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MAKING A NET-ZERO HOME

308 Colony comes to downtown Winnipeg



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TENDER RESULTS
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KENASTON EXPANSION
PICKING UP SPEED

RAILSIDE AT THE FORKS:
THE COMMUNITY IN COMMON



Images courtesy of Bockstael Construction.

MAKING A NET-ZERO HOME

308 Colony comes to downtown Winnipeg

By Matthew Bradford

An inspired approach to affordable housing is taking form in downtown Winnipeg. Under development by UWRC 2.0 and Lotus Holdings Winnipeg, 308 Colony Street is a mixed-use high-rise that will introduce hundreds of mixed-income residential units to the city's Colony Street neighbourhood and stand as Canada's tallest net-zero carbon residential building.

"The 308 Colony project is a testament to how policy objectives, such as the supply of quality, affordable housing and environmental sustainability needn't be mutually exclusive, but can – importantly, and with increasing necessity – be made mutually reinforcing," says Jeremy Read, CEO of UWRC 2.0.

Bockstael Construction is bringing the high-rise out of the ground between the UWRC 2.0's Downtown Commons and UWRC 2.0's Muse Flats buildings. Once open in winter 2025, the 21-storey building will feature two commercial spaces on its entry-level floor, topped with 214 apartment units. 20 per cent of all suites will be barrier-free or barrier-free-adaptable, and 86 units will be earmarked for affordable housing at 59 per cent to 69 per cent of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Median Market Rent for the neighbourhood. Residents will also have access to a common lounge, gym, laundry facilities and an outdoor greenspace terrace, among other amenities.

The \$76.7-million development is being supported by numerous public sector programs (see sidebar). Its funding includes \$16 million from the CMHC Affordable Housing Fund and \$9.3 million from the CMHC's Affordable Housing Innovation Fund, both of which are providing forgivable contributions to the construction of the mixed-income housing project. In her statement during a visit to the site in February 2024, Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland praised projects like Muse Flats and 308 Colony for addressing the city's housing needs, stating: "This is a prime example of what a great housing project in Canada in 2024 looks like: increasing access to affordable housing, creating a vibrant community, creating good jobs



UNITED SUPPORT FOR 308 COLONY

308 Colony is made possible with support from several provincial and federal programs and industry supports, including:

- ▶ CMHC’s Seed Funding, National Housing Co-Investment Fund, Affordable Housing Innovation Fund and MLI Select mortgage insurance (placed with RBC);
- ▶ GST rebate for multi-residential buildings and the Canada Investment Tax Credit for Green Energy Equipment;
- ▶ Canada-Manitoba Merit-based Low-Carbon Economy Fund;
- ▶ Manitoba Works Capital Incentive, Climate and Conservation Fund, Green Energy Equipment Tax Credit and Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation Proposal Development Funding;
- ▶ The City of Winnipeg’s Affordable Housing Now program and Housing Rehabilitation Investment Reserve;
- ▶ The Federation of Canadian Municipalities’ Sustainable Affordable Housing planning and study grant programs;
- ▶ Efficiency Manitoba’s Innovation Fund, New Buildings Program Performance Path, Solar Rebate and appliance rebate programs; and
- ▶ Investments from the New Market Funds and owner-contributed equity.



and coming with a low environmental impact that has a direct, immediate benefit for the pocketbooks of the people who live here.”

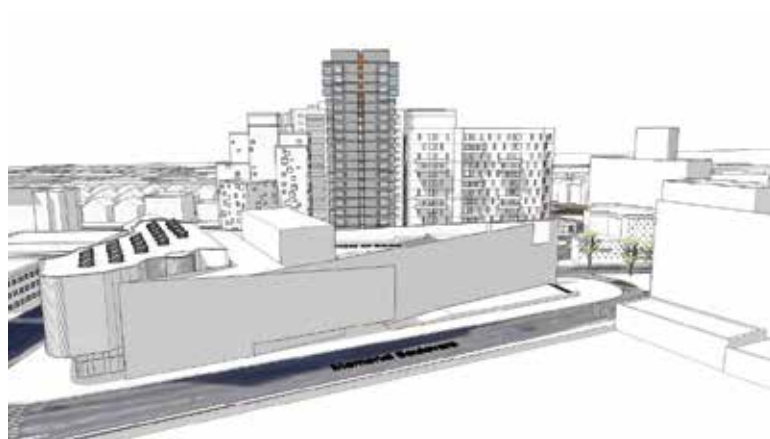
“These are exactly the types of homes that Winnipeg needs more of, and that Canada needs more of,” she added.

FORM AND FUNCTION

308 Colony is a project with several priorities. In addition to blending socially inclusive, affordable housing into Winnipeg’s dense downtown core, UWCR 2.0 and Lotus Holdings Winnipeg intend to make 308 Colony the first residential high-rise building (i.e., taller than 10 storeys) to achieve the Canada Green Building Council Zero Carbon Building – Design Standard (CAGBC ZCB-Design) in Canada.

“I’m honoured to oversee the construction of Canada’s first residential high-rise with CAGBC ZCB-Design certification,” says Anthony Militano, project manager with Bockstael Construction. “Building a near-zero-carbon, affordable high-rise in downtown Winnipeg between two existing towers is challenging, and we couldn’t do it without our dedicated, high-performing and collaborative project team.”

That team includes Winnipeg’s Cibinel Architecture, which has delivered a sleek and contemporary design that blends the high-rise seamlessly among its Colony Street community. To that end, George Cibinel, project architect for Cibinel Architecture, says several elements on the ground floor



will help integrate 308 Colony with its neighbours, including commercial rental units that focus on the street, patios, a second-storey exterior deck, transparent glazing and other features intended to “make strong visual connections to the street.”

“One of the mandates of UWCRC 2.0 is to increase the housing stock within the urban context of Winnipeg, with the desired outcome directed toward public multi-family housing,” says Cibinel. “We’re excited to work on a vision that will provide mixed-income housing for Winnipeg families and contribute to the area’s vitality and safety.”

During her site visit, Deputy Prime Minister Freeland praised 308 Colony’s overall impression: “I want to emphasize a design principle here which I think is so important. You can’t tell, when you knock on the door, whether you

are knocking on the door of affordable housing or market-rate housing. That is one of the things that makes this a real community. I am so inspired by how you are thinking about making a great place to live while also making sure that people don’t feel stigmatized.”

Numerous design and construction choices will ensure that 308 Colony meets its CAGBC ZCB-Design designation. These include an enhanced building envelope with integrated photovoltaics to provide year-round solar energy, ample glazing to promote natural lighting and cutting-edge systems designed to achieve low targets for annual energy consumption. Examples of the latter include a system of central air-source heat pumps that will work in concert with solar thermal panels and a thermal storage system to distribute heat to in-suite fan coils and the domestic hot water heating system. A central ventilation

system recovers heating energy from suite exhaust to preheat fresh air at a high efficiency.

Elsewhere, the high-rise’s superstructure and most of its foundation are made with cast concrete, which is chosen because of the material’s long-term strength, sustainable manufacturing processes and thermal mass that reduces energy consumption when compared to other structural materials.

With these elements in play, the project team is confident in its ability to deliver a high-rise that will raise the bar for sustainable residential construction. “What is more,” adds Read, “308 Colony will achieve this while addressing current market and affordable housing supply challenges by providing attractive living spaces for its future residents to proudly call ‘home.’” 