

Quigg reaches for sky

Project incorporating Island's tallest building expected to reduce urban sprawl

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Robert Quigg's proposal towers above the rest.

The Vancouver developer unveiled a detailed model of the four highrises slated for 20 acres on Player's Drive at Bear Mountain Resort in Langford.

The \$1.4 billion project consists of 613 units of varying size starting at \$500,000 in towers of 45, 39, 33 and 27 floors.

Units will vary in size from 800 to 5,000 square feet, with the tallest tower rising up to 137 metres above the site's elevation.

At 45 storeys, the building will be the tallest on Vancouver Island and the second-tallest in B.C., three storeys shorter than the Wall Centre in Vancouver.

"I think it will enhance the view-cape, but that's a subjective opinion," said Quigg, who expects to have a building permit in place by September to start pouring concrete in late fall.

The first highrise should be completed by the fall of 2009, with the project completed within five to seven years.

Langford Coun. Lillian Szpak called the project an architectural wonder that embraces Smart Growth principles discussed favourably at a recent Futures Forum.

"It reduces the environmental footprint," Szpak said. "A lot of people at the forum said they would rather go up than sprawl out."

While she admitted some Bear Mountain residents have expressed concerns, Szpak believes that's to be expected when a project of this scope comes along.

"We're consulting with staff to address the concerns," Szpak, chair of Langford's planning and zoning committee, said. "I believe this

development will be something everyone is proud of."

Benefits include jobs for residents, and an increased tax base that will enable Langford to fund transportation, recreation and infrastructure improvements, Szpak noted.

Transportation issues are being addressed through a study the City is completing, and through the building of the Spencer Road interchange that will connect to the Bear Mountain development, she said, pointing out the interchange has been part of Langford's plan to address traffic flow long before the current Bear Mountain development was built.

Quigg expects the units will be the primary residence for 40 to 60 per cent of the demographic of people he sees purchasing the units, with about 10 per cent of buyers doing so as an investment.

Residential units start on the third floor of the towers, which are stepped around the site so each tower is six storeys taller than the next, with all parking underground.

The site has an "amazing ground-scape" that allows people to enjoy the surrounding green space, and will include vineyards, a spa and a restaurant that can accommodate 150 patrons.

Quigg, a former journeyman carpenter and construction surveyor, was effusive in his praise of Langford's council and staff in moving the project forward.

"I've been doing this for a long time," said the 39-year-old Powell River native who launched his company when he was 19 with \$500 and a pickup truck. "I've worked with a lot of different municipalities all over the province, and the friendliness and helpfulness of the staff and council here was just amazing ... most impressive."

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Vancouver developer Robert Quigg shows a scale model of his development at Bear Mountain last week. He expects the first of four highrises to be completed in the fall of 2009.