

A standout in Central Lonsdale

North Vancouver's Centre View will be 'gateway' to the area

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SPECIAL TO THE SUN

Centre View is the most significant project in Central Lonsdale in the past five years, maybe even the past decade. NICK BELMAR VICE- PRESIDENT OF SALES, ONNI

JASON PAYNE/ PNG



Two kitchen vignettes have been placed at either end of a living area at the CentreView sales centre, offering stunning views that will be available from the lofty heights of the two residential towers.

The developer ended up changing the proposal, dropping from three towers of condos to two, and decreasing the height and changing the shape of the office building. The city amended the Official Community Plan for the area to accommodate the rezoning. Belmar maintains there was no way to make all the critics happy. "If we're getting opposition, we need to know why — we can't harness feedback that isn't relevant," he explains. "At the end of the day, some of the objections were just a matter of

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CentreView is a mixed- use project from developer Onni that will comprise 337 homes in two towers, one standing 17 storeys tall, and the other 24. The original plan called for three residential towers.

Nick Belmar doesn't believe in mincing words when it comes to marketing what developer Onni is doing in North Vancouver.

"Centre View is the most significant project in Central Lonsdale in the past five years, maybe even the past decade," says the company's vicepresident of sales. "It's the hub, it's the gateway to this area."

When it is complete, it will be the largest mixed- use development in the

City of North Vancouver. Belmar believes it also heralds the future direction of the neighbourhood.

However, it didn't happen without controversy.

Onni acquired the land at 13th and Lonsdale in 2010. At the time, the site held a Safeway grocery store, two commercial buildings and some parking lots. The developer's original plan was to build three highrise residential towers and a large office tower. It was too much density, too soon, for some people in the community.

There was an 18- month- long public consultation process involving two hearings, during which there were objections from some residents in condo buildings nearby. Onni says it also held its own information sessions in order to engage with future neighbours.

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"If we're getting opposition, we need to know why — we can't harness feedback that isn't relevant," he explains. "At the end of the day, some of the objections were just a matter of opinion."

Ultimately, he feels the process of consultation and compromise improved the project.

In response to concerns about how increased vehicle traffic would affect pedestrians, Onni isolated the commercial loading zone for the tenants of the complex to 13th, leaving 14th a better place to walk around. Other pedestrian

zones have been created by setting the towers back from the edge of the property.

In exchange for greater density, the developer spent \$ 3 million on a public plaza to serve as a community amenity.

It, along with green roofs on portions of the development, means there will be much more extensive landscaping than what was previously on the site.

A community garden is also available for Centre View residents.

Belmar says the project is now drawing significant interest.

"We're part of something new here — lots of convenience. You have the Whole Foods (grocery store), which will be huge. You can walk to the SeaBus to get to and from downtown, or hop on a bus to get around. And — depending what businesses move into the office building — you could see some people having 30-second- long commutes."

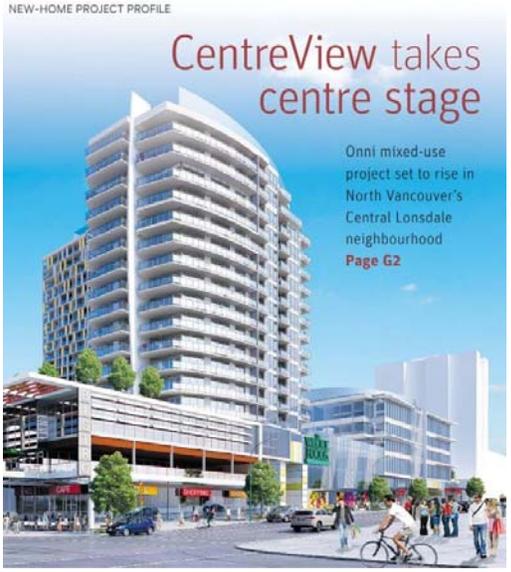
He expects restaurants and cafes to set up at either end of 13th Street, where they will be ideally placed to take advantage of foot traffic from the pedestrian areas. They will be natural congregation points, enlivening the outdoor zones.

Downsizers who already live in North Vancouver form a key component of the potential customer base of the project; many are being drawn to condo- style living after years of being in single-family homes.

Young families and young professionals are also looking at Centre View as a way of moving back to a neighbourhood they know and love, without having to shell out for a house — which likely wouldn't be as centrally located. There has been a limited level of investor interest. Still, a report commissioned at the end of March by Onni pegs rental rates in the surrounding area at approx-

imately \$ 2.50 per square foot.

The developer kept it simple when it came to setting up the sales centre, electing to create a living room sandwiched by two kitchen vignettes, rather than building a full show home.



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Residents of CentreView will have access to an outdoor pool and hot tub, a children's play area, fitness facility and guest suites. Kitchens will feature plenty of storage, five-burner gas cooktops and appliances concealed behind millwork. Countertops are made of honed travertine stone. In the larger homes, microwaves are tucked into the kitchen island and separate hood fans keep the area above the range tops ventilated. Bathrooms will be fitted with stone flooring, marble counters, flat-panel wood cabinets and undermount sinks.

keep the area above the range tops ventilated, as opposed to having the microwaves integrated into hood fan units. Countertops are made of honed travertine stone.

The living room area displays the stunning views available from the lofty heights of the residential towers, while a scale model helps put each piece of the complex into context.

Residents will be able to take advantage of an outdoor pool and hot tub, a children's play area, a sizable fitness facility and guest suites.

Belmar is confident that prospective buyers will see the value involved in living at the development, and is focusing on the positive aspects of the public consultation process.

"It made the project stronger, and any publicity is good," he says matter-of-factly. "It just adds to the story of Centre View, and helps people realize that it's here."



JASON PAYNE/ PN



The kitchens display the modern elements that many discerning buyers demand these days: plenty of storage, appliances concealed behind millwork, quiet-close drawers, wall ovens, and breakfast bars created by extending kitchen countertops.

There are some additional luxury touches at Centre View. A natural gas range top includes five burners rather than the standard four. In the larger homes, microwaves are tucked into the kitchen island and separate hood fans