Winnipeg, Canada

NMM in Winnipeg

Winnipeg is an isolated city on the Canadian Prairies – the closest major centre is Minneapolis, Minnesota, eight hours drive south. Its location marked the gateway to the fertile Prairies while topography and geology funneled railways through the city. Early expansion was fuelled by agricultural and transportation roles. The Exchange District downtown still accommodates a fine collection of early twentieth century warehouse buildings that attest to its former economic strength.

Although economic circumstances changed with the opening of the Panama Canal – reducing the importance of trans-Canada rail transportation – the population continued to grow rapidly, fuelled by post-war immigration and the Baby Boom. However, since the early 1960s, growth has slowed. Between 1961 and 2001, the population grew from 475,989 to 619,544, less than 1% annually.

Since the 1960s, the footprint of the city has continued to expand and at rates that far outstrip demographic growth. In 1961, Winnipeg’s urbanized area covered approximately 150 km². By 1991 this had doubled, and in 2005 the area exceeded 350km². Despite continued slow population growth, large new residential neighbourhoods and commercial “growth centres” are still being built on the south side of the city. In a time frame that saw the population increase by one third, the footprint of the city more than doubled.

The growth at the fringe is happening at the expense of the Downtown and the inner city. Although Downtown still provides 25% of the city’s employment, only 2% of the population call the core “home.” Those who continue to live in the inner city tend to be lower income households and the centre of the city accommodates much of the city’s fast growing aboriginal population. However, it lacks the general amenities of everyday life (grocery stores, pharmacies, etc.) and Downtown is no longer a preferred shopping or entertainment destination for most Winnipeggers.

This pattern of development and distribution of wealth has significant ramifications for infrastructure and services: the efficiency of public transit has declined; this has supported the increased use of automobiles and demands for wider and faster roads; schools and recreation centres in the center are undersized, while affluent residents of new neighbourhoods lobby for new facilities.

This expansion of the urban footprint and a rapidly increasing infrastructure deficit are coinciding with a period of neo-liberalism where the City government and its pro-business mayor support developers’ agendas – arguing that homebuilders know best what customers want – and are set on continuing a thirteen year property tax freeze, while reducing business taxes.

The city’s political and business leaders desire growth and this has been reflected in planning documents that have not simply taken into account the possibility of population growth, but have required this growth (growth that has not occurred). They have approved new suburbs (e.g. Waverley West) that provide an illusion of growth but increase the pressure projects to attract global attention (e.g. Canadian Museum of Human Rights); all of these without improving the lives of the city’s most vulnerable inhabitants.
Background Context
Winnipeg is home to the largest urban Aboriginal population in Canada and the city as a whole tends to be segmented by the social fabric and media. There is no easily shared pride in the city of Aboriginal and Métis communities, but there is a deep unease at the municipal level to acknowledge this cultural duality. While the government has worked to devolve the delivery of Aboriginal schools in Winnipeg’s inner city, reclaiming control over a custom and governance structures were suppressed and systemic racism.

Significance for New Metropolitain Mainstream
This absence of discussion and outright refusal to face past injustices, along with their contemporary results, means that Winnipeg is hindered and blinded in its efforts to grow, change and serve the people, businesses and organizations that administer it. The city is in urgent need of a vivid, visible cultural representation as a true metropolis.

Historical Context
The influence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers made a natural meeting and trading location for Aboriginal people for thousands of years. Contact with European cultures brought waves of change to traditional ways of life. The Aboriginal communities led to the establishment of the fur trade, simultaneously displaying covert as well as subtle systemic racism. Each aspect of civic life is affected by and in turn influences Aboriginal and Métis life, but there is a deep unease at the municipal level to acknowledge this cultural duality. The government has worked to devolve the delivery of Aboriginal schools in Winnipeg’s inner city, reclaiming control over a custom and governance structures that had been suppressed and then systemic racism.

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The city is in urgent need of a vivid, visible cultural representation as a true metropolis. The city is hindered and blinded in its efforts to grow, change and serve the people, businesses and organizations that administer it. The city is in urgent need of a vivid, visible cultural representation as a true metropolis.

Purpose
Intended to incorporate urbanism’s inherent complexity, its many diverse design standards, it also incorporates a deep respect for the environment, and a deep understanding of how urbanism is about many forms of social connection. Under construction but delivering few of the promises.

Purpose
A new national museum to promote the understanding of human rights (projected to open in 2012).

Dimensions
4,400 m² (47,420 sq ft) - 9 level Grass and terrace garden area with an estimated 100,000 plant species

Investors/Developers
Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba, and the City of Winnipeg

Funding
The federal government has committed 22 million in annual funding.

Architects/Planners
Antoine Predock with Architects; Police; Aboriginal and Métis people have been called to reclaim a place in the Canadian diaspora.

Contemporary Context
Winnipeg’s Aboriginal, Métis and Métis populations are about 12% of the population. The city is home to hundreds of Aboriginal organizations, not only in Winnipeg, but throughout the province of Manitoba. These organizations are spread across the city and in many communities, and they provide a wide range of services to Indigenous people in the region.

Urban Form
Winnipeg is a winter city, and the extreme temperature fluctuations may be mitigated by a snowmelt or snow blanket on the streets, which can create a more uniform winter environment. The city, with its deep history and rich cultural heritage, is a place where old and new traditions blend seamlessly, creating a unique and vibrant urban form.

The Canadian Museum of Human Rights (CMHR) is a national museum in Winnipeg, Manitoba, dedicated to promoting an understanding of human rights. The museum opened in 2012 and is the first national museum of its kind in the world. It is located in the former Redpath Sugar Refinery building in the Exchange District of the city.

The museum features a variety of exhibitions and programs that explore the history and impact of human rights, as well as the role of museums in promoting human rights. It is a centre for learning and education, providing visitors with a deeper understanding of the complexities of human rights and the importance of working towards a more just and equitable society.

The CMHR is committed to ensuring that its exhibitions and programs are inclusive and accessible to all. It partners with Indigenous organizations and communities to ensure that the perspectives of Indigenous peoples are represented in its exhibitions and programs.

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