Mona Lemoine

MANITOBA CHAPTER, CANADA GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL

In Delegation to
City of Winnipeg
Executive Policy Committee

May 9, 2007

RE: Multi-Family/Mixed-Use Dwelling Grants, Residential Infill Tax Credit Program

About Manitoba Chapter, Canada Green Building Council

- One of seven chapters of the Canada Green Building Council. The Canada Green Building Council is a national organization comprised of private and public sector professionals working to transform the building industry.
- Launched in May 2005 and governed by a 15-member board of directors. Over 500 local professionals on the Chapter's e-mail list. Hundreds more have attended our workshops and monthly events. Sponsors are professional firms, product suppliers, and contractors.
- A broad coalition of professional engineers, architects, contractors, specialty consultants, building owners, educators, and policy makers.
- Provide green building education to the local industry, offer networking opportunities, and collaborate with other organizations to help advance green building in Manitoba.

Introduction

- The Manitoba Chapter, Canada Green Building Council congratulates the City of Winnipeg on introducing the Multi-Family/Mixed-Use Dwelling Grant Program and the Residential Infill Tax Credit Program. These are good first steps.
- Programs will likely provide a reduction of energy use and GHG emissions associated with transport (people will hopefully live, work, and shop in close proximity).
- The Manitoba Chapter encourages the City to go much further with these programs by requiring a minimum level of energy efficiency from the buildings receiving grants. This will extend the energy efficiency and GHG emission reduction benefits of these programs and will align the City with other levels of government, other municipal governments, and with the growing demand for green building and energy efficiency in buildings.

301-35 King Street / Winnipeg, MB R3B 1H4 / tel 204 943 1023 / manitobachapter@cagbc.org / www.cagbc.org/chapters/manitoba.php

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Background

- In its most recent report released May 3, 2007, the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change identified improving the energy efficiency of buildings as one of the top climate change mitigation strategies.
- With the exception of insulation in new homes, there are no minimum requirements in the Manitoba Building Code for energy efficiency or water efficiency.
- The Province of Manitoba has signaled its desire to establish an energy code for buildings. The Manitoba Energy Code Advisory Committee has recommended a minimum requirement of 25% better than the Model National Energy Code for Buildings.
- Seeding the market with a financial incentive prior to the adoption of a code or regulation is a proven market transformation strategy.
- During the 2006 municipal election, Mayor Katz's proposed strategy for a clean and green city included: (1) creating an incentive to encourage the construction of green rooftops to protect roof structures from the elements, cut heating and cooling costs, and slow storm runoff and sewage overflow; (2) making ultra-low flow toilets mandatory in all new building and renovation projects; (3) establishing incentives to encourage the installation of grey water collection systems to allow for reuse of water for lawn, garden or green roof irrigation expressed. These are all potential elements of green buildings.
- LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is North America's foremost voluntary green building rating system, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council and adapted to Canada by the Canada Green Building Council. Depending on the number of credits earned, buildings are rated Certified, Silver, Gold, or Platinum.
- A LEED-Canada Application Guide for Multi-Unit Residential Buildings is available. LEED® for Homes recently released in the U.S., may soon be available in Canada.

Why Green Buildings

- Green Buildings are good for the local economy: More affordable to operate; keep dollars here that would otherwise pay for Alberta natural gas; create demand for new products and services.
- Green buildings are good for municipalities: Reduce demands on local infrastructure. Potential cost savings include reduced demand on water mains, reduced demand on sanitary sewers, reduced demand on storm sewers.

- Green buildings are good for the environment: Help achieve the necessary targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; reduce strain on local environment.
- Green buildings are good for people: Healthier places to live, learn, work, and play; Retain and attract young professionals.

Government Response to Green Building

- Of the three levels of government, the City of Winnipeg is the only jurisdiction without a policy for green building.
- The Province of Manitoba's Green Building Policy, announced in June 2006, requires LEED® Silver certification of government-funded buildings.
- Between Canada and the United States, over 50 cities have adopted LEED® requirements including Vancouver, Calgary, Chicago, and Winnipeg's U.S. sister city, Minneapolis.
- In February 2007 the BC Government announced it will develop a Green Building Code.
- In May 2007 the City of Toronto announced it will develop green building requirements for private sector buildings and houses.

Manitoba Hydro Power Smart

- Manitoba Hydro's Power Smart Design Standards provide proven cost-effective measures for a variety of building types, including multi-unit residential buildings. A Power Smart designated building is a minimum 25% more energy efficient than the Model National Energy Code for Buildings. Manitoba Hydro's Power Smart for Business programs have incentives available for new multi-family buildings that achieve this standard.
- Manitoba Health and the Manitoba Public Schools Finance Board have been designing to the Power Smart Design Standards for a number of years. It makes economic sense.
- Power Smart multi-unit residential buildings include: the new Canadian Mennonite University Residence, and the award-winning Pocket Suites.
- Manitoba Hydro's Power Smart for New Homes Program provides a set of prescribed measures and incentives to the homebuyer/owner.
- City of Winnipeg's Home Renovation Tax Assistance Program is already harmonized with the technical requirements of the Manitoba Hydro Power Smart Program

Recommendations

The Manitoba Chapter, Canada Green Building Council recommends EPC consider incorporating into the requirements of the Multiple Family / Mixed-Use Building Grant the following criteria:

1. All buildings achieve designation as a Power Smart building and are encouraged to access additional incentives for this provided by Manitoba Hydro;
2. Ultra-low flow toilets (6 litre/flush) mandatory in all washrooms, to reduce demand for potable water and wastewater treatment;
3. An additional incentive of $2500/residential unit for buildings that achieve a minimum LEED® Silver certification. LEED® Silver is cost effective and aligns with provincial government requirements (some projects may also receive provincial funding); and
4. Expedited permitting process, or increased development density, for buildings that incorporate a green roof, to help reduce municipal costs for storm water management.

The Manitoba Chapter, Canada Green Building Council recommends EPC consider incorporating into the requirements of the Residential Infill Tax Credit Program the following criteria:

5. All homes must achieve designation as a Power Smart New Home
6. Ultra-low flow toilets (6 litre/flush) mandatory in all homes;
7. An additional incentive of $2500 for R2000 homes, which is a portion of the incremental cost and $1000 greater than the maximum for the Home Renovation Tax Credit Program.

The Manitoba Chapter, Canada Green Building Council also recommends EPC consider:

8. Directing administration to engage the Manitoba Chapter, and others, in the future in discussions on how these and other programs can be strengthened and enhanced.
9. Developing a community wide plan to place these types of programs in a larger context, linking the programs to other incentives (e.g., Manitoba Hydro) and other public policy issues the City is working to address (e.g., climate change). It is recommended the development of this plan engage a board group of stakeholders very early on.