

Shovels break ground on new Southwood Circle neighbourhood

GABRIELLE PICHE

IT isn't a city, but it could be.

Shovels broke ground on Southwood Circle, a new neighbourhood, Wednesday near the former Southwood Golf and Country Club clubhouse.

Give it 20 years — it'll be the largest infill residential development in Winnipeg's history, said Greg Rogers, CEO of UM Properties.

He outlined a four-phase, \$6-billion project with 11,000 housing units — all apartments and townhouses — and amenities spanning 112 acres.

"I think everybody, myself included, is excited to stick a shovel in the ground today and say we are finally building something," Rogers said.

It's been more than 10 years in the making. Then, UM Properties — the development company the University of Manitoba owns — bought the former Southwood Golf and Country Club land.

The past decade has brought planning and approvals. In January, the *Free Press* spoke to UM Properties as it was on the cusp of finalizing its development.

Rogers expects to announce the

neighbourhood's first building deals by year end. However, construction on the buildings likely won't begin until next September.

For now, developers will service lands to accommodate 2,000 housing units — it's the first subphase within the first phase.

Completion of all four phases will likely exceed 20 years, Rogers said.

"This location, it will always be good," he added. "This is the right place to build housing because it's immediately amenitized."

The University of Manitoba has a gym, libraries, an art gallery and more, Rogers said. There's space for retail and new amenities in Southwood Circle, he noted, mentioning a grocery store and dentist office.

Of the 112 acres, 80 are developable. Residential, commercial and institutional space will consume more than 12 million sq. ft. The other 32 acres are devoted to roads and parks, Rogers said.

UM Properties is working with Indigenous designers on intertwining nature and urbanism, he added. The plans involve preserving 5,000 trees, creating a park network spanning at

least 21 acres, and planting two trees for each one removed.

Southwood Circle isn't exclusive to students and professors, Rogers noted. It will have space for more than 20,000 people; they don't need to be connected to the university.

Once complete, the area — including the university — should see 60,000 people daily, UM Properties ball-parked. Winnipeg is the only Manitoba city with a larger population.

"The lessons we learn here, because this project is being developed over time, can be applied to future phases," Rogers said.

It's why UM Properties is creating a research consortium for developers to share data. Faculty and student researchers will collaborate with industry to study community development.

The findings could lead to more effective environmental and city planning policies, Rogers noted.

Southwood Circle is planned to stretch from Pembina Highway to the Red River from north of IG Field. It's set to hold the future National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and roughly 10 km of new active transportation pathways.



SUPPLIED

The four-phase, \$6-billion Southwood Circle project includes 11,000 housing units — all apartments and townhouses — and amenities spanning 112 acres.

Residents likely won't need a car, Rogers stated.

"It will be a unique urban experience, distinct within Winnipeg," Michael Benarroch, the University of Manitoba's president, said in a news release. "It will integrate the university

with the surrounding community."

Southwood Circle will use existing city infrastructure, including sewer and water pipes. Winnipeg will build 2.5 km of new roads.

gabrielle.piche@winnipegfreepress.com