



Portage la Prairie  
Community  
Revitalization  
Corporation

# PCRC Annual Report 2013-14 & Report on 5 Year Community Plan



*Our Vision:*

*A vibrant community working together.*



## Message from the Chair

Today at our 6th Annual General Meeting of PCRC we are especially pleased to be celebrating the completion of PCRC's first 5-Year Plan. We are so proud of the role that PCRC has increasingly played in making Portage la Prairie a more welcoming, safe and vibrant community; that is a community that we are proud to be a part of.

This first 5-Year Plan, certain to be the first of many to come, has been the blueprint of change for our community's revitalization. The strength of the plan is that it addresses community needs and issues as identified through community consultations and includes meaningful and achievable ways that we, through various projects and partnerships, can work to improve quality of life for all community members.

The PCRC is proud to have been part of numerous partnerships during this short time. From working in collaboration with well-established community groups to partnerships with less experienced individuals or newly formed groups, PCRC has been happy to combine efforts and lend support to projects that address community needs such as: poverty reduction, community engagement, community safety, social and cultural diversity, affordable recreation and leisure as well as capacity building.

As one example, in November 2013, we had a blast joining with the Portage Ukrainian Nursery School to enjoy Dinner on the Titanic. We had a great time planning and decorating and participants enthusiastically dressed the part as First or Third Class passengers and enthusiastically posed for pictures like DeCaprio and Winslet on the bow of the "boat". Who knew that a sinking ship could raise spirits so high or that First Class passengers would wish they booked "steerage!"

Through the Home Beautification Grants program, 85 homeowners and 23 rental property owners have enhanced the curb appeal of their homes and in turn, changed the faces of their neighbourhoods – not just by looking great, but by inspiring neighbors throughout the city to take on their own beautification projects.

This is just a glimpse of the work that is being done by PCRC; and as the number of initiatives increase, the PCRC team increases too. Elicia Funk, Executive Director, who, at first worked out of the basement of North Memorial School, three days a week, now leads a staff that includes: Mary Lynn Moffat, Community Facilitator, Sara Herrebout, Community Engagement Coordinator, Jennifer Campbell/Stephanie Roy – Momentum Project Coordinators and Heather Patterson, Administrative Assistant. In addition, as a result of the Momentum Project, now in its final year, two term projects have been developed. Betty Kelly and Keana Rellinger have joined the PCRC team to carry these projects to completion. And last, but not least, over the past four years, our Green Team program has provided PCRC with a number of terrific young people. Welcome back Kat Boychuk and welcome aboard, Janelle Lachapelle.

As a young organization the PCRC has accomplished much. Thanks to the commitment of the founding members: Guy Moffat (Chair), Glenn Carlson (Vice Chair), Janet Shindle (Secretary), Hazen Barrett (Treasurer), Owen McKenzie, Don Boddy, Allison Briggs, Kerri Vandenberg, Sherri Morgan and Stuart Alcorn, who created a strong foundation for the PCRC to build upon.

The PCRC continues to enjoy the support of dedicated board members who over the past years have focused on developing organizational capacity and ensuring that the goals of the 5-Year Plan are always in the forefront. The coming year brings significant change to the Board with a number of members leaving. A heartfelt thanks to Guy Moffat, and Dale Brownlee, who along with myself have each served the allowable six years on Board and each served as Board Chairs. To Holly Leost, Ryan Muirhead and Danica Francis, whose time and energy has been appreciated by so many and impacted the community in such positive ways, we are so thankful for your contributions and will miss you. We are also sorry to see Wayne Kelly leave after a short time on Board, but we understand that an incredible learning opportunity awaits you in Ireland. To Lori Grenkow, our Vice Chair, we will miss you but of course wish you the best too, as you continue in your new position at Red River College.

This seems like quite an exodus, but rest assured the PCRC Board is in good hands with Scott Lawrence, Brad Poole, Cathy Thomas Lobreau, and Luis Luna continuing on. Also returning after a two-year hiatus, is Hazen Barrett whose past experience will be most welcome.

To new members, there will be much to learn about programs and initiatives, and though it is a steep learning curve, be assured that the Board works well together to build capacity. There is also great teamwork among Board members and staff which makes being on this board an enjoyable and satisfying way to be involved with the community.

On behalf of all of the PCRC Board, present and past, I would like to acknowledge the work of PCRC's Executive Director, Elicia Funk, who, without a doubt, has been instrumental in this young organization's success. Elicia's leadership and commitment to the PCRC since its inception; from consultations to strategic planning; to following through to reach its goals as set out in the first 5-Year Plan, her work has been outstanding and obviously a work of heart.

It has been an honour and privilege to chair the PCRC Board this past year; the final of my six years with PCRC. I have seen first-hand what small committed groups can do to impact change and am glad that I have played a part. Thanks again to the Interim Advisory Committee members who saw a need and followed through on their ideas and thanks, of course, to our funders, including our core funder, Neighbourhoods Alive!, who continue to provide us with the means to move forward and revitalize our community.

*Lori Carlson-Judson, Chair*

## 2013 -14 Highlights

2013-14 has been another busy year for the PCRC. Here are some of the highlights:

- We were able to hear from residents about their dreams for Portage la Prairie. Community consultations to provide input into the new community plan engaged over 800 community members, helping to define and plan a *vibrant community working together*. Our Community Input Survey received 645 community responses! In addition, we gathered a youth perspective through 188 youth survey responses and 5 youth focus groups. Combined with the results from existing reports and consultations held with lower-income women and men through the Momentum project, the PCRC has a wealth of community perspective to guide us as we move forward.
- The Momentum: Reducing Barriers to Women's Economic Security project moved into its 2<sup>nd</sup> phase this year, identifying the priority areas of child care and transportation. A working group on child care is examining the local situation and potential solutions to increase childcare capacity in Portage la Prairie. As well, a Women's Leadership Group has been formed to provide a group of women with the skills and mentorship to plan their own projects to address economic security.
- PCRC partnered with the North End Parks Committee and Active Transportation Committee this year to see developments in the North East neighbourhood. A new park was created with a basketball court that can be used as a skating rink in the winter, as well as a new pathway and trees through the park. The pathways extend through the neighbourhood, creating a network that will eventually be connected to a loop linking the entire city.
- Our graffiti removal program gained popularity as it was extended to businesses this year. More people are calling the hotline to report graffiti, as well as using the program to have the graffiti on their property removed. Forty properties had tags painted over this summer, and two summer students were employed.
- Sharing Our World had another successful year with 19 cultural groups and 120 volunteers showcasing the cultural diversity of Portage through displays, entertainment, activities and food sampling. Over 750 people attended the event.
- Revitalize Portage Grants program provided support to 15 projects making a difference to the community this year. Over 75 projects have been funded by the Revitalize Portage! Grants over the past 5 years, showing the large impact small grants can make.
- Home Beautification Grants assisted 15 homeowners in improving their properties and beautifying their neighbourhoods. We have now helped improve more than 100 properties.
- The Board has been very active in ensuring effective and accountable governance of the PCRC. Board capacity has been a focus this year with a formal Board Orientation and Board Governance training. Policies for the PCRC continue to be created and updated. Last year's AGM was attended by 78 people, the highest attendance to date.

## **5 YEAR RESULTS**

In 2007, Neighbourhoods Alive!, a department of Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs (now Manitoba Housing and Community Development), announced an expansion to their program to five new communities, including Portage la Prairie. It was this expansion and the hard work of a local Advisory Committee that lead to the incorporation of the Portage la Prairie Community Revitalization Corporation in July 2008.

Working with the Portage Community Network, residents and community stakeholders were engaged in consultations to determine social needs and community revitalization priorities for Portage la Prairie. These consultations and the resulting *Social Planning Initiative Phase I Report (2009)*, formed the basis of the first 5 Year Community Plan which set goals and priority areas for our collective work.

We have now reached the end of our Five Year Plan and our community has made significant progress in addressing the priority areas. We are excited to report on the results to date. It is amazing what can be done when we work together. Thank you to our many volunteers, community partners and funders for working together with us!

### **Community Engagement**

*Goals: To engage citizens and organizations within Portage la Prairie in community initiatives to foster participation and a strong sense of community pride.*

*To build awareness of social and cultural diversity within the community to reduce discrimination and racism.*

*To promote initiatives that enhance feelings of safety and wellbeing.*

Community Engagement has been a key value in how PCRC does its work. We realize that community development must be based on locally identified priorities, and we must build our local capacity to respond to these priorities. From participating in consultations about important community topics, to volunteering at events and activities, to planning community projects, we have seen thousands of residents involved over the past 5 years.



## Neighbourhood Activities & Community Events

Neighbourhoods in which residents know one another have been shown to have greater feelings of safety and well being. PCRC has encouraged activities that allow residents of all ages and backgrounds to meet one another. Over 1160 people participated in 19 block parties arranged by residents and supported by small grants through the PCRC. Sports evenings, barbeques, park celebrations, other events and activities also allowed neighbours of all ages to meet and play together.

Community partners also did their part in bringing neighbours together, as 21 Revitalize Portage! Grants supported Neighbourhood Building projects like Portage Potato Festival, Time 4 Kids Halloween Bash, National Aboriginal Day, Louis Riel Day and Concerts in the Park.



## Sharing Our World

In 2010, the first Sharing Our World event was held to highlight the cultural diversity in Portage la Prairie. Feedback after the event was so positive that it became an annual event, with 2013 being its 4th year. The event grew quickly with 250 attending in the first year and over 700 people in the next 3 years! The event would not have happened without the commitment of over 100 volunteers each year.



## Neighbourhood Safety Program

The PCRC approached Neighbourhood Safety through the concepts of CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) and Community Engagement. Two core principles of our safety program are that improving the look and design of an area can discourage crime and increase feelings of safety and that building connections in neighbourhoods and increasing feelings of community ownership is a key to fostering neighbourhood safety.

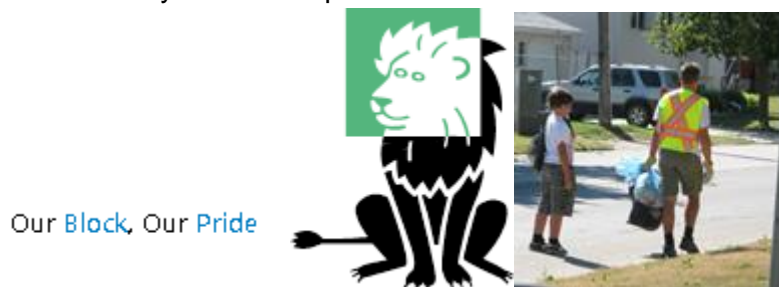
Thirty-nine community volunteers have been trained in CPTED and helped conduct safety audits along with partners from the RCMP and Fire Department. The safety issues they identified were addressed by members of the Public Safety Task Force. Public education was also a focus, with tips on how citizens could take action on neighbourhood safety.

The graffiti removal program was created in 2012 after over 300 incidences of graffiti were identified. The program has painted over 60 of these acts of vandalism with no cost to property owners. The importance of removing graffiti promptly has also been raised, with some property owners choosing to do their own removal. The public rated the graffiti removal program as the highest valued program of the PCRC in the 2013 Community Input Survey.



## Keep It Clean

Over 450 volunteers assisted in 13 community clean-up events during this four year program, removing litter from our neighbourhoods and showing their community pride. The clean-ups not only made the area look better and safer, but also strengthened connections within the neighbourhoods. Community members are taking responsibility for community beautification as evidenced by the 16 Keep It Clean! areas that have been adopted by individuals and groups.



## Affordable Housing

*Goal: To improve the quality of existing housing stock while encouraging the creation of additional safe, affordable and appropriate housing.*

Early in PCRC's history, we were able to be a catalyst for change by arranging a community meeting on the topic of affordable housing. At that meeting a lack of emergency and transitional housing were identified as top priorities. As a result the Portage Housing Coalition was formed with support from the PCRC. This Coalition provided guidance in the planning of a housing project and the lobbying required to secure interest by the federal and provincial governments. At this point the Canadian Mental Health Association took the lead to develop the 23 suite Fisher Apartments which incorporates 3 emergency units along with transitional and affordable suites. PCRC was able to assist with the feasibility study and detailed funding proposals to help the \$1.9 million project secure the funding needed to reach completion. The project will provide affordable housing to many of those in our community who are most in need for years to come



## Home Beautification Grants

PCRC offered Home Beautification Grants for exterior home improvements through funding from the Province of Manitoba - Community Housing Improvement Initiative (and the City of Portage in 2009 to 2011). Over 6 years 108 properties have benefitted; 85 homes and 23 rental units. By offering grants of up to \$2,500 to eligible home owners, and matching grants of up to \$1000 towards exterior improvements of lower cost rental units, this program is visibly enhancing Portage la Prairie neighbourhoods and improving the quality of Portage la Prairie housing stock.

	Homeowner Grants	Rental Grants	Grant Amount	Owner Contribution	Total
2008	13	--	\$28,850	\$6,949	\$35,799
2009	14	9	\$37,555	\$50,060	\$87,615
2010	16	7	\$36,607	\$12,812	\$49,419
2011	16	3	\$36,825	\$48,175	\$85,000
2012	12	4	\$29,255	\$47,211	\$76,467
2013	15	0	\$27,986	\$30,527	\$58,513
<b>Total</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>\$197,078</b>	<b>\$195,734</b>	<b>\$392,812</b>





## Poverty Reduction

*Goal: To facilitate opportunities that link lower income residents with activities to improve their well-being and economic situation, and to address barriers to economic security.*

A focus of PCRC's work has been working to remove barriers faced by members of our community with lower incomes or other barriers to participation. We strive to ensure that all residents benefit from the opportunities in our community. We have encouraged all partners to consider barriers that may be faced by lower income people in the planning of their projects and events, and have supported several projects looking to address poverty related barriers through Revitalize Portage Grants.

PCRC is also working to raise the awareness of barriers to economic security through presentations and conversations. For example, all 21 candidates running for mayor and council attended the 2010 PCRC Candidate Forum held at North Memorial School and all 3 candidates attended the 2011 Provincial Forum at the Glesby Centre to respond to questions related to social issues.

We have recognized employment and training as an important component of poverty reduction and have partnered on initiatives such as the Youth with Barriers to Employment Study, 2011 Portage and Area Labour Market Needs Assessment, Supported Employment Workshops and Interprovincial Association of Native Employment (IANE).

### Momentum: Building Women's Economic Security

We were excited to kick off the three-year Momentum: Building Women's Economic Security project in 2012 thanks to a \$300,000 three-year grant from Status of Women Canada. This project brings together community partners and young women in Portage to create and implement a community plan to increase economic security of women. In the first phase, over 100 women and community stakeholders provided input to identify barriers and potential solutions to women's economic security. Collectively, child care and transportation were identified as the key barriers to address in the second phase of the project which runs until March 2015.



## Capacity Building

*Goal: To provide resources to build the capacity of neighbourhood groups and social service organizations to together develop sustainable solutions to community issues.*

PCRC works to build the capacity of local groups and organizations through providing grants and proposal development assistance as well as coordination and communication between groups on issues identified in the Community Plan. The Network of Non-Profits has 150 members which subscribe to an e-mail sharing list. Quarterly luncheons are also held to share information. Capacity building workshops on topics such as board development, project funding, fundraising and executive director leadership skills have been offered to build local skills.

### Revitalize Portage! Grants

Revitalize Portage! Grants provide up to \$5000 to local organizations to support community building projects. Results of the first five years show over 28,100 people participated in the 76 projects which received funding. Over 1500 volunteers enabled projects to be complete, and the \$146,990 in grants were more than matched by over \$400,000 worth of funds from other sources. Funded projects addressed all areas of the Community Plan, showing the large impact small grants can have in addressing community issues.

#### 2013 Revitalize Portage! Grant Receipts

Portage School Division/ Regional Health Authority- *PACE*  
Big Brothers & Big Sisters- *Summer Activities*  
Tupper Street Family Resource Centre/Child and Family Services- *Mural Project*  
Portage Potato Festival  
Age Friendly Committee- *Priceless List*  
La Verendrye Parents Committee -*Basketball Court*  
Tupper Street Family Resource Centre- *Family Fun Event*  
Portage Regional Library- *Summer Spectacular*  
Recreational Opportunities for Children-*National Family Day*  
Time 4 Kids- *Halloween Bash*  
Portage Learning and Literacy Centre-*Bike Racks*  
Manitoba Metis Federation- *Louis Riel Day*  
North End Parks- *Fencing of Basketball Court*  
Youth for Christ- *Recreation Equipment*  
Big Brothers & Big Sisters- *Activity Supplies*  
7th Street-*Block Party*



## Affordable Recreation & Leisure

*Goal: To encourage the creation of affordable recreational opportunities and the development of physical spaces with a focus on the needs of families and youth*

Affordable Recreation and Leisure has consistently been shown as a priority for community members. While PCRC does not offer programs ourselves, affordable recreation and leisure is a funding priority. We encourage groups with projects that fit this criteria to apply for Revitalize Portage! Grants or to the Neighbourhoods Alive! Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. We have been proud to support recreation and leisure programs such as Sticks and Pucks at the BDO Centre for the Community, Recreation Opportunities for Children after school programs, Portage Regional Library programs, as well as arts and music programs.

### Parks, Playgrounds and Pathways

In addition, parks, playgrounds and pathways have been an identified as key priority areas, providing not only affordable recreation options for children, families and residents of all ages but also building a sense of community. In partnership with the City of Portage la Prairie, PCRC engaged residents in consultations about North End Parks. These consultations spurred the initiation of a North End Parks Committee and the creation of a North East Park with a basketball court, trees and pathways. Trees, benches and picnic tables were added to other existing parks when consultations identified shade and a place to sit as top recommendations.

Seven other parks have been improved through support from the Neighbourhoods Alive!: Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and Revitalize Portage! Grants:

- Portage Evangelical Church playground
- Yellowquill School Nature Playground
- Crescentview School Playground
- Red River College Playground
- Skate Park Ramp
- La Verendrye School basketball courts
- Palliative Care Memory Garden at Island Park



PCRC has also partnered with the Portage Rotary Club, City of Portage la Prairie and the Portage Active Transportation Committee to see an expansion of pathways at Republic Park and in the north end of Portage. The goal is to create a continuous network of pathways that will connect all areas of Portage. Together with the Portage Rotary Club, two successful Jail and Bail fundraisers raised over \$47,000 to support pathways and parks, and provided a ton of fun and laughter.

## Creating a New Community Plan

The work of the PCRC, and funding priorities for Neighbourhoods Alive!, are guided by a Community Plan based on feedback from community members. With the completion of the first Community Plan, it was time to determine new priority areas. The PCRC engaged residents and partners in consultations about what they saw as revitalization priorities for Portage la Prairie. From these consultations, five themes emerged: Community Building, Safety and Crime Prevention, Affordable Recreation and Leisure, Beautification and Community Pride and Building Economic Security.

While the Community Plan will guide the work of the PCRC, building a Vibrant Portage la Prairie requires the entire community to become involved. Together with our community partners, PCRC will be encouraging all of Portage la Prairie to come together to do their part to collectively achieve this community vision.



**Community Building:** Foster a welcoming community for all, with residents of all ages, cultures, income levels and backgrounds engaged and taking ownership of their neighbourhoods.

- Neighbourhood Activities
- Youth Engagement and Leadership
- Awareness of Portage's Cultural and Social Diversity
- Community Events & Gatherings
- Promotion of Portage Stories & Successes

**Affordable Recreation and Leisure:** Increase the affordability, accessibility and awareness of recreation and leisure opportunities, with an emphasis on families, children and youth; pathway and park development.

- Affordable and Accessible Child and Family Recreation & Leisure Programs
- Vibrant Spaces & Leisure Opportunities for Youth and Young Adults
- Awareness of Existing Recreation and Leisure Programs
- Parks Development Plan & Development of North East Park
- Pathway / Active Transportation Route Development

**Beautification & Community Pride:** Build citizen responsibility for beautification by engaging citizens, businesses and organizations in beautifying properties, greenspaces, and streets.

- Community Clean-Ups
- Public Art
- Property Improvements (Residential and Business)
- Downtown & Saskatchewan Avenue Beautification
- Crescent Lake Revitalization

**Building Economic Security:** Reduce barriers to economic security for lower-income individuals, by reducing barriers to education and employment such as lack of childcare, transportation, limited employability skills, awareness of existing supports and meeting basic needs.

- Increasing Childcare Capacity
- Building a Skilled Workforce through Strengthening Employability Skills
- Raising Awareness of Barriers to Economic Security
- Social Supports and Life Skills to Meet Basic Needs
- Affordable Transportation Options
- Increasing Awareness of Existing Services

**Safety and Crime Prevention:** Increase perceptions of safety through community engagement, using the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

- Graffiti Removal
- Engaging Residents in Identifying and Addressing Safety Concerns
- Safety & Crime Prevention Strategy



## PCRC Board of Directors 2013 – 14



Lori Carlson-Judson  
Chair



Scott Lawrence  
Treasurer



Lori Grenkow  
Vice-Chair



Brad Poole  
Secretary



Guy Moffat



Dale Brownlee



Holly Leost



Luis Luna



Danica Francis



Wayne Kelly



Cathy Thomas-Lobreau



Ryan Muirhead

## PCRC Staff

Elicia Funk, Executive Director

Mary Lynn Moffat, Community Facilitator

Heather Patterson, Administrative Assistant

Sara Herrebout, Community Engagement Coordinator

Jennifer Campbell / Stephanie Roy, Momentum Project Coordinator

Betty Kelly, Momentum Childcare Team Lead

*Thank you to the students who were part of the PCRC team in this past year: Katarina Boychuk and Carter Greenslade, Green Team summer students and Alex Belanger, CreateAction Intern.*