

# New development promises jobs, affordable housing

## Fremont neighbourhood will have 1,000 homes, retail and light-industrial space

BY TRACY SHERLOCK, VANCOUVER SUN   APRIL 25, 2013

A new community is being born in Port Coquitlam, in a triangle of land just northeast of the Lougheed Highway that borders on the Pitt River.

The Fremont neighbourhood development, which includes light industrial, retail and residential space, represents a \$500-million investment in the city, Geoff Duyker said.

Duyker works for Mosaic Homes, which is building 650 townhomes and apartments in the neighbourhood. Onni is developing 650,000 square feet of retail space and two residential towers nearby, while Con-west is building the light industrial space.

The Fremont neighbourhood will have 1,000 homes in all and it is estimated the nearby businesses will create hundreds of jobs.

"The Fremont neighbourhood is a great addition to our community," said Port Coquitlam Mayor Greg Moore. "It's going to provide new residential units, good-quality jobs and retail locations for growing businesses and industrial jobs to bring high-quality employment.

"This neighbourhood will allow us to achieve two goals at the same time - increasing population and increasing the number of jobs in our community - so that ultimately, someone can live, work and play within the same neighbourhood."

Vancouver architect, planner and development consultant Michael Geller said mixing light industrial, retail and residential properties makes "absolute good sense." He cited Yaletown as a good example of all three types of properties working well together and said the definition of light industrial has changed a lot in the past 25 years.

Today, it means businesses such as high-tech industries or graphic design companies.

"I believe that the Tri-Cities, especially Port Coquitlam and Port Moody, are going to see an increasing amount of development because they are nice communities in which to live," Geller said.

Moore said the project also adds to the community because the housing is relatively affordable.

"In Port Coquitlam, you are 30 minutes from downtown Vancouver by West Coast Express and you can get a townhome on the river for \$350,000, whereas in downtown Vancouver you could get a bachelor suite for that."

Port Coquitlam is already a relatively dense community because it is bordered by rivers on three sides, Moore said. The Fremont development is probably the last piece of land in Port Coquitlam that is available for new development, rather than redevelopment. "It's a substantial investment in our community," Moore said.

Duyker said the 650 Mosaic homes will be built by 2018, but sales will begin in May for homes that will be ready to move into this summer. There will be 450 three-level two-, three-and four-bedroom town-homes and 200 apartments when the development is complete. The townhouses will be priced from the mid-\$300,000s to just over \$500,000, Duyker said.

Port Coquitlam is one of the fastest-growing cities in the Lower Mainland and Fremont will support that growth, Duyker said.

"This property represents a really rare opportunity for Mosaic to build a master-plan community where we can build multiple forms of housing ... with thoughtful planning of green spaces that are connected throughout the property," Duyker said.

"Onni is responsible for developing the retail component of Fremont ... (which) when it's fully built out will include large-format retailers to meet everyday needs, but also a great experiential high-street retail concept with your local bakery and a place where your doctor's office can be."

Moore said the retail portion would create "hundreds, if not thousands" of jobs, while the industrial jobs would tend to be higher-paying jobs.

"Conwest is building the Rivers Edge business park, which will have businesses such as a production studio, a research facility or a recreational training centre. That component will directly provide over 400 jobs," Duyker said.

One of the requirements of the developer was to create a pedestrian path to the nearby school, but the biggest contribution from Mosaic and Con-west was the completion of the road network, the Fremont Connector, which connects the Lougheed Highway and Mary Hill Bypass to Dominion Avenue, Moore said.

"That was a substantial cost for that road - it is a major road for us."

The community includes the new Dominion Park and is beside the Pitt River and across the street from a golf course.

All three developers contributed toward the restoration of the riverfront, an area that will remain undeveloped as a park reserve.

"There was some environmental remediation that needed to happen on the site. The private sector contributed about 60 per cent toward a tidal wetland; it was a \$9-million environmental project," Moore said.

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