

Sky Towers to help transform Surrey Central

Towers the cornerstone of new downtown community

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Surrey's Central City area will get the two tallest towers between Vancouver and Calgary under plans unveiled Thursday by a Korean businessman.

The 36-storey and 40-storey residential Sky Towers will be directly across the street from the five Infinity highrises being built at the King George SkyTrain station in the formerly run-down Whalley neighbourhood.

With the first Infinity tower ready for occupancy in January, and four more towers on the way, the addition of the Sky Towers enhances the city's goal of turning Central City into Surrey's downtown community, Mayor Dianne Watts said in an interview.



CREDIT: Bill Keay, Vancouver Sun
 Businessman Hee Yong (Edmond) Yang shows Surrey Mayor Dianne Watts the view new residential skyscrapers will have.

"This really fits into our vision for our city centre," Watts said. "The seven towers here are going to be just the cornerstone for the whole entrance into city centre."

She said applications are being processed for several more towers, both residential and commercial, over the next five years.

Hee Yong 'Edmond' Yang, who operates a 2,000-outlet fried chicken franchise in South Korea, took over the Infinity project after the previous developer, also Korean, faltered under a heavy debt load.

Designed by Patrick Cotter Architects, Sky Towers will contain 900 one- and two-bedroom suites, as well as 56 townhouses, with studios starting at \$179,900.

Each tower will include a 1,000-square-foot rooftop solarium with 50-foot glass atriums, along with a 4,000 square foot rooftop patio offering unrestricted views.

The 36-storey Sky Tower is scheduled for completion in 2010, followed by the 40-

storey tower.

"With Sky Towers and the Infinity project, we're looking to build a dense urban mecca," said Cameron McNeill of MAC Real Estate Marketing Solutions.

At its heart is the Surrey campus of Simon Fraser University, along with shops, restaurants and recreational facilities, all within walking distance of SkyTrain.

"If we look ahead five or 10 years, Central City is going to be one of the most significant urban centres in Western Canada," McNeill said in an interview. "Surrey is one of Canada's fastest growing cities and this is their downtown core."

Unlike Burnaby's Metrotown, which he likened to a mall surrounded by residential highrises, McNeill said Central City will become "a fully-integrated urban centre in a most modern sense, a mini downtown Vancouver."

With 150 homes priced at less than \$250,000 -- almost half the cost of similar units in Vancouver -- he said it will also be highly affordable.

By "trying to deliver high-quality residences at affordable prices," Yang, 46, is living up to the three principles that have governed his life, said his spokesperson, lawyer Byron Lee.

"First of all you have to be a good person with a good heart. Secondly, whatever you do, you should try to do things righteously and honestly. Thirdly, you shouldn't be in business only to make money but you should aim at benefitting others."

Lee said Yang, who immigrated to Canada with his wife and three children in 2002, is looking for opportunities to build additional homes in the area.

"He thinks Central City will become a vibrant downtown community. It's very livable with a lot of amenities."

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TOWERS IN THE SKY

- When complete, the combined Infinity and Sky Towers project will include seven highrise buildings located near the King George SkyTrain station in the Central City area of Surrey.

- The combined development will add 2,900 condominium suites to the area and is worth \$1 billion.

- The second and third Infinity towers are under construction and are expected to be completed in 2009. A total of five Infinity towers will be built.

- Sky Towers presales will start later this month for 900 units which include studios, one- and two-bedroom units, and townhouses. Prices start at \$179,900, with 150 units under \$250,000.

Who's behind the project:

- Hee Yong (Edmond) Yang is CEO of Young In Development which has taken over financing and construction of both Infinity and Sky Towers.
- Yang is a founder of Pelicana, a chicken franchise that began with one restaurant in Daejeon, South Korea, in 1982 and has now grown to over 2,000 restaurants, meat packing plants and warehouses, according to a press release.
- Yang says he moved from South Korea to Vancouver in 2002 to find a better life for his family.

Source: Peak Communicators and MAC Marketing Solutions

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