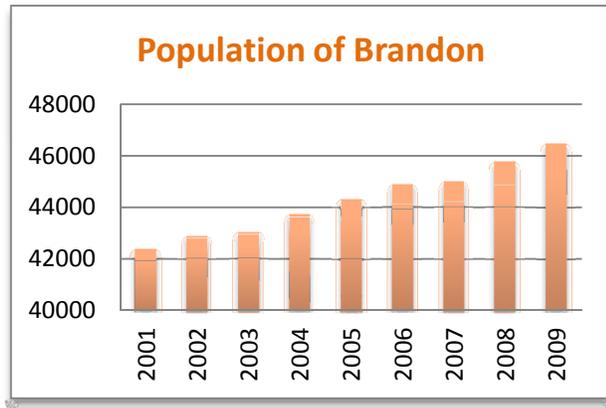


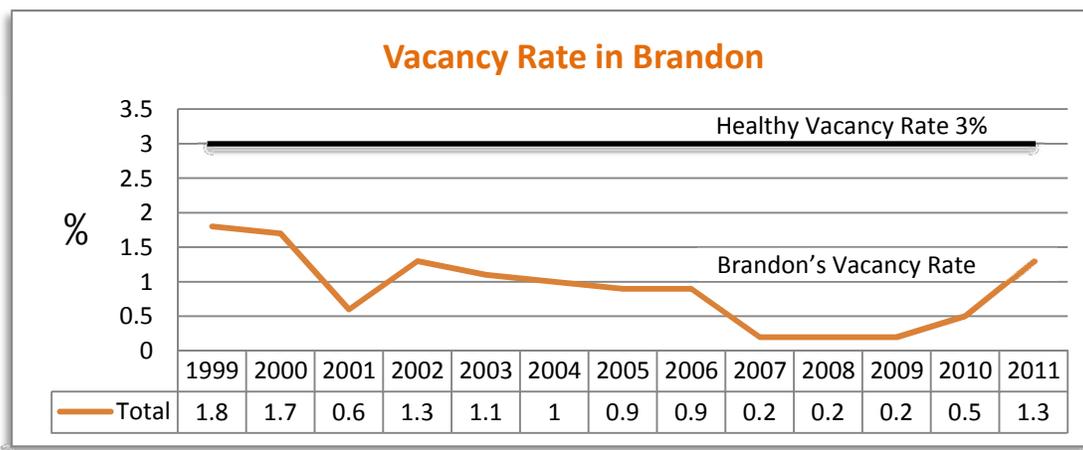
## 2010-2014 Community Plan Executive Summary

### Brandon's Housing Supply Not Keeping Pace with Growing Population

Brandon is a regional service centre for Southwestern Manitoba with a growing population and an expanding economy. According to Manitoba Health Statistics, Brandon's population grew from 44,329 in 2005 to 46,487 in 2009 (4.9% increase). Preliminary data indicate Manitoba's real Gross Domestic Product expanded by 2.4% in 2010. Brandon's 2010 unemployment rate of 5.2% was significantly below the national average of 7.6%.



Brandon's supply of housing has not kept pace with the City's growth. This impacts both potential homeowners and renters. The average selling price of a home in Brandon rose from \$120,000 in 2006 to \$187,000 in 2010 (55% increase). In the rental market, the expanding population has contributed to lower vacancy rates. Brandon's vacancy rate for apartments was 1.3% in April 2011 (CMHC, 2011). To put Brandon's vacancy rate in perspective, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation's definition of a healthy vacancy rate is 3.0% and the Canadian average vacancy rate for cities over 10,000 was 2.7% in April, 2011 (CMHC, 2011). The high demand for housing relative to supply has also contributed to increases in the cost of rent. Average rents in Brandon increased 3.0% between October 2008 and October 2009, and 4.1% between October 2009 and October 2010.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Manitoba has a system of rent controls. In 2010, Manitoba's maximum allowable rent increase was 1.0%. However, certain properties may be exempt from rent controls if they are newer builds, recently renovated or are higher end developments.

The limited supply of housing most acutely impacts individuals with lower incomes or who are unemployed. Of the 95 individuals provided emergency shelter by the Canadian Mental Health Association in 2010, 45 responded (47%) that they needed employment in order to keep their housing. In December 2009, 72% of Employment and Income Assistance recipients were paying more for rent than their social allocation.<sup>2</sup> The high cost of housing reduces the amount of money people on fixed incomes have available for other necessities, including food. The Samaritan House Food Bank provided 8,549 hampers in 2007 and 12,083 hampers in 2010 (41% increase).

### Community Advisory Board (CAB)

The Community Advisory Board (CAB) was formed in 2000 to make recommendations as to how resources from the federal government's Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) can be invested most effectively in our community. Brandon and sixty other larger communities with significant homelessness issues are designated for HPS funding. The CAB consists of eleven representatives from diverse organizations that serve Brandon's homeless and at-risk population.

The CAB also has two subcommittees. The Lived Experience Subcommittee consists of six people who have experienced homelessness. It advises the Community Advisory Board as the Board makes recommendations for HPS investments in Brandon. The members appreciate the opportunity to have their voices heard and to effect positive change in our community. Secondly, the Workshop Subcommittee consists of service providers who offer the CAB input regarding capacity building workshops.

Since 2000, the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and its predecessor program have invested \$4.8 million dollars in Brandon. Through partnerships with all levels of government and the non-profit sector, HPS has leveraged an additional

<sup>2</sup> The social allocation for housing in Manitoba includes: Employment and Income Assistance, the Manitoba Shelter Benefit and the Portable Housing Benefit.

### Good Practices Lived Experience Subcommittee

The six-member Lived Experience Subcommittee consisting of people who have experienced homelessness advises the Community Advisory Board as it makes recommendations for HPS investments in Brandon. Members appreciate the opportunity to have their voices heard and to effect positive change in our community.

### Benevolent Fund

The CAB has formed partnerships with churches to create a centralized, one-time emergency Benevolent Fund. The Fund is managed by the Brandon Regional Health Authority's 7<sup>th</sup> Street Health Access Centre. In 2009, 129 people requested money from the fund; 79 requests were granted and the remaining 50 people received options, referrals or alternatives. The fund prevents people from accessing an identical item at multiple churches, and acts as a catalyst to link people in crisis to necessary services.

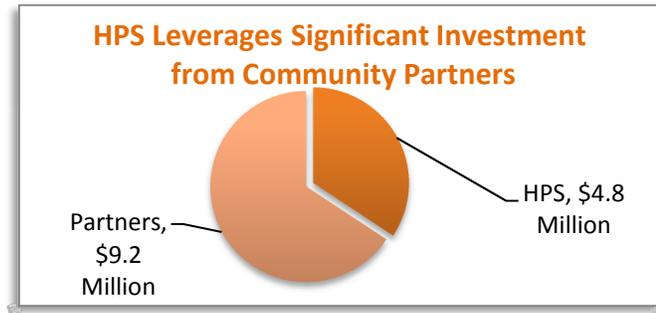
### Self-Contained Emergency Units

As an alternative to dorm-style emergency shelter units, CAB supported investment in self-contained emergency units with a private washroom, bed, refrigerator, and microwave oven. The CAB favored self-contained units as they would provide a high degree of privacy and security, while facilitating an easier transition to more permanent housing.

## 2010-2014 Community Plan Executive Summary Homelessness Partnering Strategy

\$9.2 million dollar investment for a total investment of \$14 million dollars.

In November 2010, the Government of Canada committed to continuing the HPS in Brandon until March 31, 2014, at the funding level of \$441,000 per year. The federal government requires all communities designated for HPS to complete a Community Plan. The purpose of the Plan is: to evaluate the previous four years of HPS funding in Brandon, to identify strengths and gaps, and to establish priorities for the 2011 to 2014 funding period.



### Evaluation of CAB 2007-2011

The members of CAB carry a wealth of experience working with the homeless and at-risk population. Most of the CAB members have been working in this area for more than ten years. Since the Board's inception, many meaningful partnerships have been established. For example, a recently constructed emergency shelter unit is owned by Youth for Christ, and operated by the Canadian Mental Health Association. The CAB has collaborated effectively with all levels of government and ensured HPS initiatives complement, rather than duplicate, existing programs. The CAB functions in a highly transparent manner and strictly adheres to its conflict-of-interest policy.

CAB is supportive of the unique needs of diverse groups in Brandon, including youth, people struggling with addictions and mental health issues, recent immigrants, and the Aboriginal community. CAB prioritizes Aboriginal organizations for projects targeting Aboriginal people, and CAB will increase its membership to include an additional Aboriginal member and another community representative.

The greatest challenge for the CAB is to strike a balance between inclusivity, and efficiency. The CAB aims to have diverse representation without becoming unmanageably large.

### Evaluation of Continuum of Housing and Supports 2007-2011 Priorities

From 2007-2011, the CAB has supported Homelessness Partnering Strategy funding for the creation of:

- 5 new emergency shelter units
- 10 new transitional housing units
- 8 new supportive housing units

## 2010-2014 Community Plan Executive Summary

### Homelessness Partnering Strategy

The CAB achieved or exceeded its 2007 goals for creating new emergency, transitional and supportive units.

Area of Priority	2007-2011 Goal	Funded Through HPS
<b>Emergency Shelter</b>	5 Units	5 Units (Goal Achieved)
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	7 Units	10 Units (Goal Exceeded)
<b>Supportive Housing</b>	7 Units	8 Units (Goal Exceeded)

The CAB has supported investment in existing housing and crucial non-residential facilities so they remain functional and up to code:

- Renovated Samaritan House Food Bank
- Purchased a van to transport donations to Food Bank
- Purchased a van to transport clients at the Westman Women’s shelter
- Supported Youth Asset Training Program
- Renovated Youth for Christ’s drop-in centre

To ensure the sustainability of projects, CAB has recommended that HPS funding be invested exclusively in capital expenditures and not operational costs. Partners including non-profit organizations and the Province of Manitoba have provided critical ongoing operational funding in addition to their capital expenditure contribution.

While daycare facilities were identified as a funding priority in the 2007 Community Plan, the CAB did not recommend HPS funding for this as daycare was later deemed to be an area of provincial jurisdiction.

### Evaluation of Community Development Priorities for 2007-2011

To fulfill its Community Development priorities, the CAB has hired a part-time Program and Administrative Assistant. The purpose of this position is to continue effective community coordination and enhance Brandon’s strategy for preventing homelessness. The Assistant has:

- Supported the CAB in its day-to-day operations
- Printed a written and online resource guide
- Gathered and disseminated information regarding best practices
- Facilitated the Lived Experience Subcommittee
- Enhanced partnerships to improve service delivery to those in need
- Organized capacity building workshops for Brandon’s Service Providers who support the homeless or at-risk population

The detailed Resource Guide of Community Services and Condensed Crisis Contact Brochure are among the CAB’s most significant achievements in furthering community development. The high demand for the guides stimulated budget reallocations to allow for the printing of additional



## 2010-2014 Community Plan Executive Summary

### Homelessness Partnering Strategy

guides for a total printing of 550. Both the guides and brochure are available electronically at [brandonhomelessness.ca](http://brandonhomelessness.ca).

The CAB engages Brandon's service providers and has invited stakeholders to participate in several events. Recent events include a November 2010 presentation by distinguished social science researcher Dr. Alex Michalos, on determining what makes for quality of life. In December 2010, the CAB organized a panel discussion with local experts exploring the relationship between substance abuse and homelessness. Approximately, sixty people attended the discussion. In March 2011, CAB hosted a session on motivation interviewing, a critical skill for those working with the homelessness and at risk population.

### Consultation for 2011-2014 Priorities

The CAB consulted broadly to establish Brandon's 2011-2014 Community Plan priorities:

- Client focus group held at the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Health Access Centre
- Client focus group at the Samaritan House Food Bank
- Client focus group at the Helping Hands Soup Kitchen
- Government and service provider community forum at Brandon City Hall
- Questionnaire distributed to stakeholders who could not attend the community forum
- Independent interview with Housing Resource Worker at the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Health Access Centre
- Independent interview with the Director of the Canadian Mental Health Association

All consultations were facilitated by the Program and Administrative Assistant.

### Six Priority Areas Established

Through the broad consultation process, 6 areas of priority were established for the 2011 to 2014 funding period. Approximate funding allocations for the priorities were set.

2011-2014 Areas of Priority	What it is	Approx. Funding Allocation
<b>Emergency Shelter</b>	3 Units & Cold Weather Response	5%
<b>Transitional Housing</b>	9 Units	30%
<b>Supportive Housing</b>	10 Units	25%
<b>Skills Enhancement</b>	Social Enterprise & Skills Project (Each helping 6+ people)	15%
<b>Non-Residential Facilities</b>	Non-Residential Facility	10%
<b>Community Coordination</b>	Resource Guides, Workshops, Lived Experience Subcommittee, Website, etc.	15%

## 2011-2014 Areas of Priority

### Emergency Shelter

*The CAB's objective is to support the development of a cold-weather response and 3 self-contained emergency housing units by March 31, 2014. The cold-weather response may operate on a day-to-day basis or extend the capacity of existing shelter units during the extreme cold. Emergency shelters provide temporary, short-term accommodation and may include supports such as food, clothing and counseling.*

### Transitional Housing

*The CAB's objective is to support the creation of 9 transitional housing units with appropriate supports by March 31, 2014. Transitional Housing facilities provide service beyond basic needs and, while not permanent, generally allow for a longer length of stay than emergency housing facilities. Transitional housing is targeted to those in need of structure, support, and/or skill-building to move from homelessness to housing stability.*

### Supportive Housing

*The CAB's objective is to facilitate the creation of 10 supportive-housing units with long-term, 24-hour supports by March 31, 2014. Supportive Housing is for individuals who require ongoing, around-the clock supports. As a regional centre, Brandon is often a place of relocation for individuals requiring support, including many with disabilities. Several of Brandon's existing supportive housing units are aging, lack elevator capacity and are not accessible to those with physical disabilities.*

### Skills Enhancement

*The CAB objective is to support the creation of a sustainable social enterprise and a project to help individuals gain basic living, coping, and/or employment skills by March 31, 2014. The social enterprise and the skills enhancement project will each equip 6 participants with the necessary skills to move from homelessness or being at risk of homelessness to self-sufficiency.*

### Non-Residential Facilities

*The CAB's objective is to support the creation or enhancement of one non-residential facility by March 31, 2014. This priority may include capital investments in the Food Bank, the Soup Kitchen, a small storage facility, or another building that clearly addresses the basic needs of people who are experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.*

### Community Coordination

*The CAB's objective is to ensure the continuation of the Program and Administrative Assistant position between April 1, 2011 and March 31, 2014. The part-time Program and Administrative Assistant will support the CAB in its day-to-day operations, publish a written and online resource guide/crisis contract brochure, gather and disseminate information regarding best practices, facilitate the Lived Experience Subcommittee, enhance partnerships, update the website, organize workshops.*

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