

Building a gateway piece by piece

St. Boniface

BY SIMON FULLER

STAFF REPORTER

simon.fuller@canstarnews.com

The south end of St. Norbert will soon be transformed into a more inviting gateway to the city.

Approximately \$150,000 will be spent on the St. Norbert Gateway Project, which is among 19 projects across Winnipeg that will be funded by provincial and civic governments under the Building Communities Initiative, it was recently announced.

Ken McKim, the city's project manager for Building Communities, confirmed the "image route enhancement" work along

Pembina Highway will stretch from just south of the Perimeter Highway to La Salle River Bridge.

McKim said the project is set to include signage and landscaping designed to make the southern traffic gateway more eye-catching to visitors to the city.

"The project will definitely have a historical flavour to reflect the area's rich francophone culture and history," McKim said. "We're working on some preliminary designs right now."

The intent is to have the project designed and completed by late this fall, he added.

Entreprises Riel — a non-profit organization whose mandate is to foster economic, community and tourism development in Winnipeg's francophone districts — is working with the two levels of government and

community members to develop the project.

"This is really phase two of the project," said Norm Gousseau, executive director and CEO of Entreprises Riel. "Last year, we started on some boulevard work."

He said project players are currently looking at different signage designs that will reflect the area's Métis heritage, while also capturing the sense of a modern, vibrant community.

As well, his organization is working with the city to add more trees along Pembina Highway.

Gousseau said the project is important because the gateway provides primary access to the city on the highway, notably from the U.S. border.

Gousseau compared each component of the project to pieces of a puzzle that will "enhance the area and tell a story."



Photo by Simon Fuller

Norm Gousseau stands at the proposed site of signage near the St. Norbert Bridges.

"A couple of signs alone are not enough. But add the tree-planting, median development and the future development of certain attractions, such as the St. Norbert Farmers Market, and the puzzle becomes more complete."

"And let's not overlook the historical significance of the area, considering it is where Manitoba entered the Confederation and was the staging area for the Métis buffalo hunts," he added.

The genesis of the project was a June 2008 funding announcement designed to capitalize on St. Norbert's heritage and location.

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