

Selinger vows to build on four downtown lots

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The NDP pledged Monday to build condos and apartments on four government-owned surface parking lots in downtown Winnipeg, the same lots many have called a scourge.

At a campaign announcement in front of the Winnipeg Convention Centre, Premier Greg Selinger said the NDP hopes to encourage the construction of another 1,400 condo and apartment units downtown in addition to 700 already underway.

But three of the four lots were earmarked for development well before Monday's announcement. Manitoba Public Insurance has been planning for months to begin a formal search for developers willing to build on two of its lots. And it's long been understood the Winnipeg Convention Centre would expand due south over a surface lot on York Avenue.

Monday, Selinger re-promised the province's support for the WCC's expansion.

He said the parking lots are located within downtown development agency CentreVenture's proposed sports, hospitality and entertainment district around the MTS Centre and the convention centre.

The premier said though he would sell government-owned land to private developers at market rates, an NDP government would encourage new housing through the use of its residential development grants and tax-increment financing.

He said there's "no guarantee" all the housing units the province is hoping to see built will materialize in the next four years.

"But we'll get the land available, get the projects rolling and, subject to private-sector interest, those projects will move forward," Selinger said. "We already know that they (developers) are interested."

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