

Race is on to build Westside's first high-rise

By Jason Luciw - Kelowna Capital News - June 11, 2008



Doug Taylor looks over a scale model of the multi-phase Lake Wind residential development on Carrington Road in Westbank, which could be home to the first high-rise on the west side.

Jason Luciw/Capital News

Despite all the gangbuster development in Westside and on Westbank First Nation land in the last five years, no one can yet lay claim to building the first high-rise on the west side.

But that could soon change.

The tallest building in Westside is currently six floors and is nearing completion on Carrington Road. It was built by Alberta-based Medican.

But, on the horizon are Medican's 16-storey and 18-storey towers near downtown Westbank. And, Kelowna-based Troika Developments has plans that could see towers of up to 30 storeys built on WFN reserve land, just west of Old Ferry Wharf Road.

Troika chief executive officer Renée Wasylyk said it could be tempting to race to build the first tower.

"I'd hope it would be us. But, I am not going to race, I am just going to do things well," Wasylyk said.

The company to build the first Westside high-rise may get bragging rights, but Wasylyk will tell you building the first residential tower will have much more to do with market demand than anything else. "I think it's going to come down to Medican or us and who knows—it's anyone's guess."

There could also be a wild card in the race—Concord Pacific. The Vancouver-based developer needs to

ink a deal with former WFN chief Ron Derrickson before it can talk about building towers on a large site south of the William R. Bennett Bridge.

Concord's senior vice-president Peter Webb did not return a call before press deadline.

As for Medican, it has recently handed marketing of its project near Westbank over to Sotheby's International Realty.

Spokesperson Doug Taylor said the overall development has been newly named Lake Wind.

The Carrington Road development's first two phases involve construction of two buildings at Lake Wind called Kaleido, which is nearly completed, and Kaleido Two.

Each building has 86-units spread out over six floors.

Once those two projects sell out, Medican's first tower will be next, Taylor said.

The high-rise, called Lumina, will be 16-storeys and offer 116 luxury units complete with a concierge service.

Taylor noted reservations for units in Lumina will be taken starting in August or September.

If construction begins later this year as hoped, residents could take possession in the new tower in 2010, Taylor added.

Another high-rise, 18 storeys tall, would be built in a future phase, at a time still to be determined.

As for Troika's West Harbour Project, west of Old Ferry Wharf Road, it is just getting started. The first phase of construction contains two, four-storey towers and will take 18 months to complete, said Wasylyk.

Beyond that a 20-storey tower is in the plans, she added. "We have a high-rise in our second phase."

Wasylyk noted that Troika Developments may consider approaching the Westbank First Nation to build higher than 20 storeys.

"We've been given some indication that if we created a good design we might get a variance for further height," Wasylyk said.

It would have to make sense and be appropriate for the area in order for buildings to reach those heights however, she said.

"We've done a lot of shadow studies to make sure that we're not impacting neighbours inappropriately or negatively at all."

West Harbour is in now marketing phase one. None of the 142 units are for sale yet, stated Wasylyk.

Phase two would be 170 units total, with 120 units in the 20-storey tower, and the remainder in a four-storey condo.

Meanwhile, Wasylyk said it's exciting to be part of development on the west side.

The west side is becoming a city unto itself, she said, with the completion of the bridge and new major commercial and residential developments.

"I think that's great, it (commercial development) gets people really living in their communities," said Wasylyk.

She said the addition of a health centre in Westside would add more jobs and encourage further growth.

jluciw@kelownacapnews.com

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