April 14, 2022

His Worship Brian Bowman
Mayor of Winnipeg
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Aniin Mr. Mayor,

I am writing to thank you for your support and to formally invite you to the historic reconciliation event in Winnipeg that you will know is scheduled for April 22, 2022. The Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) has been working for more than a year to acquire the iconic Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) building in downtown Winnipeg, and we are so pleased that the announcement will occur on site in the building at 10 a.m. on April 22nd. Until then, the project remains highly confidential.

The announcement will be an historic opportunity to turn the page on a history of more than 350 years, when a royal charter gave our lands to HBC. Every one of our 34 member Anishinaabe and Dakota Nations was impacted by the arrival of HBC and the colonial era that followed. Now this iconic building will be owned by SCO, and the result will be a major initiative to create economic reconciliation and revitalize the downtown of Winnipeg.

The project will transform the building into hundreds of units of affordable housing as well as assisted living for Elders, and families living in the building will have the benefit of a child care centre for more than 100 children built on the language nest model. The second floor will also contain a health and wellness centre and a pharmacy with traditional and western medicines.

The main floor will be developed into a world class museum, gallery, and cultural centre where for the first time First Nations will have an opportunity to tell our own story. A ceremonial space will honour Survivors of residential and day schools and it will contain a memorial to the children who never returned home. The space and the building will act as a place of learning, a tourist attraction, and beacon of reconciliation for Canada.

The historic building will also become the future Governance House for the Chiefs of the southern First Nations, the voice for 34 Anishinaabe and Dakota Nations and more than 81,000 First Nation citizens, 10 per cent of all First Nation people in Canada.

Environmental sustainability will be championed throughout the renewal of the HBC building, and its low carbon, low energy technologies will closely align with First Nation values of treading lightly on the earth. We are please that our energy modelling demonstrates a 35 per cent reduction in energy savings and an 81 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Conservation principles will be incorporated throughout the renovation, while maintaining the distinguished and historic façade, making the building a showpiece of heritage preservation and sustainability.

We have been working with our federal and provincial Treaty partners on funding to support this ambitious project, and look to you and City Council to support our project with the following four commitments:

1. Tax increment financing (TIF) for 25 years as a transformational project
2. White glove service to facilitate the expediting of permits for this complex project, and a rebating of permits and fees, perhaps in a grant-back model
3. Commitment to streetscaping improvements at the conclusion of the project in the summer of 2025 and 2026 on the four sides of the building and across and on the adjacent streets, including consideration of items such as designed sidewalks and specially imprinted maintenance hole covers
4. The HBC building includes areaways along the entire north, east and west elevations, which are located in the basement level below the city sidewalks. The width of these areaways ranges from 10’ to 18 feet wide, beyond the perimeter walls of the Bay that are visible above grade. It has come to our attention that temporary shoring, comprised of a series of steel posts in the basement, exists under the west areaway concrete roof slab (i.e., the concrete slab of the city sidewalk). We understand that this shoring was installed as a temporary measure to maintain public safety at ground level until the areaway roof slab / city sidewalk can be permanently repaired. The previous investigation did not include a detailed look at the north and east areaway concrete slabs, however it is reasonable to conclude that these areaways will also require repair. It is prudent that the condition of these areaways / city sidewalks be explored in further detail and fully repaired. We respectfully request collaboration and a financial contribution from the City of Winnipeg in this regard.

This project will be a legacy that you and City Council can be proud of, one that can begin to tell a new story for the Anishinaabe and Dakota people I represent, and for our City, our province

and our country. Following an unprecedented year, with the discovery of the unmarked graves of the children who died at residential school, now is the time to create a new future. The project will breathe new life into the vacant HBC building and create social and economic opportunity, revitalizing the downtown and putting people back to work after the pandemic.

This historic event of national importance would not be complete without your attendance. The event on April 22nd will be another step toward a brighter vision, where we can work together to build the future our ancestors dreamed of – one with hope and opportunity for all.

In pursuit of balance,



Ogema-Makwa
Grand Chief Jerry Daniels

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