

# More homes but less biz at Fraser Mills in Coquitlam

Gary McKenna / Tri-City News

OCTOBER 25, 2017 11:06 AM



A key part of old Coquitlam will be getting a new look starting next year. Photograph By CITY OF COQUITLAM

After more than a decade of discussions and revamped plans, the builder is getting ready to start the massive redevelopment of the 89-acre property in southwest Coquitlam, along the Fraser River, in the second quarter of 2018.

“We are really excited about the project and finally bringing Fraser Mills to reality,” said Ryan Beedie, the president of Beedie Living. “It has been a long road... There is a lot of work yet to do but I think we are on the right track.”

The company’s plans — which have yet to receive all of the required council approvals — have evolved considerably since they were first presented to the public in 2006.

The developer wants to add 1,000 residential units to the 3,400 to 3,700 units currently approved, which would be accommodated by increasing the number of towers from 10 to 15 and adding floors to a number of the highrises. In the new proposal, the tallest building height would rise from 38 to 41 storeys.

Beedie also plans to increase its job-creation target by the time the project is completed from 1,500 to 1,700 although it is removing the multi-story industrial buildings outlined in the original plan.

The total amount of retail floor space also shrinks in the latest iteration and a multi-storey office building will be located near the waterfront; that will be built instead of a proposed post-secondary education facility included in the initial planning documents. There will also no longer be an elementary school in the area after School District 43 said it no longer requires one there.

Beedie said the changes will make the development, which would be built over the next decade, more economically viable.

According to a city staff report, the new proposal still includes 16.35 acres of park, trails and green space, which will feature a wharf on the Fraser River recently used by Kiewit during the construction of the Port Mann Bridge/Highway 1 project.

The city and developer are also discussing the possibility of a new public recreation facility.

While details are sketchy, Coquitlam's parks and recreation general manager, Raul Allueva, said talks are underway about building a 40,000-sq. ft. facility on the property but it is not yet known what amenities would be available and how such a facility would be paid for.

"We do believe it is an exciting concept," Allueva said during Monday's council meeting. "We are very happy with the opportunity [and the] benefit for this community."

The historic Fraser Mills site dates back to the turn of the 20th century and at one time provided employment for more than 1,000 people, including many francophones and their descendants. The mill, which was closed in 2001, led to the establishment of Maillardville and Coquitlam's southwest neighbourhoods.

