

New in Homes & Condos

TORONTO STAR

SECTION H
SATURDAY
OCTOBER 22, 2011
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SCRAP YARD DOGS

A local scrap yard may not be beautiful, but it sure is handy, **H2**

CE ON2



Top 10 New Home Buying Tips



Tarion.com

LONG BRANCH

Making a mark on the waterfront

'For years, this has been a drive-through community and now it's being recognized'

TRACY HANES
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

For more than a decade, Mark Bozzo has been championing the "underdog."

That's how he describes the Long Branch area of South Etobicoke, where his company, the Queenscorp Group, has been building mid-rise, mixed-use condo buildings and leading the rejuvenation of the west-end neighbourhood that lies just steps from Lake Ontario.

More than a century ago, Long Branch was a cottage-country playground for the wealthy, with steamships, an amusement park with a Ferris wheel, and quaint cottages clustered around the waterfront. It eventually became a village, cottages were converted to homes, and in the 1930s a commercial strip with an industrial section was added along Lake Shore Blvd. W. during World War II. Eventually, the bordering cities (Toronto and Mississauga) engulfed the area and the once-bustling streets lost their lustre.

"Over the last 10 to 12 years, we've been working in this community that's ever-evolving," says Bozzo, Queenscorp president. "We are essentially the only player in the sandbox that has put forth this effort and vision. Our vision is to revitalize the main streets. We're at the turning point. For years, this has been a drive-through community and now it's being recognized. It's really cool down here."

LONG BRANCH continued on H14

VAUGHAN

A place to

GROW

Expo City is the first step in transforming a suburban field into a modern city centre

TRACY HANES
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Just as Expo 67 transformed two islands in Montreal into a stunning cultural showpiece for the World's Fair four decades ago, another Expo will help transform suburban Vaughan into a world-class showpiece city.

Expo City is the first residential development in the new Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, a sustainable, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly "downtown" to be created on 179 hectares (440 acres) of open land.

The VMC will include a retail avenue, condos and more than 14 acres of naturalized space including a central park along Black Creek that will have recreational trails, ponds and protected wildlife areas.

Plans for the VMC have been bolstered by the TTC's announcement that it will extend the Spadina subway line north to Highway 7. The last of six new stops will be the VMC and the subway will link Vaughan residents directly to downtown Toronto.

Also underway is the transformation of Highway 7 into a tree-lined avenue with dedicated Viva Rapid Transit bus lanes converging at the VMC.

EXPO continued on H12



Expo City is the first residential project for the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, which aims to transform 179 hectares (440 acres) into a new mixed-use downtown.

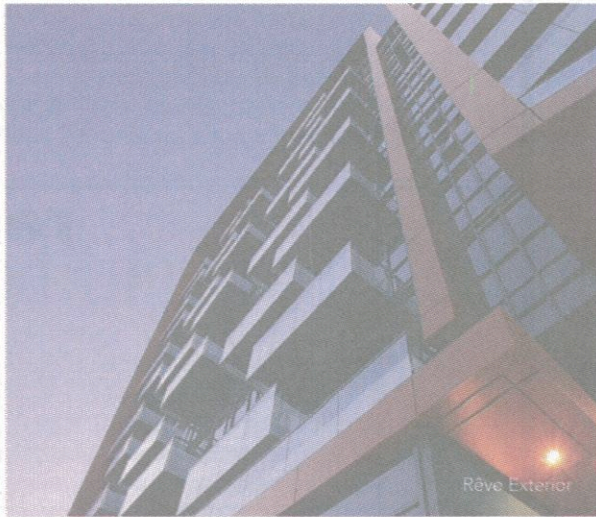
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CE ON2

HOMES & CONDOS

'We are lucky we have this open space'

EXPO from H1

Expo City, at Highway 7 and Jane St., is being developed by the Cortel Group and will include five residential towers, an urban square, retail galleria, a pedestrian and bike-friendly boulevard and a short walk to the subway stop. The first building, Expo-1, has been launched with the second to be released soon.

The 37-storey building has been designed by architect Alan Tregebov of YZed Project Management. It has an 18-degree twist and it appears as though waves are ascending the facade.

"The surveyors who laid out southern Ontario skewed the main concessions such as Dufferin and Keele 17 or 18 degrees off true north," explains Tregebov. "We've oriented buildings so they are true north and south to maximize sunshine for each suite. You will get some sun even if you're on the north. It's about air, light, sunshine and quality of life. There's nothing better than sunshine in your suite, whether it's large or small."

The units will have wider than normal spans (7.6 metres or 25 feet) to create shallow, wide suites to capitalize on the light and views. Windows will be floor-to-ceiling, ceilings nine-feet tall and half the



Architect Alan Tregebov of YZed Project Management, left, and Cortel Group vice-president Peter Cortellucci stand by the model of the first tower of Expo City, the first residential project for the VMC.

suites will be corner units.

"There is no other building in Vaughan with floor-to-ceiling windows and nine-foot ceilings," says Peter Cortellucci, Cortel's vice president.

Even when all five buildings are erected, they won't overlook each other, so residents will have clear views. Buyers in the first tower will

overlook Black Creek and a pond. Covered walkways and an underground retail arcade will connect residents to retail shops in the complex.

At the centre of Expo City will be a neighbourhood square that Tregebov says will be "an oasis" from the traffic along Highway 7.

"We're trying to build more actual

communities where people mingle," says Vaughan councillor Sandra Yeung Racco. "Here, they (Cortel) are building a place where the community can come together to meet or to go shopping. You don't need to get in your car to get stuff. It's all about sustainability."

Expo City represents a new green planning and building benchmark

for Cortel, says CEO and president Mario Cortellucci.

"We are realizing with fuel consumption and energy costs, it's the right thing to do," he says. "This will be a place to live, work and play. We are trying to be more conscientious about how people live. We are surprised at how educated buyers are and they are asking (about sustainable features)."

Expo City will have a rainwater management system that will capture excess water from a half hectare (over one acre) of green rooftops, treat it and funnel it back into the natural ecosystem. YZed and Cortel Group sourced predominantly local construction materials and opted for a post-tension structural system, which allows for a lighter structure that uses less material.

They looked locally and internationally for inspiration in creating everything from the master plan to the suites.

"We looked at what makes sense. We looked at the Vaughan area where people typically live in larger homes and when we're building a condo unit for them, they wanted larger space," says Peter Cortellucci.

"Alan's been all over the world, my dad has been as well, I've been on condo tours to Vancouver and the States. We take inspiration from all these places and ask what makes sense. You ask what the people who are living in Vaughan want now and what the people who will eventually live here will be looking for."

"There is a stronger influence from Italy than other places because in the last 2,000 to 3,000 years of continuous habitation, a lot of great ideas have come out," says Tregebov. "There are a lot of great contemporary ideas, a lot of innovation. Here, we will have a lowrise component along Highway 7 of about 20 metres high, which is about the same height of buildings you'd find in Barcelona, London or Paris. It creates great urban streets and a public realm. A smaller podium is not enough to define the public realm."

Because the blocks laid out in the official plan are large — about three times that of a block in New York City — Tregebov says a series of pedestrian streets were added "to make them into bite-sized pieces so you get back to more of a traditional scale. The official plan is the broad brush stroke. Our job is to add a level of refinement."

The project will have 30,000 or 40,000 square feet of commercial/retail activity.

"Because of the subway, it's critical in how we plan the VMC," says Yeung Rocco. "We've seen other bad examples. The perfect example is when the Sheppard subway was built and for a long time the subway was empty because there weren't people living there. Now there are highrises going up everywhere, but it's not good planning."

"We are lucky we have all this open space that has not been developed so we can develop it properly," she adds. "We can make sure that this downtown is going to attract people to come, not just to live, but to work, to play, to socialize. I'm looking into putting in a performing arts centre or other elements that will make the downtown vital."

"What's going to be very interesting is how this community takes shape along Highway 7," says Tregebov. "It's going to become a grand boulevard with rows with trees. We're doing a 200-metre stretch and I think the formation will be astounding. In five to 10 years, it won't feel like a highway anymore."

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