

## Plateau Subdivision: A Sustainable Subdivision

Phase 1 of the Plateau Subdivision is ready to go. Although the construction schedule was very tight the City is pleased to announce the subdivision is on time, as planned. At present, construction is underway on five of the residential lots with development permits approved for the construction of 5 additional homes in Phase 1 of the Plateau Subdivision.

The new subdivision offers piped service, with a water booster station providing the necessary water pressure to service the buildings. The construction of the booster station will be completed by late February 2006 at which time the homes currently under construction will have running water making them ready for occupancy.

The Plateau Subdivision is the first arctic subdivision based on sustainable development principles. Given the sensitivity of the physical environment, the high energy and construction costs and the concern regarding the effects of global warming, City Council and the residents of Iqaluit took on the challenge of developing in a more sustainable way.

To build a sustainable subdivision means to develop land and to build houses in a way:

- that addresses social needs and fits with the cultural identity of this community;
- that is more sensitive to the environment; and
- that is more sensitive to the use of resources such as water, electricity and fuel.

The vision of developing a sustainable subdivision was achieved in various ways. For example, social needs and cultural uniqueness were addressed by protecting natural features such as the berry picking areas, by establishing a network of walking trails and snowmobile trails, by maximizing the number of single-family lots and keeping them affordable by designing smaller lots, pricing lots based on site characteristics, and initiating the first purpose-built condominium project in Iqaluit,

which is currently under construction with 4 dwelling units. Similarly, the majority of the roads of the subdivision are aligned with the prevailing winds to reduce snow accumulation thereby reducing the need for snow removal which is very costly. Building standards were also put in place. Amongst others, the standards require that home builders use water saving devices such as low-flush toilets, low-flow shower heads and energy efficient appliances. This reduces the demand the development puts on municipal infrastructure, the consumption of fuel and electricity, and the environment. In addition, several lots have enhanced standards requiring that the homes on these lots be built according to the R2000 standard.

The planning of the subdivision involved substantial community input. In May 2004, in partnership with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canada Mortgage, Housing Corporation, and Natural Resources Canada the City of Iqaluit hosted a two-day design charrette (a workshop) where City Council, City staff, government agencies, Inuit associations, local developers and other key stakeholders, including elders and the public, combined their efforts to develop best practice options that can be applied to the design of an arctic sustainable subdivision for Iqaluit. The consultation process also involved a series of public meetings and open houses, as well as the necessary presentations to the City of Iqaluit's Planning and Engineering Committee.

Based on the results of a feasibility study prepared by a team of consultants and on the ideas and creative solutions that resulted from the design charrette, over the subsequent months the consultants prepared a development scheme showing how the subdivision could be developed following principles of sustainable development and smart growth.

The following year, in the spring of 2005 the City advertised the disposal of the lots of Phase 1 of the

Plateau Subdivision and the response was unprecedented. Except for 2 Community Use lots, all the lots were leased immediately. The single-family lots were disposed of by ballot draw and they were all awarded on the day of the draw. The remaining lots were disposed of by proposal call. The current phase of the subdivision provides 34 single-family lots, 10 multi-family lots, 3 mixed-use lots allowing a mix of commercial use and apartments, and 2 Community Use lots.

The City of Iqaluit is responsible for land development. To finance land development projects the City uses the funds accumulated in its "Land Development Fund" and, if necessary, borrows money. The development cost for Phase 1 of the Plateau Subdivision is: \$ 5.5 million dollars. In this case the City will need to borrow \$ 4.5 million dollars to fund the development. The costs relating to



*Opening reception of the design charrette.*

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the development of Phase 1 of the Plateau Subdivision will be recovered solely from the revenues of the leases of that subdivision. The pricing of the lots reflects the full cost of land development including the cost of borrowing. The general revenues of the City bear no part in the money that is borrowed to finance this or any other subdivision.

The Plateau Subdivision establishes new benchmarks for land development in the arctic. This initiative is a symbol of the City's ability to face the challenges of northern planning and of its commitment to sustainable development. The City intends to continue developing expertise in this area and to apply lessons learned and sustainable principles on future developments in Iqaluit, and to lend assistance to other initiatives in Nunavut and the Arctic in general.



*City staff and consultant inspect the new subdivision.*

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