

Telus eyes massive downtown development to house new national headquarters

BY BRIAN MORTON, VANCOUVER SUN MARCH 9, 2011 3:06 PM



Telus's proposed downtown Vancouver complex would include a 22-storey office complex and 44-storey residential tower.

Photograph by: Courtesy, Telus, PNG

To see different views of Telus's proposed downtown complex, [click here](#).

VANCOUVER — Telus plans to build a spiffy new home in downtown Vancouver that will not only include a 22-storey office complex and 44-storey residential tower, but bring an aging city block to life.

The \$750-million project, which requires rezoning by the City of Vancouver, would be completed in 2015 if council approves the project and construction gets underway later this year as planned.

The one-million-square-foot development is also planned to be one of the most technologically and environmentally advanced sites in the world that includes 10,000 square feet of green roofs for growing organic produce, two elevated roof forests, LED lighting, an office tower built to LEED Platinum standard, a residential tower built to the LEED gold standard, and new heating technologies that would reduce energy consumption by nearly 35 per cent.

As well, the site will be home to Telus's new national headquarters and will include advanced telecommunications technology to expedite the company's goal of having 70 per cent of employees working at home or out of offices by 2015, in order to reduce the company's real estate footprint and greenhouse gas emissions.

"This is the most significant next-generation property in Vancouver's history," Telus president and CEO Darren Entwistle said while announcing the project, Called Telus Garden, at Wednesday's news conference. "It's the transformation of an entire city block. We'll build a cohesive blend of commercial space, homes, restaurants and it's going to be very, very cool.

"It will inject hundreds of millions of dollars into the local economy and revitalize the area."

Telus's partners in the project, which will be built on the block the telecommunications giant owns between Robson and Georgia and Seymour and Richards Streets, are property developer Westbank Corp., which also built the Woodward's complex, and architect Gregory Henriquez of Henriquez Partners Architects, which also did Woodward's.

The new 500-unit, 440-foot residential tower would be among the five or six highest buildings in Vancouver and include a three-level wellness and retail centre. The commercial tower would have 500,000 square feet of office space, available for multiple tenants.

A public amenity will be built at the corner of Georgia and Seymour and the entire development will be connected with public space. Telus's existing eight-floor headquarters at Robson and Seymour will be renovated, opening up 115,000 square feet of office space for lease and converting the ground floors to retail.

It's expected the new development will bring new life to the lower end of Robson Street and provide a "vibrant link" to the city's cultural and sports centres, including BC Place.

Telus's office complex in Burnaby will not be impacted by the new development, Entwistle added.

"[Telus Garden] will be a celebrated urban oasis that is literally alive with plant life and showcases our great province's arts and culture." he said.

According to Telus, the site's business and residential tenants will contribute an estimated \$8 — \$10 million in new tax revenue to the city annually.

He said Telus will fund its share of the development mainly through leveraging its existing real estate holdings in the block, coupled with the sale and lease of space in the new buildings.

As well, Telus said it has entered into an agreement to purchase the city-owned parkade at the corner of Georgia and Richards, consolidating the entire block, other than the Kingston Hotel, to create a

unified development.

Also at Wednesday’s announcement was Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson, who said he supports projects like the new Telus proposal in downtown Vancouver.

“Let’s just start with ‘Wow’. What a fantastic start to the day,” Robertson said of the Telus plan. “This is great news for our local economy and the city at large.

“This is world-leading stuff and, frankly, it belongs in Vancouver.

“We want to move this along aggressively, given the opportunity here.”

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