

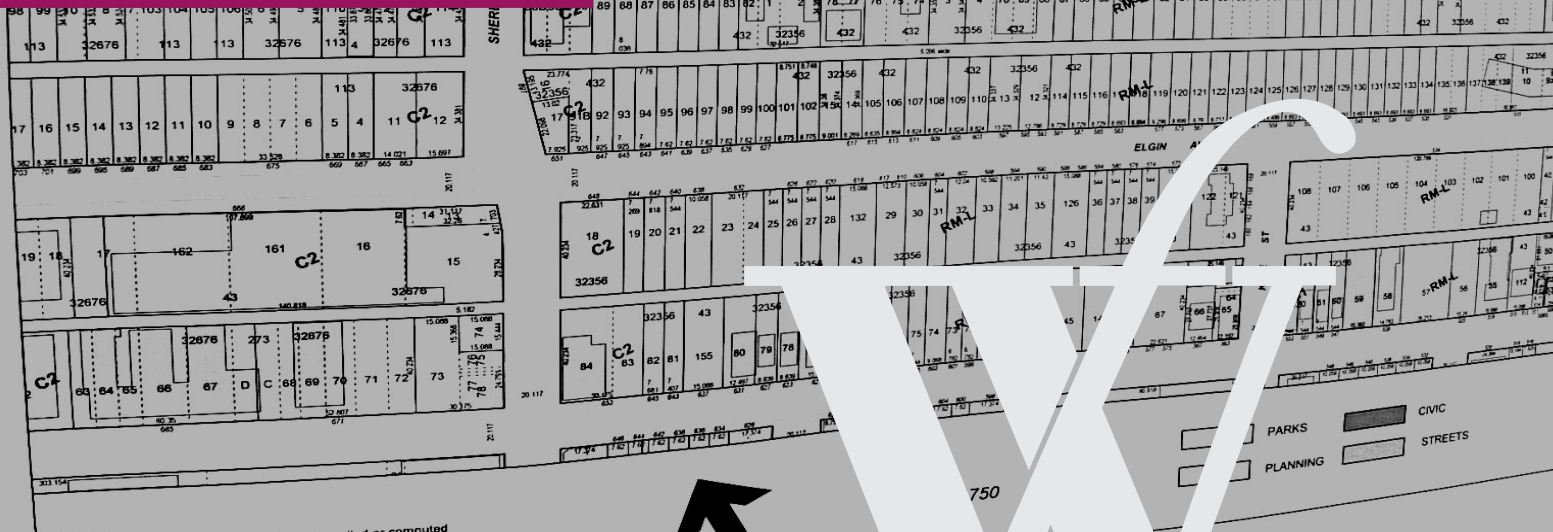


THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION

Centennial Neighbourhood 'A Snapshot in Time'



Background Information
for the Centennial
Neighbourhood Project





The Good, the Bad and...

Area Characteristics

Centennial neighbourhood is bordered by four primary streets: Princess Street (on the east); William Avenue (on the south); Sherbrook Street (to the west); and, Logan Avenue (on the north).

The neighbourhood has a broad mix of land uses and zoning. The eastern border, along Princess Street is dominated by commercial/warehouse type activities. Red River College's downtown campus, City Hall and the civic administration building, are major features within and immediately adjacent to the neighbourhood.

Commercial/retail activity extends along much of William Avenue, mixed with residential dwellings (single and multi-family), and the Health Sciences Centre. Commercial and retail activity is also present along Isabel Street which runs through the centre of the neighbourhood. It can also be noted that Isabel serves as a major link between the north end of the city and downtown. As such, it also provides a significant physical 'divider' within Centennial.

Pockets of commercial and light industrial activity are also evident throughout much of the neighbourhood. Vacant and/or derelict residential and non-residential buildings are also visible.

The commercial, industrial and institutional land uses break up the housing and residential 'feel' within many segments of the area, and may be viewed as a detriment for

the generation of stable and desirable housing. At the same time, they can provide opportunities to support local growth and employment development. Access to some services are present within the immediate neighbourhood (groceries, pharmacy, medical, etc.).

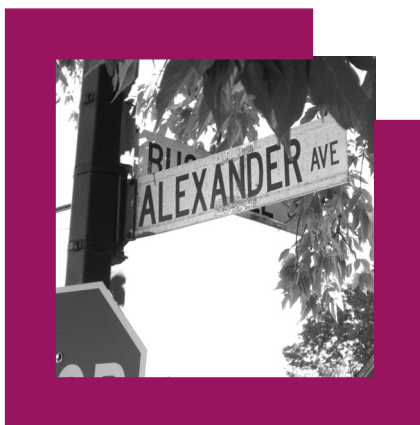
Centennial is also home to a mix of housing types. In 1996, the total number of recorded residential dwellings was 880, including 320 single detached and 75 semi-detached dwelling units and 485 rental units.

It should be noted that, while the proportion of rental units is steadily dropping across Winnipeg, within Centennial, rental accommodations remain consistently high in number. This factor is viewed by some as a contributor to mobility and instability.

Housing stock is generally considered to be older, with over 50% of all residential dwellings between 40-60 years of age.

The neighbourhood has a variety of parks and green spaces, ranging in size from two residential lots, to the majority of a full street block – adjacent to the Freighthouse (Central Community

Centre). Park usage appears to vary dramatically, with many of the parks having aging infrastructure and playground equipment.



“...it has lots more potential than people are giving it credit for.”

Winnipeg's Centennial Neighbourhood

Who Lives Here?

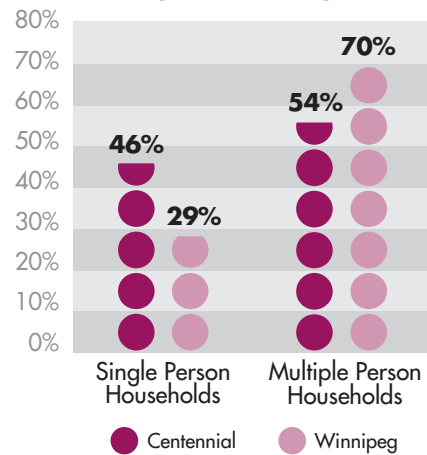
Neighbourhood Demographics

As of the 1996 Statistics Canada Census, the total population of the Centennial neighbourhood was 2,210, a drop of 19.3% from the 1991 census period. The population of the neighbourhood has continued to decline since 1976, when it stood at 3,510.

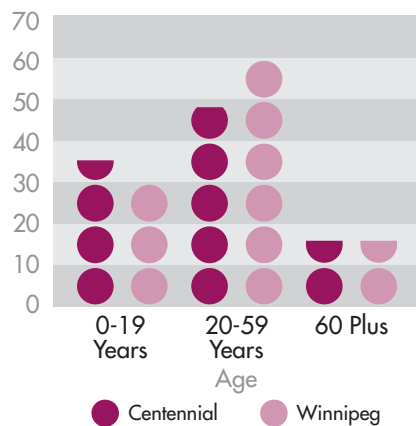
Overall, the neighbourhood has a younger than average population, with nearly 36% of all residents under the age of 20 years.

A total of 16% of the population was over 60 years of age, and the majority (48%) were adults, aged 20 – 59 years of age.

Comparative Family Sizes



Population By Age



The Census information indicates that there were a total of 880 households in Centennial in 1996. The neighbourhood has a greater than average proportion of single person households/non-family households than the Winnipeg average.

“I like it here...
I like this area...
why should
I move?”

The significant proportion of single person, and/or non-family households can have implications for the type of efforts needed to involve people in the neighbourhood, and to have them take an active role in its development.

“Lots of movement of families... nobody homesteads.”

The neighbourhood has a very significant Aboriginal population (49.5%), with the majority being of Ojibway descent.

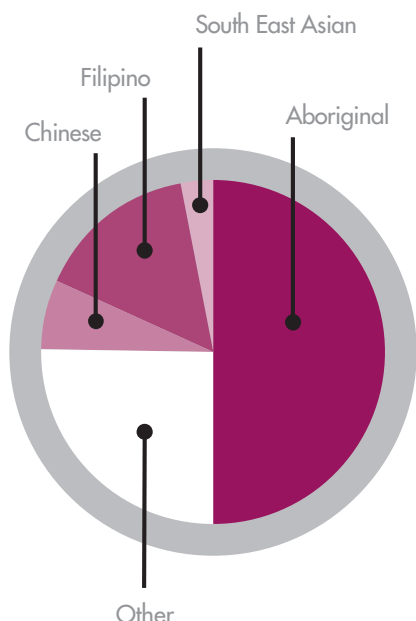
Of the remainder of the population, 25.2% are characterized as being visible minorities – primarily Filipino, Chinese and South East Asian.

Within these latter populations, it is interesting to note that a high percentage of these groups (85 – 96%) indicated retention of knowledge of their first (home land) languages. This often tends to indicate either, recent immigration, or the active maintenance of a strong connection to heritage and culture.



“Lots of parents don’t have computer skills, or literacy.”

Major Population Groups



Census data indicates that recent immigration is not a significant factor in the neighbourhood population, giving further suggestion that the visible minority population in the area maintains a strong cultural connection.

The implications of this have been suggested within the resident discussions, where it is noted that racism (by both adults and youth) is evident both, within the neighbourhood, and outside of the neighbourhood. It is obvious that this situation can act as a barrier to bringing all residents together towards common goals.

Mobility and transience was quite high in 1996, (59%) as compared to Winnipeg’s average of 44%. Transience and its implications for the schools will be presented below.

A Place to Stay, Food to Eat, and a Way of Paying For it All

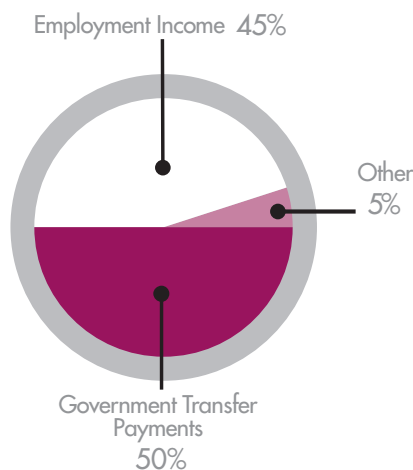
Adequate income is a factor that directly affects residents within Centennial. The neighbourhood ranks as having one of the highest unemployment rates in the city. In 1996, this rate stood at 29% for adults and 42% for youth. The unemployment rate has risen steadily from since 1976.

Basic Needs

Another identifier of the impact of income on families is the ‘Low Income Cut-Off’ (LICO)¹. This calculation accounts for the weighted income of families with children. In 1991, the LICO rate within Centennial was 76%. By 1996 this rate had risen to 78% (690 households out of 885 below the ‘poverty line’).

Employment income makes up only 45% of total income within the neighbourhood, while government transfer payments account for slightly more than 50% of total income.

Sources of Income



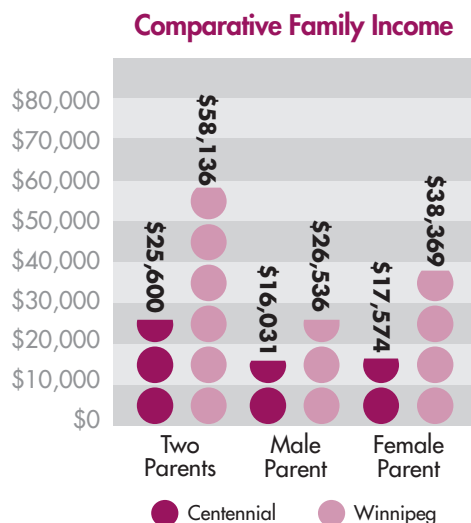
In 1996 the economic profile of the neighbourhood was:

- **67% of households earned under \$20,000 annually;**
 - **3% earned in excess of \$50,000; and,**
 - **Average household income – \$18,294.**
- Comparably, within Winnipeg as a whole for that same period:**
- **25% of households earned less than \$20,000;**
 - **35% earned in excess of \$50,000; and,**
 - **Average household income – \$44,937.**

¹ It is acknowledged that debate continues on the appropriate use of LICO and/or other identifiers, which will be accounted for within the overall evaluation. For the purposes of this report, this factor has been used as it provides a consistent definition across many jurisdictions.

Winnipeg's Centennial Neighbourhood

Centennial family incomes are significantly lower than the Winnipeg average, and single parent families, particularly single female parents, are most dramatically affected.



At the same time, the neighbourhood is immediately adjacent to one of the city's largest employers (Health Sciences Centre) and is surrounded by industrial, commercial and retail activity and Red River College that could provide potential training and employment opportunities for residents into the future.

As a result of the limited incomes of residents, issues of health and food insecurity are often dominant. Winnipeg Harvest has arrangements for food distribution with a number of area agencies, and the school uses Harvest's resources to provide snacks for students on a regular basis.

Compounding the issue of food insecurity is the reality that there are no local, large scale grocery stores, and auto transportation is limited (less than 60% of residents had access to vehicles). As a result, opportunities to purchase food from larger retailers, taking advantage of competition and bulk purchases are very limited.

"Issues around garbage, high speed chases, prostitution, crack, graffiti and boarded up houses..."

While health care information is currently not available on a neighbourhood basis, it is commonly recognized that there is a direct relationship between socio-economic situation and health. Poverty is a significant determinant of health. It is also acknowledged that, for a large number of Aboriginal persons, mobility and related factors make regular health care inaccessible.

Shelter is an additional concern within Centennial neighbourhood. Of the 880 dwelling units in the neighbourhood, nearly 16% were in need of major repairs in 1999.

"The worst street is Pacific...a few drug houses there."



"Stability in the community (centres on) safety and housing."



There has been a decline in the overall quality of dwelling units, as evidenced in several ways:

- Designations of buildings as being "unsafe" grew to nearly 8% of all dwellings in 1999, far above the Winnipeg average;
- From 1983 – 1998, over 40 dwellings were demolished, with no new dwellings replacing them;
- Maintenance orders have remained consistently high (in excess of 60 annually) for the entire 1989 – 1999 period;
- Only 38 permits for repairs or alterations were issued during the overall period from 1994 to 1999 – investment in neighbourhood housing is minimal; and,
- The median selling price for single family homes (actual selling price), dropped from \$32,500 in 1986 to \$17,500 in 1999 (a 46% decline) – compared to over \$90,000 within Winnipeg as a whole.

Safety remains a growing and significant issue facing the Centennial neighbourhood.

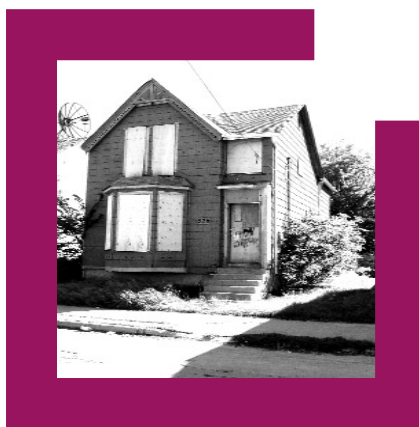
The total number of crimes reported in 1999 was 554. Of these, over one quarter were crimes against people – an indicator of the concern for personal safety. It should also be acknowledged that criminal activity in areas that are perceived to be unsafe often goes unreported.

“Violence isn’t too bad... gang activity is not as visible (as it was). They are a night pack... keep to themselves at night.”

The opinions of residents echoes this finding. Personal and family safety issues were a recurring point of discussion amongst both the adults and youth that provided their feedback. Parents are clearly concerned for their children, particularly their younger children. The school is seen as a safe place, but concern exists over the streets and playgrounds. Bullying, gang activity, the number of group homes with inadequate supervision, and the lack of strong parental supervision are all reasons given for these concerns.

Youth indicated that they feel safe when they are in their respective 'homes' like Rossbrook House, but are less safe away from the familiarity of these places. Agencies like these are to be commended for making every effort to maintain safe settings.

Gang activity is evident, particularly at night, and particularly within the eastern section of the overall neighbourhood, across Isabel.



“...gangs across Isabel & William... lots of parties.”



Winnipeg's Centennial Neighbourhood

“Parental involvement was very little. One parent/teacher night no one came. Now we have really good turnout for parent/teacher conferences (40-60-70% of parents.)

At the Heart of it All

Children

Information from the 1996 Census indicates that the population of Centennial is young, and had a high proportion of children aged 0-7 years. Taking this information and extending in into the current year, would mean that there should be a large school age population within the neighbourhood.

Dufferin School is the primary elementary school within the geographic boundaries of the neighbourhood. Adjacent to the formal neighbourhood boundaries (to the south) is Victoria Albert School. Children moving on to junior high most often attend Hugh John MacDonald. For the purpose of this report, primary investigation was done within Dufferin School. Additional information will be gathered around other area schools, once the pattern of attendance can be confirmed.²

Dufferin is a kindergarten to grade 6 school. The school has undergone many changes in the past several years, under recognition of the neighbourhood in which it operates. This has tended to focus on continually emphasizing ways of retaining students and keeping them within a strong learning pattern.

School administrators at Dufferin indicate that the school population is approximately 90% Aboriginal students. Even with the very high percentage of Aboriginal persons in the neighbourhood (49.5%), the dramatic composition of the school population raises a number of questions.

At issue is where the remaining students (particularly those identified as visible minorities) are attending classes, and whether parents select 'schools of choice' under consideration of either higher Aboriginal school populations, or higher ethnic populations.

It is known that student mobility within Dufferin School is significant and has a dramatic affect on classrooms. Mobility within the school setting is defined total transfers divided by average enrolment.

From October 2001 to May 2002, the school experienced a mobility rate of 51.1%. This implies that over half of the student population changed during the course of the year. Further information, however, indicates that much of this mobility rate appears to be due to a smaller number of families.

“School is a foundation in the community.”



² While Victoria Albert and Hugh John MacDonald schools are physically out of the neighbourhood, further analysis will be done to identify the enrolment of neighbourhood children.



“One child had been to 11 different schools when they got to Dufferin School.”



Within that same October to May period, the number of students that did not move (the stable population in the school) equalled 213 individuals (out of a school population of 260). This means that 47 students were involved in a total of 76 transfers in and 56 transfers out of the school (the 51.1% mobility rate).

Indications from the school are that several families have moved their children in and out of the school more than once during the school year. Each time this happens, classrooms are disrupted and it is estimated that the mobile student loses up to six months of learning per move.

“...50% of school aged children are two grade levels below, due to undiagnosed reasons and attendance...some have missed 50% of their time.”

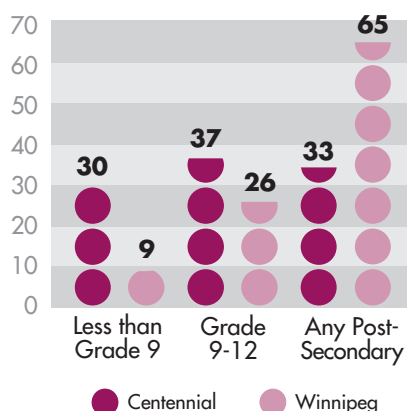
In Support of Their Children

Families

While the vast majority of all families include children, nearly 19% of all couples (married and common-law) do not have children.

Educational attainment in families is an issue that can impact on children's success in school.

Family Educational Attainment



“We have such resilient children and families.”

“The (parent) resource centre is giving parents a room for themselves.”

Winnipeg's Centennial Neighbourhood

In Support of Families

Community Resources

Centennial neighbourhood has a number of active community supports for families and their children. Dufferin School has recognized the importance of parental involvement, and has prioritized that involvement by taking a number of steps to facilitate this. At the present time, there is a community support worker and a parent resource room in the school that directly contribute to active parental participation.

Programming offered within the school, such as the FAST program work to strengthen the understanding and bond between parents and their children. Resident support and skill development is also present within a number of smaller agencies such as Anishinabe Fellowship.

In the broader neighbourhood, Rossbrook House is a long-standing organization serving children and youth in the area. Participants tend to gain a strong loyalty to Rossbrook, and actively seek to remain involved in various ways as they move from children to young adults. Rossbrook has been particularly successful in providing an alternative to 'street life' and gives young people the opportunity to engage in positive activities, and to learn skills and relationships that build personal capacity.

"Rossbrook is a safe place... a good place to learn self discipline."

In a similar fashion, children and youth participate in activities through the Central Community Centre and the Winnipeg Boys and Girls Club at Freighthouse. Both provide opportunities for recreation, understanding and a place to attend that is safe and positive. Loyalty to these activities is also seen to be quite strong.

"...FAST program is working with 8-10 families. Two of those families are now taking leadership roles in the school."





“There is no coordination with recreational services... would like to bring Rossbrook, Freighthouse and Dufferin together to streamline.”

The neighbourhood also has three child care centres within or adjacent to it, providing both preschool and before, lunch and after school programming. It is not yet known if attendance at these sites is primarily by local resident children, or is attended by children from the broader community. Parental support is present within these sites, and through parenting classes available at the school.

As noted above, the neighbourhood is adjacent to the Health Sciences Centre, and also has the Health Action Centre within it, providing both, primary treatment, as well as a range of wellness/prevention focused programming.

While some community resources may exist, community members indicate very limited access to supports other than recreation for children and youth. In addition, collaborative action and organization across these agencies does not appear to be present.

Opportunities to work together to mutually support a larger number of residents, and to facilitate the ‘coming together’ of different groups of individuals in the neighbourhood is seen to be beneficial to the overall community building efforts.

“...some favouritism between Rossbrook and Freighthouse ...maybe we need a third place to both of these (with pool tables)...a neutral place.”



“...need more basketball courts,...there is only one in the area and it is wrecked.”

Winnipeg's Centennial Neighbourhood

“... less gangs that ten years ago... community fights back now.”

The Way to the Future

Leadership and Ownership

There are a number of individuals and groups that provide a sense of leadership and exhibit strong ownership and loyalty to their own ‘parts’ of the Centennial neighbourhood.

As noted above, Dufferin School is experiencing higher levels of parental participation because of efforts to actively engage parents. Through this, a stronger and more vibrant parent advisory council can grow.

The Winnipeg Boys and Girls Club and Rossbrook House support and develop their own membership, and extend the opportunity for others to become involved. Agencies such as Rossbrook, Boys and Girls, Freighthouse Day Nursery, and the Central Community Centre (Freighthouse) have their own boards of directors that are active and highly committed to these efforts.

An emerging resident group is present, and indications are that they are beginning to gain knowledge and understanding of the value of working collectively and having a stronger, unified voice.

It is also evident, from discussions with some of area residents and youth, that there exists a sense of ownership within individual sections of the neighbourhood. On some of the blocks, neighbours are more likely to know each other and to look out for each other. Against a number of challenges and a changing environment, many residents defend and support where they live.

While a number of individuals and groups are clearly showing leadership, it does not appear that there is an overall sense of neighbourhood that crosses over special interests and individual organizations.



A number of factors are seen to contribute to this, including, race, culture, mobility, owner/renter differences, etc. These factors contribute to a gap in overall focus on broad neighbourhood issues.

Overall, a broad mix of challenges and opportunities are evident within the Centennial neighbourhood. However, it is equally evident that there are groups and individuals that have the energy and willingness to build their strengths and foster a greater sense of capacity and ownership towards change within the neighbourhood.

“Given the right circumstances people would clean up their own backyards...”

“Nice neighbourhood... want to make it even safer for my children.”

Winnipeg's Centennial Neighbourhood

Acknowledgements

This document has been prepared to provide readers with a sense of background and context for the work of the Centennial Neighbourhood Project. The Centennial Neighbourhood Project is an initiative of The Winnipeg Foundation, that will look to and rely on the efforts and relationships with a range of community, public and private sector partnerships.

The intent of this document has been to present the current situation within the neighbourhood, both in terms of data and facts, as well as opinions and perceptions. More importantly, this document recognizes and acknowledges the work of the myriad of individuals and groups that are active in Centennial, past and present, upon whose efforts the current initiative can be built.

The work of the Centennial Neighbourhood Project would like to acknowledge the organizations and agencies, active in providing direct support and services, particularly their respective staff, board members and volunteers (with apologies to any hat have been missed), including:

- Anishinabe Fellowship;
- Central Community Centre;
- Freighthouse Day Nursery;
- Health Action Centre;
- Rossbrook House;
- Salvation Army;
- SEED Winnipeg; and,
- Winnipeg Boys and Girls Clubs.

Those that work to address housing concerns through organizations such as:

- Ayawin Housing Corporation;
- Kinew Housing Corporation;
- Manitoba Housing; and,
- Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation.

The resources and assistance available through private and public vehicles and sources of financial and developmental assistance, such as:

- Area schools including, Dufferin School, Victoria Albert School and Hugh John MacDonald Junior High School;
- Government of Canada (Health Canada; Human Resources Development Canada).
- City of Winnipeg (Planning Department and Community Services);
- Government of Canada (Health Canada; Human Resources Development Canada).
- Province of Manitoba (Neighbourhoods Alive, Family Services and Education, Citizenship and Training);
- The Winnipeg Foundation; and,
- United Way of Winnipeg.

And most importantly, the residents that are seeking to make the neighbourhood better for themselves and their families, through vehicles such as:

- Parent Advisory Committees at Dufferin and Victoria Albert Schools;
- Past and newly emerging resident groups and local business leaders.

Thank you



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