



PRESS RELEASE



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\$1.6 Million will Create Much-Needed Affordable Housing in Spence Neighbourhood

WINNIPEG, Manitoba, May 27, 2005 — Residents in the Spence neighbourhood will soon benefit from the construction and rehabilitation of 49 affordable housing units and small grants to homeowners and landlords, with the help of up to \$1.6 million from the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg through the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI).

The Honourable Christine Melnick, Manitoba Minister of Family Services and Housing; Anita Neville, MP for Winnipeg South Centre, on behalf of the Honourable Joe Fontana, Minister of Labour and Housing; and Mike Pagtakhan, Deputy Mayor of Winnipeg and Councillor for Point Douglas, on behalf of Winnipeg mayor Sam Katz, took part in today's event at 508 Spence, the site of one of the new homes.

"This support for eight new, energy efficient R2000 compliant homes and major repairs to numerous structures builds upon our balanced approach of working cooperatively with local groups on projects that are community-based, to create more safe and affordable housing that will further revitalize the inner-city," said Minister Melnick. "We are pleased as the new home construction and rehabilitation projects address the need for more affordable housing and the renovation grants directly help to improve property values and the appearance of the neighbourhood."

"These projects are an important part of increasing and maintaining the housing stock in the Spence neighbourhood and will contribute to building a lasting and sustainable community," said MP Neville. "By working in partnership with local groups like the Spence Neighbourhood Association, the federal government is helping ensure lower-income individuals and families in Winnipeg get the quality, affordable housing they need."

"This is an exciting announcement for the Spence neighbourhood," said Deputy Mayor Pagtakhan. "Constructing new energy efficient homes and rehabilitating existing buildings will help to provide more safe and affordable housing options for lower income residents. In addition, the grants that will be available to property owners for renovations will go a long way to revitalizing this inner-city neighbourhood. The City has contributed over \$200,000 to this project, and I am very pleased to be a part of it. I applaud the efforts of our partners; this is yet another great example of what we can do when government and the community come together to address housing concerns and homelessness in Winnipeg."

The funding is being provided to the Spence Neighbourhood Association, Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation and Lazarus Housing. Total project costs are estimated at \$2.9 million with the groups contributing the balance of the costs.

Funding support facilitated through WHHI includes:

- \$654,000 under the Canada-Manitoba Affordable Housing Initiative's New Homeownership Supply Program and Neighbourhood Housing Assistance, cost-shared equally by Canada and Manitoba;

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- \$716,000 under the Rental Residential Rehabilitation Assistance (RRAP) program, cost-shared 75/25 per cent by the federal and provincial governments;
- \$232,000, including four vacant lots valued at \$32,000, from the City of Winnipeg's Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve; and
- \$30,000 from Manitoba's Neighbourhood Housing Assistance (NHA) program.

"The building of new homes in our neighbourhood has allowed us to diversify the types of housing available to community members," said Inonge Aliaga, Executive Director for the Spence Neighbourhood Association. "What's more, they will provide the opportunity for families in our community to become home owners for the first time."

The funding is coordinated by the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative, a partnership established by the Government of Canada, the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg to address homelessness, declining housing stock and the revitalization of Winnipeg's older neighbourhoods. The WHHI recently celebrated its fifth anniversary and since 2000, the partnership has facilitated approximately \$57 million toward the repair, rehabilitation or construction of over 2,200 units of housing and 137 rooms or beds, as well as assisted the homeless or those at risk of being homeless. Located at 361 Hargrave Street, the WHHI serves as a single-window office for community organizations to access information on government funded housing and homelessness programs. For information, organizations or citizens can call 940-3070.

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Backgrounder

Spence Neighbourhood Project Details

Spence Neighbourhood Association

- SNA is building eight new, energy-efficient infill homes in the Spence neighbourhood for sale to low- to moderate-income homebuyers. Construction of the first four homes is underway and completion of all eight is expected by September 31, 2005. All of the homes will meet the Manitoba Hydro R-2000 standard for energy efficiency and indoor air quality. At least one of the homes will be wheelchair accessible and a household requiring an accessible unit has already been identified.
- SNA will provide small grants to property owners to improve property values, enhance curb appeal, and help prevent owners from being forced to leave properties vacant and tenants homeless. Grants will range from \$700 per property for small exterior improvements to \$2,500 for larger renovation projects. With the exception of the \$700 grants to low income homeowners, property owners will be required to contribute up to matching funds. Total value of the grants is estimated at \$60,000.

Winnipeg Housing Rehabilitation Corporation (WHRC)

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- WHRC will acquire and rehabilitate five boarded up and/or derelict homes in the Spence neighbourhood for sale to low- to moderate-income households. Total project costs are estimated at \$580,290. The project is expected to be completed by March 31, 2006.

Lazarus Housing Inc. (LHI)

- Lazarus Housing will purchase and rehabilitate five boarded up and/or derelict homes in the Spence neighbourhood for sale to low- to moderate-income households. Total project costs are estimated at \$525,000.

573 Sherbrook Street

- To rehabilitate an 85 year old 31-unit apartment building located at 573 Sherbrook Street. The building contains 23 one-bedroom units and eight studio units. The majority of the work involves the installation of fire detection and control devices, repairs to the heating system, window and door replacements, plumbing and electrical upgrades and repairs to the roof. Total project costs are estimated at \$732,612.