

STEFANO GRANDE

Son of Italian immigrants, a husband, father of three boys, and regarded as a change agent, Stefano Grande has devoted his career to a higher purpose – to create positive change in the City, starting with the downtown and the inner city.

A professional Urban Planner with a B.Sc. from The University of Winnipeg. Stefano honed in on his city planning skills while working in the Town of Selkirk, the R.M. of St. Andrews and the R.M. of St. Clements for seven years – where he focused on community economic, tourism and business development. More recently, Stefano has played an instrumental role in the revitalization of Winnipeg's inner city in his position as General Manager of Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation, which he held for six years. During his tenure, he created over a hundred units of affordable housing units in the inner city by working closely with community groups – helping them achieve their vision for safe and vibrant neighbourhoods through housing renewal.

As the current Executive Director for the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, his focus over the last ten years has been increasing the BIZ's service delivery to business members in the areas of safety, events, and improving the cleanliness of Downtown. In particular, Stefano is an advocate and has created conversations in areas including downtown housing, ending homelessness, increasing police foot patrols, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Rapid Transit, and other key policies critical to the long term renewal of downtown. Among several contributions he created ManyFest, the cities largest street festival, home to the cities food truck wars, and the Change for the Better CEO SleepOut and event to raises awareness on ending homelessness. The event has raised over \$600,000 and generated 1000's of hours of employment for those who are homeless, ready, willing and able.

Stefano is regarded as one of the key voices on downtown, inner city and housing renewal issues and opportunities. While balancing a family including three young boys, Stefano continues to give back to the community by serving on the International Downtown Association, Downtown Winnipeg Council. Stefano has been awarded the Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee, as well as the University of Winnipeg Distinguished Alumni Award, has written hundreds of opinion pieces on Urban Development in various magazines and newspapers. He is also the Chair of Downtowns Canada a new national coalition of downtown organization, and is vice president of the International Downtown Association.

Stefano is a believer and advocate for change and believes this can only be achieved through mutual respect and teamwork of peers, empowering and engaging people and the community – listening and learning, taking action, and taking responsibility. He believes that the economic prosperity of our Cities and social justice must go hand in hand.