

Building complete communities

WHERE PEOPLE WORK



BEFORE



AFTER

Riverside Square, a revitalization project in the east end of Toronto, will combine retail space, residential units, and a boutique hotel, turning a gritty downtown corner into a thriving mixed-use space. TIM FRASER (left); CONTRIBUTED (right)

More than ever before, people across the GTA are looking for communities where they can not only live and play but also be close to work — and the building and development industry is responding

On the 10-year anniversary of Madhouse Advertising in 2012, president and creative director Tami Kenwell decided it was time to relocate. She decided on commercial space in Regent Park, an area being revitalized in the city's downtown east end.

"It had true grit and it felt just right for me, with new commercial, residential, retail and recreational development," says Kenwell. "I felt there was lots of opportunity. I saw potential for living space in the area for employees and possibly for me."

Today, developers, builders, architects and others are thinking about how to create mixed-use communities that let people live close to where they work and play.

One such development is Credit Manor Heights, three mixed-use blocks along Mississauga Road on the border of Brampton and Mississauga. The development consists of 577 homes ranging from townhouses to estate homes, a 17.5-hectare office centre and 87,540 square metres of retail and commercial space, an elementary school, neighbourhood park and woodlot.

"It's been planned so a family or individual can walk to work in the office centre, walk to the store, walk to school, walk to the park or woodlot," says Darren Steedman, vice president of the DG Group (formerly Metrus), developer of Credit Manor Heights. "All daily needs can be achieved without the need for an au-



Tami Kenwell, president and creative director of Madhouse Advertising, chose Regent Park for her new offices because of its work-life balance. TIM FRASER

tomobile — and Brampton becomes more economically and socially sustainable as a result."

The province forecasts that the GTA will continue to grow by up to 100,000 people and 50,000 jobs every year, and community builders are meeting the demand by blending residential living with a combination of commercial, retail or industrial work spaces.

"Our members have become experts in implementing the provincial Growth Plan, which sets out targets for the number of people and jobs municipalities have to ac-

commodate," says Bryan Tuckey,

president and chief executive officer of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD). "The industry is working to meet the challenge of the demographic reality here in the GTA, but the true challenge has been building appropriate employment spaces to align with the jobs forecasted."

"In many areas, the numbers of jobs forecasted are not materializing," says Tuckey, "and therefore, meeting the provincially set targets doesn't come easily."

Steedman and DG Group are experiencing it firsthand. "In municipalities outside Toronto, it can be challenging to hit the target of 50 jobs per hectare because the nature of employment is changing," says Steedman. "Historically, these areas had a lot of manufacturing jobs, but these buildings have been converted to warehouses that simply store goods, so there aren't as many jobs, which is making this target harder to achieve."

"Mixed-use buildings allow a higher density of jobs and people per hectare, and in many ways, this is how we're achieving the growth target in the suburbs." Creating complete communities with a mix of uses to bring jobs closer to home isn't confined to the outlying areas of the GTA. Riverside Square is a revitalization project in the heart of Toronto's downtown east side.

"Commercial space will include a new boutique hotel (formerly the Broadview Hotel) to attract more business to the area and options for travellers; retail on Queen Street, including an anchor grocery store; commercial space off Queen on a private street; and a cluster of automotive dealers," says Les Mallins, president of Streetcar Developments. "Rising upward from that will be the residential units."

The multi-phase mixed-use Riverside Square will have a total area of 90,877 square metres, with a total of 894 residential units, and

create hundreds of jobs in the neighbourhood in the commercial and retail space.

In many respects, this community has a history of being a mixed-use neighbourhood, so the conversion should be smooth, and Streetcar has made its mark by blending new and old communities in a way that respects the heritage and history of the community.

"The advantage for commercial businesses is that the space is more affordable than downtown, and being in the heart of a vibrant neighbourhood can be appealing. For re-

“The true challenge has been building appropriate employment spaces to align with the jobs forecasted.”

Bryan Tuckey, president and CEO of BILD

tailers, they love the fact that there is activity all day long from business and residential customers," explains Mallins. Residents, of course, enjoy the advantages of local employment opportunities and an energetic community with great highway access and lots of bike paths and parks nearby.

As Toronto continues to expand and people look for ways to simplify their lives, the need for and the interest in mixed-use development will continue to grow, so it's a safe bet we'll see more of these communities in our future.

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT GETS INNOVATIVE ON THE WATERFRONT

Toronto's waterfront is set to become one of the city's finest examples of new mixed-use development. In 2016, Menkes Developments will begin construction of an exciting and unique new commercial office development with the launch of the Waterfront Innovation Centre.

The 350,000-square-foot building will be located in the new East Bayfront community. Situated near some of Toronto's finest residential developments and close to some of the best recreational areas in the city, this cutting-edge workplace is a great example of people living, working and playing in the same neighbourhood.

"We're redeveloping old industrial lands to prime waterfront office space to offer an exciting work environment, creating jobs and a higher and better use of these lands," says Peter Menkes, president of the commercial/industrial division at Menkes Developments. "Many people who will work there will also choose to live, play and even learn in the same area. This is a great environment with a boardwalk, Sugar Beach, the waterfront — it's a spectacular view and a great lifestyle."

The East Bayfront,

encompassing the lands from Jarvis to Parliament and the Gardiner Expressway to the lake, is the waterfront revitalization area closest to the downtown core. The Waterfront Innovation Centre is the next step in the implementation of this mixed-use community.

"The Innovation Centre will sit next to the Corus building and George Brown College and more than 10,000 condos are planned and underway, plus the current residential properties that already exist," says Menkes.

The expectation is that the Centre will house 2,000 jobs

with many of the employees being in the creative and technology sectors, due in part to the planned ultra high-speed broadband fibre-optic network that will run throughout the Innovation Centre.

"We have planned two buildings connected by an

atrium. One building will be devoted to office space, and the other will be a collaborative work environment, with amenities like restaurants, meeting rooms and conference rooms that can be booked on an as-needed basis," explains Menkes.

The Centre joins other neighbouring projects like Monde by Great Gulf Homes, Aquavista at Bayside by Tridel and the nearby Canary Park by Dundee Kilmer Developments and River City by Urban Capital; all BILD Pinnacle Award-winning developments.

When built out, the new waterfront neighbourhood will provide numerous opportunities for Waterfront Innovation Centre employees to live, play and learn in the same community where they work.



The Waterfront Innovation Centre will turn old industrial lands into prime waterfront real estate. CONTRIBUTED

This is the second in a 3-part series sponsored by BILD. Look for the next one on Saturday, June 6.

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