

Community partners to revitalize neighbourhood

A huge cross-section of stakeholders is partnering with residents of an inner city neighbourhood in Regina, Saskatchewan to revitalize the area. The goal is a safe, clean and sustainable community.

The partnership is a “story in itself,” says Robert Bjerke, housing coordinator for the City of Regina. Representatives of the federal, provincial and municipal governments have joined to form the Regina Inner City Partnership. Their objective is to work with representatives of the inner city core to rejuvenate their neighbourhood.

Just this past week the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation announced that one stream of this process will be funded thanks to the federal, provincial and municipal governments.

A new, energy-efficient, 29-unit affordable housing project is being built on a primary site of the inner city. It is to be available for habitation for the summer of 2007.

Originally, this project, to be called Maple Leaf Estates, was one of seven sites where architect Avi Friedman and a group of his students from McGill University, designed plans for affordable housing coupled with features to make use of alternative energy.

Sustainable features that have been considered include district heating systems and seasonal energy storage systems, where the sun’s heat is trapped during the summer and released as energy in the winter. Passive solar energy was also a key characteristic of the original designs. Feasibility studies will be determining which of these features are included in the final design.

Robert says that from his perspective as a housing coordinator, Maple Leaf Estates “is a really good opportunity to really make an impact on the neighbourhood.”

In a press release on Wednesday, November 15, 2006, Regina Mayor Pat Fiacco stated that this project is “another great example of different orders of government and community working together to improve living conditions and quality of life for Regina’s residents.”.

The total project cost is approximately \$4.6 million.

Construction of Maple Leaf Estates is currently underway with the development of 29 units. Three are two-bedroom, mobility accessible bungalows and twenty-six are three-bedroom, two-storey units.