

Galt factory gets makeover

Tiger Lofts to offer 54 apartments in old textile plant

By KEVIN SWAYZE
RECORD STAFF

CAMBRIDGE

As Lancer Group works to convert a former textile factory into 54 affordable loft apartments in old Galt, the Toronto developer is shopping for more sites to redevelop.

"We are looking across Waterloo Region," said Steve Lindy, vice-president. "We are looking for sites for seniors homes, for rental (apartments) and condominiums . . . Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge are good places to be building."

Lancer has a proposal before the Region of Waterloo for a subsidized apartment project aimed at those 50 or older, on King Street near Grand River Hospital. He wouldn't be more specific, but said it's an "underutilized site."

This week, Lancer and city officials gathered at the Tiger Lofts project on Water Street South where Melloul Blamey Construction is gutting a four-storey former Tiger Brand factory before 51 one-bedroom and three bachelor apartments are created. At street level, there will be retail space, parking and gardens.

Minor soil contamination was found. Also, extra work is needed to replace the floor over a former water raceway. Those surprises boosted the project cost to \$7 million from \$6 million, Lindy said.

The project is getting \$2.1 million in provincial and federal affordable housing grants.

Four visitors on upper floors saw downtown vistas that will come with the \$585-a-month units. Looking east, Lancer officials could see their \$12-million Wellington Square apartment project completed last summer.

Tiger Lofts should be ready for occupancy by early 2008, Lindy said.



PHIL WALKER, RECORD STAFF

Lancer Group officials Steven Lindy (left) and Tom Hall discuss project details in the former Tiger Brand factory at 35 Water St. S., Cambridge.

The project is one of several in the works in downtown Cambridge.

Developers of a \$120-million residential condominium and commercial development on a coal-tar contaminated site hope to start work on a Water Street North site in a month.

Waterscape is a project of Haastown Holdings, based in Richmond Hill. President Paul de Haas said local government approvals are falling into place and buyer response is strong.

"We're now at about 50 per cent pre-sold in the first phase," de Haas said.

Construction starts when 70 per cent of units are sold, he said. The first building has 115 units. Two towers are proposed in the first phase.

De Haas expects the city to exempt his project from height rules. He also expects the region to approve property tax concessions.

Environmental concerns, meanwhile, have delayed a seven-storey, 66-unit apartment building at the former Cambridge Reporter property.

Heartwood Place awaits provincial approval for a cleanup plan for the long-time industrial site. That's expected by end of summer, said Mary Bales, chair of the non-profit Heartwood board.

So far, \$1 million has been raised toward the \$10.5-million project to create affordable downtown housing. Heartwood is also talking with Waterloo Region to access federal and provincial housing grant money, Bales said.

Conversion of a former textile factory on Spruce Street into upscale condominiums is well underway. Renovation started a year ago to create one- and two-bedroom condominiums selling for \$228,000 to \$349,000.

kswayze@therecord.com

Region's affordable housing lauded

By LIZ MONTEIRO
RECORD STAFF

KITCHENER

One by one they came to the podium with big smiles.

Each of the home builders praised the partnership of federal, provincial and municipal governments that have contributed money toward six new affordable housing projects in Waterloo Region.

Yesterday, the projects, which have 82 units, were officially unveiled with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at regional headquarters.

Monte Solberg, minister of human resources and social development, was

in Kitchener to start the celebration.

"This model needs to be praised and emulated," said Martin Buhr, president of MennoHomes Inc., the home builder behind the Rockway Gardens Village 50-unit project on King Street East in Kitchener.

The other projects include The Working Centre, 66 Queen St., YWCA K-W on Frederick Street in Kitchener; Keystone Homes on Avon Road in Kitchener; Queen's Apartments on Stanley Street in Ayr and Regency Apartments on Queen Bush Road in Wellesley.

Rob Horne, planning, housing and community services commissioner, said from 2001 to the present the region has received \$22 million for affordable

housing units.

About \$7 million remains and regional staff are reviewing proposals for future projects, Horne said.

The region has a target of building 1,500 housing units by the end of 2008. To date, they have built 1,200.

A total of 9,500 housing units exists in the region operated by the region and various non-profit and co-operative groups. But the waiting list of people wanting affordable housing remains at 4,000 people.

Regional Chair Ken Seiling said the region's target of 1,500 units by next year is a "drop in the bucket" when compared with the waiting list.

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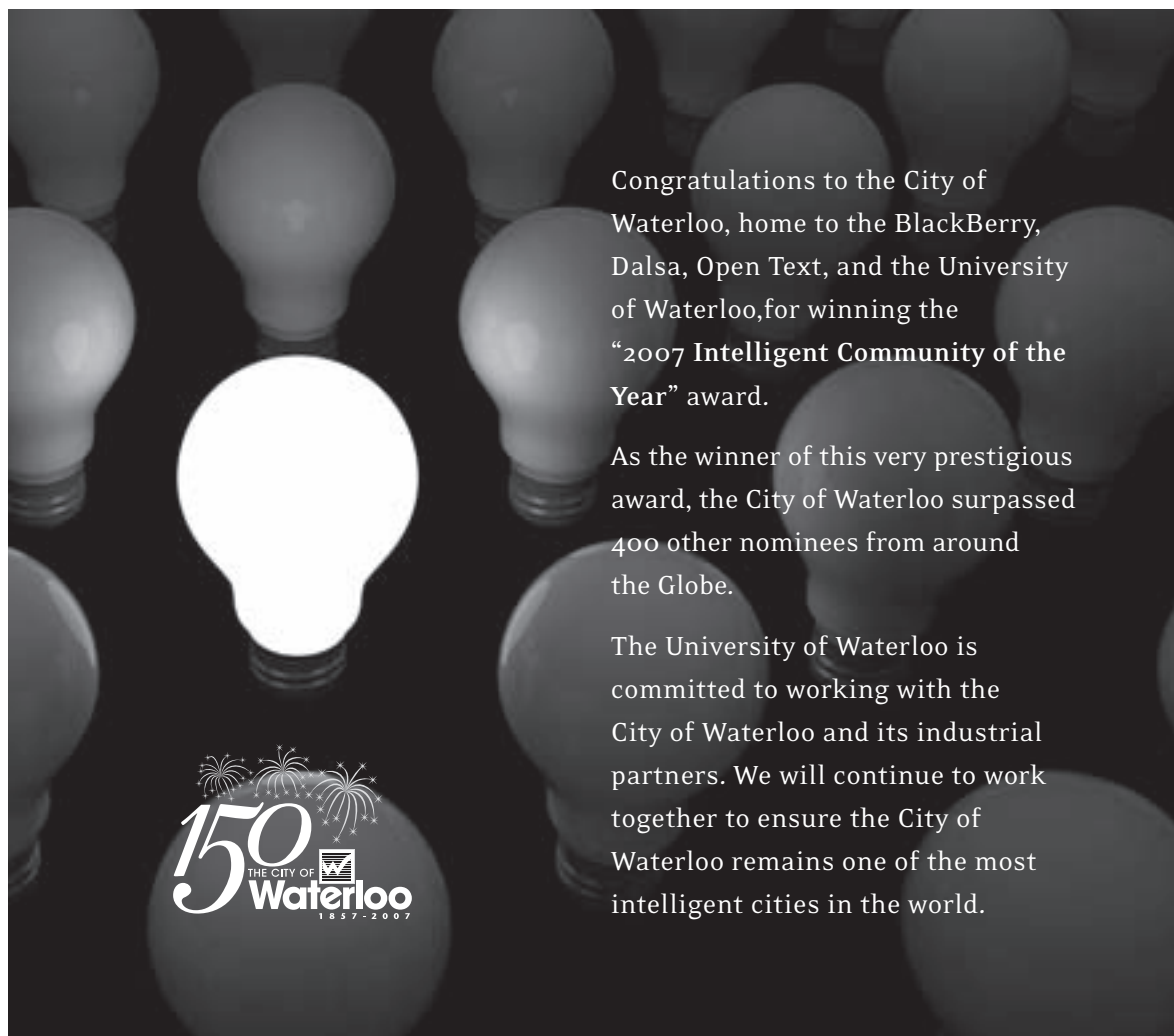
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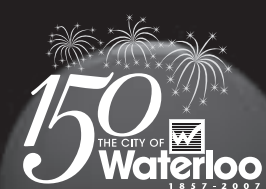
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