

SHERRI ROLLINS

For City Councillor
Fort Rouge – East Fort Garry



WBHA QUESTIONNAIRE

Q: Housing is a foundation of healthy communities. Limited affordable housing options create barriers for low-income households in Manitoba leading to visible homelessness, hidden homelessness, and core housing need. What role do you think the city should play to increase the supply of adequate, suitable and affordable housing?

A: The city should be an advocate for adequate, suitable, and affordable housing on behalf of city residents who need it. We need elected officials that will fight for better housing, as we work to address structural and social needs in our community. When the city invests in or supports capital investments, these projects should reflect established local planning goals around affordable housing. Councillors should support the plans like the West Broadway Community Housing Plan, facilitated by the West Broadway Community Organization, so that local communities are engaged in decisions about housing in their neighbourhood.

The city can educate the public on the complexity surrounding affordable housing in terms of relative affordability so that there is a better understanding of the problem we are trying to solve. There is a wide difference between the type and quality of housing that the average family can afford, compared to the average rent low income individuals and families can afford. Making informed, meaningful decisions about housing supply requires city council and the public to better understanding these underlying issues.

Ultimately, we need leaders at the city who will advocate for real progress on affordable housing. I believe the city should have the courage to use its powers to incentivize and require the development of affordable housing in the city. This is why I called for council to delay the vote on True North until after the election if it wasn't going to demand affordable housing as part of the deal. Our city needs new housing of all types and we cannot simply rely on private suburban development to meet our affordable housing needs.

Q: People on low incomes and those with mobility issues have fewer transportation options. A healthy transportation network prioritizes walking, cycling and public transit. If elected, how will you prioritize sustainable and healthy modes of travel in Winnipeg?

A: Our city needs to make public and active transportation a priority so that everyone in our community has a safe way to get to work, school, or the store. Every year, pedestrians and cyclists are injured on Winnipeg roads, while there is increasing worry about safety for riders and drivers on public transit. I want the city to adopt a 'Vision Zero' model for road safety and renewal that views every injury and fatality as a preventable tragedy rather than an accident.

ANSWER CONTINUED ON FOLLOWING PAGE...

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Vision Zero is a long-term, evidence-based strategy that targets how infrastructure is built and traffic signs are used, including road redesign, traffic calming, lower speed limits, extended cross-walk times, pedestrian-driven signaling, targeted traffic law enforcements, and increased public awareness campaigns. By promoting intentional design for pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit, we can make our roads safer for everyone.

I have long been an advocate and ally for a barrier-free and accessible province and city. We need to make sure our roadways, sidewalks, and public transit are built for everyone, not just cars. We also need to make that snow clearing and removal is better managed with a bigger budget. Too often people are stuck in their homes or can't navigate major roadways because sidewalk clearance is so poor. Finally, we need to make sure that Handi-transit services are accessible and reliable, and that Winnipeg Transit has the funding it needs to provide routes that serve more people, more often.

Q: Given that the continued growth of the Winnipeg Police Budget has been called unsustainable (by the CCPA alternative budget, the mayor, the former police chief), where would money be better spent to improve safety for all community members?

A: I share the CCPA's concern about the manner in which policing is funding in our city, and the impact that has on other city priorities. I am concerned with the lack of Indigenous representation and community oversight of our policing, particularly in light of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, and my work at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I think we need to focus more on prevention and ensuring people in crisis or with addictions have access to meaningful supports, rather than a reactive policing model.

We need to make sure more money is spent on community social and economic development like education, housing, health, and not just policing. We should open 24-hour safe spaces for Indigenous Women, Girls, and Trans-identified youth to provide better options for those vulnerable people who are more likely to be victims of crime. And we should work with community organizations and non-profits who are working at the front lines of public safety. There is more to public safety than just policing and we need to make sure the city's budgeting process does not simply place all its resources into the police budget without also looking to address the structural social issues and vulnerabilities in our society.

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Q: How would you propose that City Council work with the business community to ensure the City permitting process and related fees as well as the bureaucratic structure relating to timeliness of those permits do not hinder or discourage business development?

A: I know that planning and permitting is an important factor for major development projects and that there needs to be a consistent and predictable process in place for permitting and approvals. The city should play a role in being fearlessly optimistic in terms of innovation and development, and I am open exploring ways that we can make the process more efficient. I think we should have a process that is focused on helping, not just compliance, and think it makes sense to have a system where if all the required information and documentation is provided properly, there are no unnecessary delays in approval. That said, the city cannot walk back from its obligations to public health and safety, the environment, and public consultation, simply in the name of fast-tracking development.

Making sure this process works better would be a key priority for the Economic Development Office that I would advocate for. This office would be focused on creating processes at city hall that help responsible, sustainable development occur, and support that works for our community and builders. By having a dedicated office, there would be a clear place to go to when facing issues around permitting or fees, and the ability to identify and address structural concerns more quickly.

Q: Do you support the phasing out of cosmetic pesticides, elm tree spraying and mosquito control? Why or why not?

A: I believe that all our families, children, and pets should be able to enjoy being outside and in green space without the risks associated with pesticides. We need to reduce the risk to human health that has been identified by the Canadian Cancer Society. We also need to address the public health impacts of communicable diseases transmitted by mosquitos, and ensure that our trees are kept healthy and free from disease.

Q: Vacant buildings are present in many parts of the ward, what role should the City play in ensuring such structures are renovated or secured?

A: Our city needs to do a better job at addressing vacant buildings so that they are safely maintained and restored for productive use. Another role of the Economic Development Office would be to help make sure that city policies and practices around vacant and derelict buildings are providing a better path to redevelopment and renewal. In cases where there is clear, long-term noncompliance, the city should be willing to step in and force real improvements to be done or impose real consequences. In other situations, and the city should move to help these property owners throughout a redevelopment process. The city should also consider “pink zoning” some corridors where building are vacant so that innovative and progressive solutions aren’t frustrated by difficult processes meant for new construction.