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Gateway sparks \$50 million housing project



Construction continues at a fast pace in the Yorkson Creek area where building permits are still being issued. Developers have big plans for the area, including a multi-family project that will include a 1,474-unit apartment block as well as single-family dwellings.

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Despite the current economic downturn, signs of construction activity and real-estate optimism abound in Langley Township. And more is in the pipeline.

On April 20, a number of public hearings for rezoning, Official Community Plan amendments and development permits came before council, including some fairly significant single-family subdivisions, and one large multi-family project.

The multi-family project, by 208 Developments Ltd., (Quadra) is a 1,474-unit apartment complex, in 16 four-storey buildings. It includes 16 single-

family houses. That proposal is located on eight hectares (20.77 acres) in the central phase of Yorkson Neighbourhood Plan, the west side of 208 Street between 80 and 84 Avenues, said senior Township planner John Geraghty.

The 208 Street Developments project's 1,474 units will be phased in over five years, depending on market activity, he expects.

Peter Warkentin, Quadra's project manager, said Thursday that the 1,474 one and two-bedroom apartments and the single-family homes are just part of his company's overall plan, which in time will include 144 three-bedroom townhomes, a total of 1,618 residential units.

Quadra Homes is the luxury condo division of the John Redekop Group, of Abbotsford, a well-known builder of residential and commercial projects in the province for more than 40 years.

"This is a \$50 million project, one of the largest residential projects in Canada," Warkentin said.

"The infrastructure improvements on Highway 1 (Gateway, including Port Mann Bridge) gives us a lot of confidence to move ahead. There are road improvements (that Quadra will make) and the interchange at 216 Street as part of Gateway, that will make this a very vibrant economic area."

Good access will also be enhanced with the Golden Ears Bridge opening, Warkentin said.

"We have tremendous confidence in the economy of Langley. We just think it is a fantastic area."

Other projects considered during the April 20 public hearings included the issuance of a development permit, to White Willow Investments Ltd. White Willow will build two manufacturing buildings, of 34,620 and 30,480 square feet, with accessory office space, for Quest Canada Drilling.

Quest is an international drilling company and will do off-season equipment and machinery repair, with a staff of up to 50 people, at the new facilities.

And the April 20 hearings included a subdivision in the Yorkson Neighbourhood Plan, 56 single-family lots, 17 rowhouses and 19 townhouses; a subdivision that includes another 56 single family homes and 36 attached strata units in the 21100-block of 77A Avenue; and a 10,000 square foot, multi-tenant commercial project for Comex Developments, at 19909 64 Ave.

And at the evening session of council April 20, final adoption was given to rezoning bylaws for a 26-acre, four-lot industrial subdivision in Gloucester Industrial Estates; and a 106-unit townhouse project by ParkLane in the 20300-block of 96 Avenue.

Dave Gormley, project manager for Gloucester, said Wednesday that he has been receiving many inquiries.

“We are in discussions with a lot of companies, a lot are on a wait-and-see format,” said Gormley.

“We see some hesitation from smaller companies. . . but larger companies are looking beyond the current economic situation.”

As an example, Gloucester principal, The Beedie Group, has just secured in Delta a 400,000 square foot project, a distribution centre for Home Depot.

And one of the tenants slated for Gloucester’s four-lot rezoning approved April 20 should be in front of council this month for a development permit — a 300,000-square-foot warehouse.

Senior planner Geraghty says quite a few other projects have been approved earlier, or are in the works, including significant activity in Murrayville.

This includes the Avalon Seniors Building, 126 units; Century Group’s 155-unit senior’s project, with 114 other residential units, poised to begin soon on the north side of Fraser Highway just east of the Langley Memorial Hospital; and Avtar Johal’s 73-unit townhouse project, also in Murrayville.

In Willowbrook, Sandhill Developments is still in for a building permit, and Sherwood Park Homes

is building two, 20-unit townhouses in Willoughby.

“Vesta (Properties Ltd.) keeps going there . . . that’s the one you see on 208 Street, there is about 300 units, single family, rowhouses, townhouses and manor homes, a mixture,” said Geraghty.

In Routley, Phoenix Homes has applied for a building permit on a 62-unit townhome project.

“Up in Yorkson, there is a lot of activity,” said Geraghty.

The Yorkson projects include a 70 single-family-lot, 40 rowhouse project; a 92-unit mixed residential project; 25, 48 and 105-lot single-family subdivisions, and a subdivision application by BFW, for 300 single-family lots.

BFW also has another 12 acres, which has just been rezoned for multi-family, but with no development permit yet.

Phoenix Homes will build 108 townhouse units and a four-story, 55 unit apartment building, and Athenry Developments’ plan for a multi-faceted project on four acres at 83 Avenue 208 Street is still going ahead.

Athenry, a project by Tony and Gwen McCamley, includes a proposal for the restoration and relocation of the Willoughby Community Hall, an Irish Cultural Centre, with a large seniors housing component, and about 100 other residential units.

In the Carvolth Business Park on 200 Street south of the freeway, “we have bits and pieces of commercial development going on, 13 developments, in various stages of the approval process,” Geraghty said, and Gloucester has about a half dozen building permits “imminent.”

And in Walnut Grove, there are several commercial properties north of 96 Avenue, as well as ParkLane Homes, 106 lots on 96 Avenue, and with ParkLane is also proceeding with 70 apartment units and eight townhomes, in Fort Langley’s Bedford Landing.

Deana Grinnell, the manager of land development with ParkLane, also expresses confidence in Langley.

“Walnut Grove has a huge value (for its location, amenities and services) and (the 96 Avenue project) is a product that hasn’t been brought on stream for quite some time.”

The Golden Ears Bridge will not only make Walnut Grove “the heart of economic activity” in Langley, the closure of the Albion Ferry will make Bedford Landing and Fort Langley even more attractive, Grinnell said.

The Bedford Landing project is a rare opportunity for this type of residential housing in Fort Langley, she said.

Grinnell said that in tough economic times, builders must look ahead and plan their strategies, because it takes time to get projects on stream.

ParkLane’s strategy is to “overcome uncertainty. . . by placing a well positioned product into the right marketplace,” she said.


Doug Kellner, a long-time Langley area realtor says that the “market is showing signs of picking up (and) people want to see a rejuvenation of the economy.”

But he is wary, as he says investors are, about the pending May 12 provincial election.

He says people who have witnessed a previous New Democratic Party majority in Victoria, will be reluctant to invest here if the NDP are chosen to lead the province for the next four years.

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