) at a minimum

- Adopt a Leave With Pay (LWP) for minimum wage earners

- Need more people LIVING downtown, but already communities in other parts of the inner city.

- Don't impose dreams of condo developers

- Agile physical infrastructure

- Physical infrastructure — should be informed by co-creation

- More harm reduction supplies

- Addictions and mental health supports together

- Indigenous-based healing spaces

In follow-up discussions with the advisory committee, we heard loud and clear that the current system is not working: inner-city organizations are seeing more and more overdoses, and increasingly desperate poverty. Staff are nearing burnout, and are dealing with intense stress and mental health issues. People and communities are in crisis and in pain, as described in a recent open letter from North End Women's Centre's director (see Appendix C).

Two key changes are needed: first, adequate funding is needed to support community well-being, including core funding to ensure that organizations are able to fulfill their mandates to support communities without spending inordinate amounts of time on grant writing and fundraising. The second is the creation of decolonial and equity-focused systems, policies and programs to address the ongoing impacts of colonialism, poverty, and other forms of marginalization and oppression.

Potential Public Investments

The second discussion asked about public investment in the inner city. Poster paper was provided to each table group and participants were asked: *What public investments in this area would you like to see in the inner city?* Table themes were developed from previous research and discussions with inner-city organizations providing support to the community. Participants were invited to discuss key topics for investment in the inner city. We proposed eight initial topics:

- Healing and wellness

- Housing

- Green spaces and neighbourhood livability

- Recreation

- Social enterprise, training and employment

- Reconciliation and relationships

- Funding for community-based organization

- Ongoing evaluation and accountability

Participants added two other topics, food security and transportation. Groups were encouraged to identify intersections between topics because we also acknowledged the impossibility of separating out each of these areas. There was much discussion on each of these topics. Four key themes emerged through the discussion: accessibility (including affordability and equal opportunity), safety; Indigenous leadership; and ongoing evaluation and accountability.

1. **Accessibility:** In all nearly all discussion themes, participants pointed out the importance of accessibility. This includes lowering costs to make services, programs and housing more affordable. Accessibility also relates to individuals' ability to access services and programs. Basic necessities and essential services, including food, housing, health and wellness, greenspace and recreation, should be accessible to all.

2. **Safety:** Participants would like to see alternative methods of making people safer in the inner city. Several comments addressed safety models that do not involve police.

3. **Indigenous leadership:** Indigenous leadership should be included in any initiative. People highlighted the importance of Indigenous-led programs and services, the benefits of drawing on Indigenous knowledge, and the importance of Indigenous perspectives and voices in decision-making.

4. **Evaluation and accountability:** Evaluation and accountability is an important part of receiving and maintaining funding streams from the government. Evaluating the outcomes is what governments require for reporting. Participants identified the importance of accessible language and methods for evaluation to reduce administrative reporting burdens for organizations.

TABLE 6 A Summary of the Discussions

Topic	Summary
Transportation	Focus on transportation methods aside from the private automobile, including affordable and accessible public transit, cycling and cycling infrastructure and car sharing.
Recreation	Participants would like to see opportunities for recreation that are accessible to more people, including newcomers and low-income populations.
Housing	Mixed use, walkable neighbourhoods, more RGI (affordable), housing first initiatives and housing that is suitable and safe. Alternative housing models – definancialization of housing and investment in cooperative housing.
Safety	Reconsider how we define safety and for whom. Participants would like to see a push towards alternative methods of safety that are not hostile or enforcement based. This includes adopting methods such as conflict resolution, community safety hosts and harm reduction.
Food security	Increase access to food and education on cooking and nutrition through generational knowledge, community gardens and food and cooking programs and in schools.
Social enterprise, training and employment	Create more opportunities for social enterprise through increased investment from governments and to create more social enterprise jobs for a variety of skill levels.
Greenspace and neighbourhood liveability	Guarantee greenspace in communities, and improve neighbourhood liveability by creating more accessible and connected neighbourhoods, including snow clearing. Participants would also like by-laws that make it simpler for people to garden on public and private property.
Reconciliation and relationships	Ensure that all community members can participate in conversations and projects in the inner-city to ensure that they are stakeholder driven and collaborative.
Healing and wellness	Participants noted that healing and wellness was linked with all other topics. The discussion therefore encompassed several topics including community level safety, safe consumption, creating an alternative safety model, food security, safe housing, improving systems navigation, and deconstructing the current child protection system.
Funding for community-based organizations	Participants would like to see a minimum guaranteed annual funding for CBOs, a more streamlined application process for funding, increase in funding in rural areas to relieve pressures in the city. Trust-based funding.
Ongoing evaluation and accountability	Create realistic timelines, an accountability framework, accessible language to ensure the process is producing the intended outcomes.
Other	Recognize that all of these topics are important and intersectional. Some keys comments are the need for a universal basic income/ liveable wage, mental health and addictions support, transform our model of safety, community-led change, and core funding for CBOs.

In addition, participants noted that each of these themes are linked, and we cannot invest in just one area. Each area requires attention and investment for safety to improve, to increase access to greenspace and recreation, create more housing, etc. Participants also notes that all of these themes fall under the Health and Wellness theme. Therefore, investment in these areas will promote greater health and wellness for inner city community members. A summary of the discussion is in *Table 6*.

Based on the feedback from the community engagement and discussion with the Advisory Committee, the Call to Action was revised. It now reads:

We call for:

- renewed public investment in the social, economic, and physical infrastructure of Winnipeg's inner city to benefit current residents;

- the convening of a table of Indigenous and community leaders to identify strategies and structures to address the crisis in the inner city through renewed public investment;

- immediate action to address Make Poverty History's goals.[1]

Principles to guide action:

- *Community leadership:* the communities of the inner city know what they need. Any planning for the inner city must have substantial leadership from inner city communities and organizations.

- *Indigenous self-determination:* Indigenous peoples have distinct rights, including the right to self-determination. Any planning for the inner city must uphold Indigenous self-determination, to create neighbourhoods and communities that reflect Indigenous peoples' rights, priorities, concerns and ways of life.

- *Social determinants of health:* Social determinants of health are the social and economic factors that shape individual and community health outcomes. Any planning for the inner city must address the social determinants of health, to ensure that all inner city residents have the best possible health outcomes.

- *Intersectionality:* There are many different identities that shape individual and community experiences; the overlaps or intersections of these varied identities results in new and distinct identities and experiences. Any planning for the inner city must reflect the intersectional diversity of individual, household and community needs and priorities.
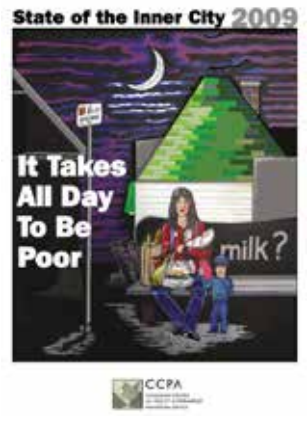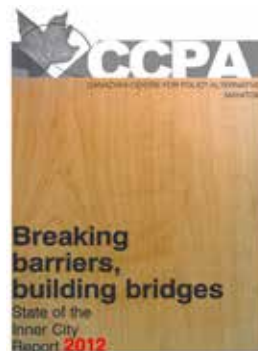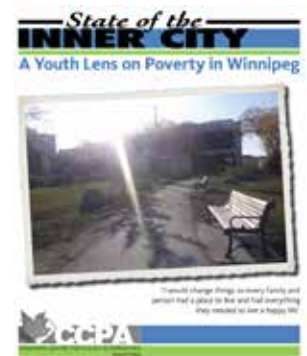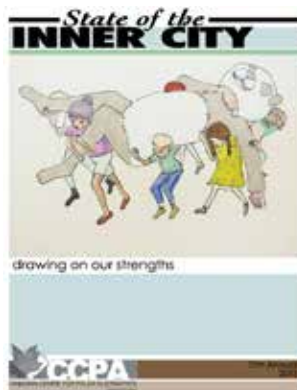

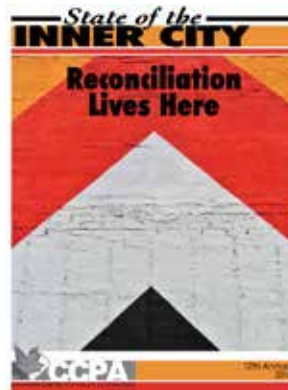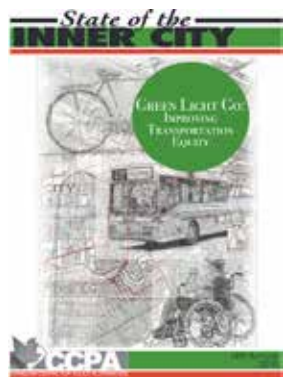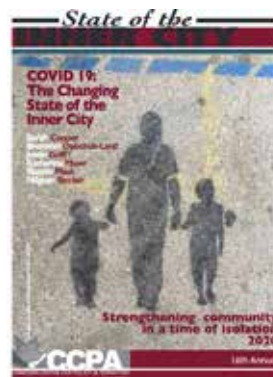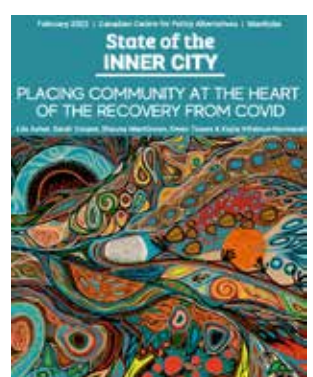**1** See Appendix A.

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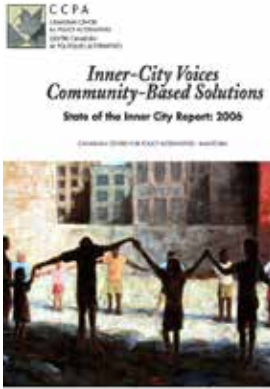
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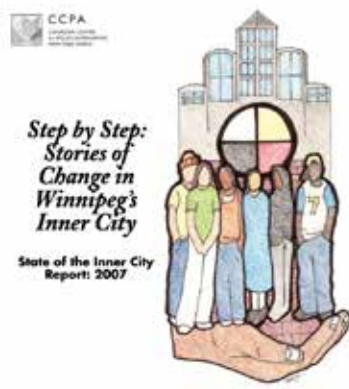
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