

Building Futures

The best of all worlds

Integrated condo communities enable residents to live, work, shop and play in one place

For Vangie Tsui, Hullmark Centre offers the best of all worlds.

Hullmark Centre is a mixed-use development at Yonge and Sheppard, with condo towers, offices and a 60,000-sq.-ft retail space.

The optometrist purchased two units at this project: one to be her home, the other to be her professional office. Plus she'll have a gym, grocery store (Whole Foods) and a bank in the same complex, which is located at the junction of two subway lines.

Tsui is eagerly anticipating her move into Hullmark next year. "It means I'll no longer have to commute for two hours to and from work," she says. "It will save me time, money and a few extra white hairs."

Hullmark is emblematic of the evolution that has taken place in condominium development over the past decade in the GTA.

Previous generations of condos tended to be stand-alone developments, with office space and major retail located elsewhere. Today, the members of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) must meet the intensification targets set out in the province's growth plan, Places to Grow. The plan encourages developers to concentrate their efforts on creating density in downtown areas and transit corridors to accommodate the population growth of the region, which grows by 100,000 new residents every year.

They're also building denser, mixed-use communities that incorporate a variety of different uses (residential, office and retail) into a single, complete community. All of this enables residents to live, work, shop and play in one place.

A BETTER LIFESTYLE

"The majority of the condos we have on the market today are mixed-use," says Jim Ritchie, senior vice-president of marketing and sales with Tridel, the co-developer of Hullmark Centre. He points to another major mixed-use project of Tridel's, Bayfront. Currently under development on the waterfront, the community will have condos, office buildings and substantial retail space. "You bring all these various components together, and it's great from the homeowner's perspective because those services are right downstairs."

For their part, developers like the fact that mixed-use projects generate a lot of buyer interest because they offer a better lifestyle in a walkable neighbourhood.

Municipalities enjoy having a variety of land uses on a single property, because it means added tax revenue. And by utilizing land more efficiently, mixed-use development also reduces the need for expansion of infrastructure such as sewer, water and roads.

Ritchie notes that mixed-use projects improve the public realm, ensuring a steady



Tim Fraser

What did you buy and why?

Name: Vangie Tsui
Location: Toronto
Occupation: Optometrist
Where did you buy: Hullmark Centre, Yonge and Sheppard
Developers: Tridel and Hullmark Developments (both BILD members)
Why there: The advantages of being able to work and live in the same place.
What did you get: A condo and an office.
Tell us about your place: Condo is a 600-sq.-ft., one-bedroom-plus-den unit on the 17th floor. Has a big terrace facing Yonge and Sheppard. Stainless-steel appliances and granite countertops.
 Office is a 700-sq.-ft. unit on third floor of Hullmark Centre, just above the new Whole Foods. The space is a raw unit, Tsui says, "so I'll need to finish it myself."

stream of people and activity in the surrounding neighbourhood. "It's important to address how a building relates to the street," he says. "And by bringing those different uses together, you're animating the street even more."

"Because of Places to Grow, our communities that were traditionally spread out in the 905 area have become more compact."

MARCO FILICE, senior vice-president at Liberty and member of BILD's board of directors

Markham-based Liberty Development has introduced two major mixed-use projects that are part of a significant shift in how development is done in the GTA suburbs.

Liberty's World on Yonge mega-development, just north of Steeles Ave., has one

million square feet of condos, and 500,000 square feet of office and retail space on a 10-acre site. "We did in 10 acres what would traditionally take 300 acres to do," says Liberty's senior vice-president Marco Filice, who is also a member of BILD's board of directors.

At Hwy. 7 and Weston Road in Vaughan, Liberty is building Centro Square, a two-tower, 800-unit condo project with more than 250,000 square feet of office and retail space to service a rapidly growing region.

Centro Square is only the latest in a growing number of mixed-use condo projects that have been cropping up in recent years along Hwy. 7 — from Vaughan to Richmond Hill to Markham — as York Region works to concentrate high-density development on its major thoroughfare, in accordance with the province's growth plan.

"Because of Places to Grow, our communities that were traditionally spread out in

the 905 area have become more compact," Filice explains.

His company's intensification efforts will be aided by the construction of a bus rapid transit (BRT) service down the median of Hwy. 7, connecting Vaughan Metropolitan Centre with Richmond Hill and Markham town centres. There'll also be a new TTC subway station opening at Hwy. 7 just west of Jane Street, the final stop on the Toronto-York Spadina subway line extension.

DEMAND FROM RESIDENTS

With all that mixed-use development and the transit to support it, Filice is convinced Hwy. 7 will ultimately rival North York's densely populated Yonge Street corridor.

"There's a demand from residents or commercial tenants and business owners (for projects that have) residential, retail and office, all in the same facility," he says.

It's not hard to see why. "On a rainy day at World on Yonge, you go across a covered tunnel to get into the mall, you go shopping, and then back to your unit, all without ever having gone outside.

"That's the advantage of integrating everything in one location."

It's certainly what drew Vangie Tsui to Hullmark Centre, where she'll have both her home and office. "From a business standpoint, a Yonge Street address is valuable, because everybody recognizes it. Plus it's on the subway line," she says. "I'm also excited I've got all the conveniences like the gym, grocery store and bank right at my finger tips.

"I might never have to leave the building."



Left: Hullmark Centre is a mixed-use development at Yonge and Sheppard, with condo towers, offices and retail space. Right: Liberty is building Centro Square, a two-tower, 800-unit condo project with more than 250,000 square feet of office and retail space.

facebook.com/bildgta
 bildblogs.ca @bildgta



WORKING TOGETHER TOWARD A GREATER GTA

Building healthy, complete communities is a team effort. That's why BILD works closely with our partners in government to establish fair and effective policies that affect the land development, home building and professional renovation industry in the GTA. We are always at the table on behalf of the industry and new home buyers.

So why is advocating on your behalf so vital to us?

BECAUSE THE GTA IS OUR HOME TOO