

## **Revitalizing Historic Pleasant Hill Neighbourhood Backgrounder**

In 2002, with the help of community residents and stakeholders, the City of Saskatoon undertook a Local Area Plan (LAP) to assess conditions in the neighbourhood and develop a long range plan to improve Pleasant Hill. Situated west of the CPR railway, south of 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, the Pleasant Hill neighbourhood was facing a broad range of social and infrastructure challenges. As one resident said, “we will need an extraordinary effort to put the ‘Pleasant’ back into Pleasant Hill.” New housing, the reduction of vacant lots, property maintenance, increased safety, and land development were identified as keys to improving Pleasant Hill.

Although from the outside looking into Pleasant Hill signs of deterioration and neglect were evident, the spirit of this neighbourhood was unshakable. The long-time residents who came forward to develop a plan for their future demonstrated and continue to demonstrate mental, emotional, and spiritual strength second to none in this city. They came forward with a resolve to build upon these strengths to create a safe and welcoming neighbourhood that celebrates cross-cultural and multigenerational relationships. This resolve was founded on the principles of: a family oriented community; a community where you help your neighbors; and a community where everyone pitches in to create a clean, healthy, cared for, and vibrant place to call home.

In 2006, a funding commitment by three orders of government – Federal, Provincial, and Municipal – created the foundation for a major redevelopment project in Pleasant Hill. Called an Urban Development Agreement (UDA), funding was provided to produce an entire block, plus a number of adjacent lots, of clean, fully-serviced land ready for redevelopment.

On May 13, 2008, this project was further enhanced by the Province of Saskatchewan – Ministry of Education and the Greater Catholic Saskatoon Schools when they announced plans to build a new and larger community school in this area. The plans for the new St. Mary Community School include community space such as a daycare, kindergarten, wellness centre, walking track and multi-purpose community rooms. Both the private sector and the City of Saskatoon have announced financial support to development this community space within the new school.

The Province also announced on May 13, 2008 that it has prioritized \$8 million to develop affordable housing as part of the Pleasant Hill Revitalization Project.

The development area that is being launched today totals 9.21 acres and provides land areas for three key driving forces of rejuvenation:

1. Residential development – 3.34 acres
2. A new community school and school grounds – 2.86 acres
3. Open park space – 3.01 acres.

Community consultation and involvement have been a significant aspect of the revitalization effort so far. The community has been involved in the drafting of the concept plan, will review all development proposals, and has provided input into the community space in the new school and the new park space.

The City of Saskatoon has retained ownership of the land in the short term and is releasing it to development partners when it is ready for construction. Each development site is being offered for a total of \$1. The proposal allows the City of Saskatoon to share some of the risk of investing in this neighborhood and attract a diverse group of partners that includes other levels of government, non-profit groups and the private sector.

Two housing developers have signed sale agreements to date. The Affordable New Home Development Foundation will contract two local builders to build 24 dwelling units on Parcel D, and Cenith Developments Inc. will develop 12 units on Parcel B. The Foundation will help to bring innovative, high quality, energy efficient affordable housing to Pleasant Hill, with a leading edge design being showcased for the first time in Saskatchewan.

The total value of the revitalization project is so far estimated to be over \$40 million.

The City of Saskatoon is exploring the possibility of purchasing more property in the area to enlarge the scope of the redevelopment. The Pleasant Hill Redevelopment proposal is a rare opportunity to acquire up to 38 properties on two and a half blocks of land for redevelopment. It is believed that the Pleasant Hill Revitalization Project is the largest redevelopment ever undertaken within a residential neighbourhood in Saskatchewan.

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