

Centennial Community Improvement Association



**Centennial Neighbourhood
Housing Plan
Overview Edition**

2005 – 2009

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Executive Summary

The Centennial neighbourhood is bounded by the CPR Rail Yards on the north; William Ave. on the south; Princess St. on the east; and Sherbrook St. on the west. One of the unique characteristics of the neighbourhood is that it has the highest concentration of Aboriginal people as compared to any other neighbourhood in the city of Winnipeg. Eighty per cent of the residents are renters. According to the 2001 Census, 2,385 people live in 955 dwellings in the Centennial neighbourhood.

The Centennial Community Improvement Association (CCIA) is a newly formed residents association in the neighbourhood. CCIA conducted a door-to-door survey, held 4 focus groups and one community meeting as part of the community consultation process to develop this neighbourhood housing plan.

The theme of the housing plan is to focus on the housing needs of the residents currently living in the Centennial neighbourhood through a range of housing improvement strategies that include rental housing, rent to own housing and home ownership. The seven key program areas identified in the neighbourhood housing plan include:

1. Zero Tolerance Policy for Boarded Up and Vacant Houses
2. Building and Health Code Monitoring and Enforcement of Rental Properties
3. Rent Subsidized Housing Program
4. Manitoba Housing Authority Tenant Relations Program
5. Homeownership Program
6. Housing Renovation Job and Training Program
7. Strategic Housing Development Site Plan for the Neighbourhood

The neighbourhood housing plan proposes that 5 houses each year or 25 houses over five years be renovated for rent subsidized/rent-to-own housing; 10 houses each year or 50 houses over five years be newly constructed for rent subsidized/rent-to-own housing; 5 houses each year or 25 houses over 5 years be renovated and sold to residents of the neighbourhood; 5 houses each year or 20 houses over 4 years be newly constructed and sold to residents of the neighbourhood; 10 matching renovation grants each year or 50 matching grants over 5 years for landlords who own property in the neighbourhood; 20 matching renovation grants each year or 100 matching grants over 5 years for home owners who own property in the neighbourhood. The projected annual cost of implementing the initiatives identified in the neighbourhood housing plan would range between \$3.3 to \$4.2 million on an annual basis.

Community Involvement in the Planning Process

There were four components of community involvement in the planning process including:

1. Centennial Community Improvement Association – Housing Committee

The Housing Committee met on a bi-weekly basis from March 1, 2004 to October 31, 2004 to provide the leadership for planning and coordination of the neighbourhood housing plan development process. Ten to fifteen neighbourhood residents attend these meetings on a regular basis.

2. Neighbourhood Housing Survey

Twelve residents were hired from the local neighborhood to undertake a door to door survey between May 1, 2004 and June 15, 2004 to identify issues regarding housing as identified by neighbourhood residents that were asked to respond to the survey. 266 residents were surveyed, 12 surveys were incomplete and 200 residents declined to be surveyed.

3. Focus Groups

Four focus groups were held between June 1, 2004 and August 31, 2004 on the following topic themes – home ownership; rental housing; Manitoba Housing Authority housing; and homeowner/landlord renovation grants. A total of 30 residents attended the focus group sessions.

4. Community Consultation Meeting

A neighbourhood meeting was held November 2, 2004 to provide feedback to the draft neighbourhood housing plan developed by the Housing Committee of the Centennial Community Improvement Association. One hundred twenty-five residents attended the community consultation meeting.

Vision for Neighbourhood Housing

To create a diverse, stable, friendly and safe neighbourhood that provides affordable, well maintained, multiple designed and colourful rental housing and homeownership for individuals and families who are presently living in the neighbourhood.

To develop a neighbourhood that has no vacant lots, no boarded up houses, no drug houses, no graffiti, low rates of crime, safe parks, large lot sizes, well maintained trees, and regularly cleaned up garbage.

Guiding Principles

1. The development and implementation of the housing plan and initiatives will be provided under the leadership of a resident driven committee that is representative of the people who reside in the neighbourhood.
2. Community consultations will be an important part of the planning and implementation of neighbourhood housing initiatives.
3. A priority will be given to promote, respect and support the cultural, social and economic diversity of the people who live in the neighbourhood.
4. A priority will be given to address the various housing needs of people who presently live in the neighbourhood including the need for rent subsidized housing, public housing, rent-to-own housing, and homeownership. A secondary priority will be to attract individuals and families to live in the neighbourhood.
5. A priority will be given to develop single houses, duplexes and triplexes.
6. A priority will be given to develop policies and programs that promote the training and employment of local residents in the renovation and construction of houses in the neighbourhood.
7. Landlords will be expected to operate their properties in a responsible and respectful manner.
8. Tenants will be expected to live in their housing units in a responsible and respectful manner.
9. Homeowners will be expected to maintain their properties in a responsible and respectful manner.
10. A wide range of partnerships will be developed with the three levels of government, non-profit housing groups, construction contractors, cooperative landlords, financial institutions, foundations, Aboriginal and Metis organizations, and community organizations in order to address the housing needs of the residents.

Overview of Proposed Programs and Initiatives

1. Zero Tolerance Policy for Boarded Up and Vacant Houses

The Housing Committee of the Centennial Community Improvement Association will declare that effective October 31, 2004 a zero tolerance policy regarding boarded up houses will be implemented. The zero tolerance policy will include the following initiatives:

- 1.1 Develop and maintain a registry of boarded up and vacant houses*
- 1.2 Work with the City of Winnipeg to ensure that all boarded up buildings obtain and maintain the required permits to board up a building*
- 1.3 Develop and implement action plans for each of the boarded up houses to ensure that the buildings are either repaired or demolished within an established timeframe*
- 1.4 Work with the City of Winnipeg to speed up the process for the City to acquire title of boarded up buildings from absentee landlords*
- 1.5 Develop a neighbourhood recycling strategies for the materials from the boarded up buildings that are being renovated or demolished*

2. Building and Health Code Monitoring and Enforcement of Rental Properties

Eight out of ten people in the Centennial neighbourhood live in rental housing. The Housing Committee of the Centennial Community Improvement Association will work towards increasing responsibility on the part of both landlords and tenants to improve and maintain the quality of rental properties and prevent further deterioration. This will involve the following initiatives:

- 2.1 Develop and coordinate an action plan with the City of Winnipeg to conduct regular inspections of rental housing properties in the neighbourhood*
- 2.2 Develop and implement a community based tenant advocacy support and resource service for tenants living in the neighbourhood*
- 2.3 Develop and maintain a housing registry of rental properties in the neighbourhood*
- 2.4 Develop and implement a renovation and energy efficiency grant program for cooperative landlords*

3. Rent Subsidized Housing Program

The 2001 census data indicates that single parent families in the Centennial neighbourhood can only afford \$418 each month for rent and utilities. The Housing Committee of the Centennial Community Improvement Association believe that because of the high number of families on low and fixed incomes

that live in the Centennial neighbourhood, more rent subsidized housing needs to be built in the area. This will involve the following initiatives:

- 3.1 Work with existing non-profit housing organizations to develop and implement an acquisition and major rehabilitation program to convert existing properties into rent subsidized housing
- 3.2 *Work with existing non-profit housing organizations to develop and implement a new home construction program on the vacant lots in the neighbourhood for rent subsidized housing*
- 3.3 *Work with existing non-profit housing organizations to develop and implement a rent-to-own housing program in the neighbourhood for newly constructed and renovated houses*

4. Manitoba Housing Authority Tenant Relations Program

The Manitoba Housing Authority manages 432 housing units in the Centennial neighbourhood. The Housing Committee of the Centennial Community Improvement Association will work with the residents of the public housing units to create more positive tenant and landlord relations with the Manitoba Housing Authority involving the following initiatives:

- 4.1 *Assist the residents of the public housing units to organize a leadership group of tenants to identify tenant concerns and develop strategies to address the concerns identified by the tenants*
- 4.2 *Work with the Manitoba Housing Authority to improve maintenance issues identified by the public housing tenants*
- 4.3 *Work with the Manitoba Housing Authority to develop and implement a local neighbourhood waiting list strategy in order to ensure residents of the Centennial neighbourhood are given priority consideration to live in the public housing units located in the local neighbourhood*
- 4.4 *Work with the Manitoba Housing Authority to develop and implement a strategy to ensure that staff working for the housing authority in the Centennial neighbourhood, reflect the make up of the community that is being served*

5. Homeownership Program

The Housing Committee of the Centennial Community Improvement Association believes that a range of housing opportunities need to be provided to local residents including rent subsidized housing, rent-to-own housing and home ownership. The home ownership program for the neighbourhood will involve the following initiatives:

- 5.1 *Develop and implement a homeownership education and support service for people who are interested in becoming homeowners*

- 5.2 *Develop strong working relationships and partnerships with local financial institutions to develop and implement innovative mortgage financing services that would assist local residents to become home owners*
- 5.3 *Develop a resource guide for local residents about the information and responsibilities of becoming a homeowner*
- 5.4 *Develop and implement regular information sessions on budgeting, general maintenance, home renovation and home ownership responsibilities*
- 5.5 *Develop and maintain a registry for houses that are for sale in the neighbourhood*
- 5.6 *Work with non-profit housing organizations to develop and implement an acquisition and major rehabilitation program for existing properties to be sold to local neighbourhood residents*
- 5.7 *Work with non-profit housing organizations to develop and implement a new home construction program on the vacant lots in the neighbourhood to be sold to local neighbourhood residents*
- 5.8 *Develop and implement a housing renovation and energy efficiency grant program for residents who are home owners in the neighbourhood*
- 5.9 *Develop and implement a strategy to ensure homeowner insurance is affordable and accessible in the neighbourhood*

6. Housing Renovation Job and Training Program

The Housing Committee of the Centennial Community Improvement Association believe that the renovation and construction of houses in the neighbourhood provide local unemployed and underemployed community residents with an opportunity to obtain training and employment in the construction field. The CCIA believes that local employment needs to be a key guiding principle of the neighbourhood housing renewal plan. This will involve the following initiatives:

- 6.1 *Develop and implement a local training and hiring policy for any building and renovation contractors that are awarded contracts to renovate and construct houses in the Centennial neighbourhood*
- 6.2 *Develop partnerships with existing housing renovation and construction contractors regarding employment opportunities for local neighbourhood residents*
- 6.3 *Develop and implement housing construction and renovation certificate training programs for local residents – especially targeting youth, young adults and older workers*
- 6.4 *Develop an inventory of construction skills of people living in the neighbourhood.*

7. Strategic Housing Development Site Plan for the Neighbourhood

The Housing Committee of the Centennial Community Improvement Association that the housing renewal plan needs balance the need to develop strategic

locations within the neighbourhood, as well as pursuing opportunities as they arise throughout the neighbourhood. This will involve the following initiatives:

- 7.1 *Develop and implement the renovation and construction on targeted streets in the neighbourhood in order to focus the impact of the housing renewal plan*
- 7.2 *Pursue strategic opportunities such placing a priority on renovating boarded up houses regardless of their location in the neighbourhood*