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## **Friends of Upper Fort Garry (FUGG) Unveil Plans for New Downtown Park at Historic Winnipeg Site - \$19 Million Heritage Park and Interpretive Centre**

**Upper Fort Garry, Winnipeg** -- The Friends of Upper Fort Garry (FUGG) unveiled plans for a new public park at one of our province's most historically significant sites today.

"Many call this place the birthplace of Manitoba," says Jerry Gray, Chair of the Friends of Upper Fort Garry. "It really helped build the nation and it's gratifying to be able to bring it back to life."

Plans for the \$19 million project unveiled today do not attempt to rebuild the original fort, but instead pay homage to it.

"The park's design demarcates the foundations of the original buildings and walls," says Gray. "Interpretive installations will be placed within the foundations with other commemorative and interpretive installations throughout the park. It is really adding a significant public park to the downtown landscape. And, of course, the original Governor's Gate will remain."

An interpretive centre, complete with exhibit space, a multi-purpose theatre, food service, a digital library and office space, will be the final piece within the park.

"We will be phasing in this project over several years," says Gray. "We'll begin with the landscaping and public space and then move on to the interpretive centre in 2011 to complete the project within the five year time frame."

\$10.3 million has been raised to date, with another \$9.0 million required over the coming years to complete the five year build plan. A fundraising campaign is expected to kick off this fall. Construction of the park will be an ongoing development. An additional \$3 million in private donations will be sought to add sculptural installations within the park.

The provincial and federal governments each contributed \$1.5 million to the original fundraising campaign and the city of Winnipeg donated the land. The Provincial government also purchased the Petro Canada station at Broadway and Main to complete the land assembly for the Park. Legislation to make the site a Provincial Park is expected to be passed in the current session.

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“The Upper Fort Garry Heritage Park and Interpretive Centre will be a testament to the dedication of our innovative community leaders and of all citizens whose goal is to preserve our historic and cultural traditions, sense of identity and natural surroundings. This park is sure to become a destination for many visitors to experience, learn and enjoy a part of Manitoba’s history,” said the Honourable Vic Toews, Minister of Public Safety on behalf of the Honourable Lynne Yelich, Minister of State for Western Economic Diversification.

“As the birthplace of Manitoba, it is fitting that Upper Fort Garry site be brought back to life so that future generations can reach out and touch their history,” said Conservation Minister Bill Blaikie. “This exciting new park will become a focus of provincial pride and an important destination for visitors to Manitoba.”

Archaeological work on the site will begin in May. The Friends are partnering with the University of Manitoba for the archaeological field school with students doing the excavating. Additional archaeological work will be conducted before site preparation work begins in the fall. Construction of the Park will begin in the spring of 2011.

The Forks North Portage Partnership will operate the park under an in-kind agreement that provides operating, marketing and administrative services to The Friends of Upper Fort Garry.

The site is being designed by landscape architects Hilderman Thomas Frank Cram and architects Cohlmeier Architecture Ltd.

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### **About Upper Fort Garry**

The Fort, built between 1834 and 1837, was the centre of trade for an area that was larger than Eastern Europe and was the administrative and judicial body of the Red River Settlement, which was governed by the Hudson’s Bay Company. It was also the place where Louis Riel formed the Provisional Government which led to Manitoba entering Confederation as a province. Upper Fort Garry was demolished between 1881 and 1889.