



Stoneridge Equities Ltd.



NEWS RELEASE

Parties Sign Memorandum of Understanding on Shared Vision and Collaborative Commitment to Establishing a New Urban Ecological Preserve in Brandon, Manitoba

Brandon, Manitoba/October 1, 2020 – A number of key stakeholders have jointly and collaboratively identified the opportunity to establish a new Urban Ecological Preserve in southeast Brandon, Manitoba. This preserve would not only protect the endangered/threatened Small White Lady-slipper occurrences found on the property – by excluding critical mixed grass prairie habitat from any future development – but also ensure ongoing stewardship and monitoring, in addition to significant community awareness, outreach and educational programming.

The parties to this exciting new partnership include the current landowners and developer, Manitoba-based Stoneridge Equities Ltd., the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), and the City of Brandon. Earlier today, these stakeholders announced that they had entered into a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at bringing this shared vision and collaborative commitment to life on the property located at SW-12-10-19-W1; DESC A-37021, a property wholly within the City of Brandon.

Given the broader public interest and overarching ‘public good’ aspect of these efforts, other potential government, foundation-based, corporate and post-secondary partners are also being asked for their financial and in-kind support. Once again, the primary goal being to ensure the longer-term sustainability of a viable population of Small White Lady-slippers and their supporting mixed grass prairie ecosystem well into the future.

“The Nature Conservancy of Canada is in the best position to acquire and actively manage these ecologically-sensitive lands from an ongoing protection, stewardship, monitoring, and community outreach and education perspective. However, our partners at the NCC will require funding support for both the required land acquisition and for the preserve’s year-to-year operations,” stressed Stoneridge spokesperson, Shane Pospisil of New West Opportunities.

“While Stoneridge will step up with a significant contribution of land, over and above the significant species protection and stewardship contributions it has already made and shared with the NCC, it is clear that others will also have to come to the table to bring this exciting – and some would say long overdue – vision for an Urban Ecological Preserve and new Brandon-based ‘Westman eco-destination’ to reality,” Pospisil stated.

“The Nature Conservancy of Canada is excited by the enthusiasm and mutual interest that is being expressed to conserve the viability of this population of endangered orchids,” said Kevin Teneycke, Regional Vice-President for the Manitoba region. “The Memorandum represents a commitment to shared principles that places a priority on protecting and conserving the Small White Lady-slippers in an urban surrounding. We appreciate Stoneridge Equities’ and the City of Brandon’s commitment to conservation through this project.”

Ryan Nickel, Director of Planning & Buildings with the City of Brandon, added: "The City is excited about the proactive approach taken by Stoneridge Equities to partner with the Nature Conservancy of Canada in establishing an Urban Ecological Preserve. Not only will the preserve enhance the long term viability of the Small White Lady-slippers, it will provide an important environmental greenspace to serve as a destination for Brandon residents and visitors alike. We look forward to our continued progress with the other partners in bringing this vision to reality."

Within the next several weeks it is anticipated that individuals will also be given an opportunity to contribute to these efforts and demonstrate their collective passion to protect and preserve an important part of Western Manitoba’s natural legacy.

After all, this is the Manitoba way...and a big part of the reason why Manitobans continue to be seen as leaders in advancing shared conservation values and outcomes through increased awareness, outreach and education. The key is to ensure that generations of Manitobans (and visitors alike) come to better understand and truly appreciate the value of a healthy natural environment.

The parties to this Memorandum of Understanding remain confident that the required financial partners and overall financial plan can be put in place, with the NCC assuming the lead management and conservation role. More information will be forthcoming in the weeks ahead as the parties move forward with this proposal.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is Canada's leading national land conservation organization. A private, non-profit organization founded in 1962, the NCC and its partners have helped to protect 14 million hectares (35 million acres) across Canada, including over 71,161 hectares (175,843 acres) conserved and protected in key natural and ecologically-sensitive areas critical to Manitoba's biodiversity. To learn more, visit www.natureconservancy.ca

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