

South Surrey to see growth of \$1.5 billion in housing

Planners consider proposals for 2,400 units in largely rural area

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Developers are lining up with more than \$1.5 billion worth of multi-family housing projects for a planned community of 5,400 people in south Surrey's Morgan Heights.

In a mostly rural area of \$1-million homes on one-acre lots, planners are considering proposals for 2,400 units ranging from one-bedroom condos to luxury townhouses and single-family homes, to be built over the next three years.

Housing could be joined by a 400,000-sq.-ft. upscale shopping area -- similar to West Vancouver's Village at Park Royal -- and "tamed" big-box stores such as Wal-Mart, Surrey planner Nicholas Lai said in a release.



CREDIT:

The Morgan residential development

Citing restricted surface parking and high standards of design and architecture, Lai said: "You will probably see the most beautiful, well-designed Wal-Mart in the whole of the Lower Mainland."

Other stores in the mix include Home Depot and Real Canadian Superstore.

"Over the years there has been quite a pent-up demand in south Surrey for commercial and multi-family development," Laid said. "That's why you have got a development of this magnitude in a relatively short period of time. But it will be development on a human scale."

Morgan Heights straddles about 79 hectares (196 acres) bounded by the Highway 99 corridor to the west, 28th Avenue to the south, and 164th Street to the east.

The first residential phase of 121 units at the Morgan, a \$100-million condo development in two buildings at 26th Avenue and 160th Street, sold out in advance of the official opening, Richard Wittstock, vice-president of Amacon, said Monday. The second phase will be released May 12, four months ahead of schedule.

Wittstock said what excites city planners and community groups -- the Neighbourhood Community Plan received 79 per cent support at a public hearing -- is the concept of sustainable living with medium and high density housing within walking distance of shops and services.

"It's going to be a very vibrant community where people can live and walk to their shopping and all of their services without having to jump in the car for a quart of milk," Wittstock said in an interview.

Larco Investments, owner of West Vancouver's Park Royal Shopping Centre, has applied to build a "lifestyle village" on about 11 hectares (28 acres) at Highway 99 and 24th Avenue.

"What excites us is that there are lots of million-dollar homes here, yet it is the fastest-growing area of Surrey," Larco development director Art Phillips said in a release. "If you look at the demographics, the opportunities for a lifestyle village similar to the one at Park Royal are very strong."

Larco is also building 457 residential units. Other developers at Morgan Heights include Intracorp (464 units), Polygon (327 units), and Pacific Rim (120 units). In addition, nearby land is being parcelled into about 500 lots for single-family housing.

While Morgan Heights is about sustainability -- getting people out of their cars and reducing carbon dioxide emissions -- Lai said it is also about affordability.

"This is the first time in this beautiful area of south Surrey where young people starting out, or families, or retired couples, can afford to buy."

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High density the new destiny for south Surrey

This model shows The Morgan, a residential component of the huge development planned for south Surrey's Morgan Heights. The Morgan, a \$100-million development by Amacon, will feature 242 apartments within two four-storey buildings.

Morgan Heights by the numbers

\$1.5 billion Overall cost of development

5,400 People expected to live in the planned community

2,400 Residential units planned

3 years Time frame for construction

Developers involved: Amacon, Intracorp, Larco, Polygon, Pacific Rim

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