



SCO'S PROJECT TO REIMAGINE HUDSON'S BAY HERITAGE BUILDING IN DOWNTOWN WINNIPEG

HBC Gifts Landmark Building to Southern Chiefs' Organization A Bold Vision for a Better Future – Grand Chief Daniels

April 22, 2022

ANISHINAABE AND DAKOTA TERRITORY, MB – The Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) is proud to announce its project to transform the iconic Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) heritage building in downtown Winnipeg. Following traditional ceremony over two days, culminating in an event held on Friday, HBC announced its intention to gift the building to SCO. Working closely with HBC and federal, provincial and municipal Treaty partners, SCO has developed a visionary plan to turn the building into a space for economic and social reconciliation.

"Today can be another step forward to a brighter future, one that reflects what our ancestors dreamed of," stated **Grand Chief Jerry Daniels**. "This project is an act of reconciliation and is our vision to revitalize the heart of Winnipeg's downtown, for the benefit of all, in line with our traditional, holistic approach to sustainable economic development."

The project's working title is **Wehwehneh Bahgahkinahgohn**, or 'it is visible', and it will be a public act of reclamation and reconciliation as First Nations become the new owners of the historic building. This year marks the 352nd anniversary of Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), the oldest company in North America and one entwined with the fur trade. This project can begin to tell a new story for First Nations, for HBC, and for Canada.

"As we considered the future for the Winnipeg building, it was important to ensure a sustainable plan for the site that also had meaningful purpose for the city of Winnipeg," said **Richard Baker, Governor and Executive Chairman of Hudson's Bay Company**. "HBC's Truth and Reconciliation journey requires actions that demonstrate our commitment to moving forward together with Indigenous communities. We believe SCO is the right steward for this location, and can create a new community landmark that will help advance reconciliation."

"Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home," said **The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada**. "By reimagining the iconic Hudson's Bay Company building in Winnipeg's downtown core, the Southern Chiefs' Organization is helping preserve this historic building, while creating almost 300 much-needed housing units for members of the southern First Nations in Manitoba."

Following an unprecedented year, with the discovery of unmarked graves of children who died at residential school, and the disproportionate economic, health, and social hardships brought on by the pandemic, now is the time to create a new and brighter future for First Nations people. The SCO project will give new life to The Bay building, including a place of reflection to honour residential and day school Survivors and the children who did not make it home. It will also create social and economic opportunity, including significant long-term employment and over a million working hours during the construction phase, putting people back to work after the COVID-19 pandemic.

“With this project, we are working with HBC and creating a new way of living and working together with Treaty partners to create better outcomes for us all,” said **Peguis First Nation Chief Glenn Hudson**, member of the SCO Chiefs’ Executive Committee. “This will be a new beginning for our people, for this important heritage building, and for everyone who will be brought together to live, work and visit this ground-breaking space.”

“The iconic Hudson’s Bay building is part of our province’s heritage and the social fabric of downtown Winnipeg,” said **Premier Heather Stefanson**. “We are pleased to see this unique partnership and act of reconciliation move forward that will certainly have a positive impact on the redevelopment of this landmark building and vibrant neighbourhood, while also supporting our collective commitment to work collaboratively with Indigenous communities to build a brighter future for all Manitobans.”

“At the centre of Canada and at the crossroads of an Indigenous meeting place that is thousands of years old, Winnipeg is leading the way forward on Canada’s journey of reconciliation and today’s announcement is another step in the right direction,” said **Mayor Brian Bowman**. “I am proud to participate in today’s announcement of a vision led by the Southern Chiefs’ Organization and supported by the Hudson’s Bay Company and governments. Our country’s path to reconciling with Indigenous Peoples will be long, and will require the support of many, and steps like the actions here today.”

Environmental sustainability will be championed throughout the renewal of the Bay building, with the use of technologies to support the low carbon, low energy ideals including a 35 per cent reduction in energy consumption and an 81 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions that closely align with First Nation values of treading lightly on the earth. 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.

The building will be further reimagined by a transformation of the main floor, creating a public space that honours our lands and waters, in an atrium illuminated by skylights and the soaring sky above. Once complete, the building will attract people from across Turtle Island and beyond as the area becomes a key draw for the celebration of First Nation heritage and culture with a **museum and living art gallery**, where for the first time First Nations will tell our own story. **Two restaurants** will attract downtown office employees, students from the nearby university as well as locals and tourists, to a main floor featuring a café with a fresh take on First Nations’ cuisine and a rebooted **Paddlewheel Restaurant**.

“It’s been a difficult year for us all, but we are resilient and continue to work toward a better future,” added **Sagkeeng Anicinabe Chief Derek Henderson**, member of the SCO Chiefs’ Executive Committee and the Chiefs’ Finance and Personnel Committee. “The transformation of this historic building is a way out of the darkness and toward a better tomorrow. This project can set the standard for what reconciliation can look like, in the city with the largest Indigenous population in Canada.”

The improvement of First Nation peoples' health and wellness is also incorporated into SCO's project, with a **health and healing centre** that embraces both western and traditional medical practices. The **rooftop garden** will provide further space for wellness, as children in the child care centre can explore and plant their own garden, and residents and employees will be able to find fresh air and space to exercise or enjoy the natural world.

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. As leaders and stewards of this land, the Governance House will be a symbol of reclamation for our people for years to come.

The project team includes senior advisor **Dr. Phil Fontaine**, Founder and President of Ishkonigan, former three-time National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, and negotiator of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement which created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The Honourable **Dr. Lloyd Axworthy**, Nobel Peace Prize nominee and former Minister of Foreign Affairs Canada who revitalized the west end of downtown Winnipeg when he was President of the University of Winnipeg, is also a senior advisor to the project.

"This project represents SCO's bold vision of what the future can hold," concluded **Grand Chief Jerry Daniels**. "It can be a new world of hope and possibility, filled with place and space for our people to come together, to grow, create, and lead. A place for us to connect with people who come from across Turtle Island. A place for us to stand together in unity, speaking with one voice, proud of who we are. This is the vision of our ancestors."

-30-

About SCO

The Southern Chiefs' Organization represents 34 Anishinaabe and Dakota Nations and more than 81,000 citizens in what is now called southern Manitoba. SCO is an independent political organization that protects, preserves, promotes, and enhances First Nations peoples' inherent rights, languages, customs, and traditions through the application and implementation of the spirit and intent of the Treaty-making process. For more information, visit <https://scoinc.mb.ca/>

About HBC

HBC is a holding company of investments and businesses at the intersection of technology, retail operations and real estate. It is the majority owner of iconic ecommerce companies: Saks, a leading online destination for luxury fashion; The Bay, a Canadian ecommerce marketplace; and Saks OFF 5TH, a premier luxury off-price ecommerce company offering top brands at the best prices. These businesses were established as separate operating companies in 2021. HBC also wholly owns Hudson's Bay, the operating company for Hudson's Bay's brick-and-mortar stores, as well as SFA, the entity that operates Saks Fifth Avenue's physical locations, and O5, the operating company for Saks OFF 5TH stores.

With assets spanning top markets and prime locations across North America, HBC owns or controls—either entirely or with joint venture partners—approximately 40 million square feet of gross leasable area. HBC Properties and Investments, the company's real estate and investments portfolio business, manages these assets along with additional real estate offerings, including Streetworks Development, its property development division.

Founded in 1670, HBC is North America's longest continually operating company and is headquartered in New York and Toronto. For more information visit: www.hbc.com.

For Media Inquiries:

Southern Chiefs' Organization

Email: Media@scoinc.mb.ca

Tiffany Bourré, DVP of Communications, PR and Heritage, The Bay
416-571-1301 | Email: tiffany.bourre@thebay.com