

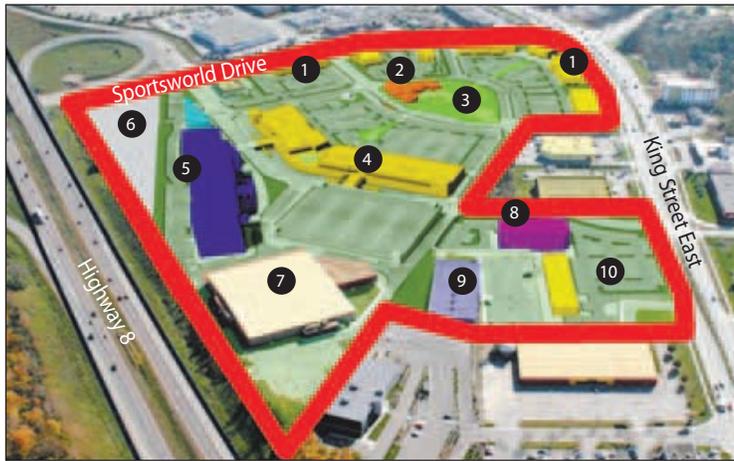
THE RECORD

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2007

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HIGHER OUTSIDE THE REGION

'Sportsworld Crossing' bucks big-box trend



1. Retail stores and restaurants
2. Restaurant, arcade and office space
3. Green space
4. Retail with second-storey office space
5. Six-storey office block
6. Potential mass transit site
7. Rink
8. Hotel
9. Office space
10. Food court



The project will feature a campus-style environment, mixing offices with a variety of retail styles.

New owner wants smaller stores, offices in 'downzoned' project

BY CHUCK HOWITT
RECORD STAFF

KITCHENER

Municipal officials were amazed.

They were expecting another big-box power centre at the former Sportsworld site.

But the new owners thought differently.

They wanted to go green with smaller retail stores, tree-lined streets and plenty of green space.

Not only that, they wanted to "downzone" the site so big-box stores would be prohibited.

"We shocked regional and city staff," Mark Kindrachuk, president of Intermarket, said of the rezoning request which is very unusual in development circles.

Intermarket, which is developing the 40-acre property on behalf of the new owners, GPM Managed Investments of Toronto, could have put up stores as large as 100,000 square feet.

Instead it opted for shops and retail tenants no larger

than 15,000 to 20,000 square feet in area.

Yesterday, Intermarket unveiled more details of the \$100-million project in the south end of Kitchener which will feature a mixture of office, retail, recreational and service uses.

A large scale model of the project was set up in the lobby of the twin-pad arena on the site. The formal name of the new development will be Sportsworld Crossing.

Construction of the buildings will begin next month and the owners predict the project will bring about 1,000 new jobs to the area. Melloul-Blamey Construction is the general contractor.

The grand opening is expected in 12 to 14 months, Kindrachuk said.

The project will feature about 300,000 square feet of office space and another 250,000 square feet of retail space.

The site is a triangle, bounded by King Street, Sportsworld Drive and Highway 8.

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Site: Politicians pleased

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To improve flow, a new road will be completed through the centre of the site.

The office buildings will be grouped on a higher elevation at the back, close to the existing arena. This was done because office workers and arena-users come and go at different times so they can use the same parking lot.

Highway 8 drivers will see office buildings and an arena rather than the ugly loading docks common along highways in other parts of southern Ontario, he said.

Though the entire site will still have plenty of parking, it will be hidden behind an attractive streetscape of stores along King Street and Sportsworld Drive. The McDonald's will be moved to the corner of Sportsworld and Gateway Park drives.

The middle of the property will have a large park-like green space behind Moose Winooskis and the games arcade, featuring a waterfall, pond and place where outdoor movies can be screened in the summer.

Behind the green space and across a parking lot will be a V-shaped retail plaza. Stores will have decorative facades featuring brick, stucco, awnings and cornices, Kindrachuk said.

A future hotel and new restaurants will be located along King Street at the northwest corner of the site.

All commercial buildings will be certified under the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design rating system and concrete, asphalt and trees previously on site have been recycled.

Plans also call for a transit hub to accommodate buses and trains at Sportsworld Drive and Highway 8.



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Developer Mark Kindrachuk displays drawings at a presentation yesterday for a \$100-million retail, office and recreational hotel development called Sportsworld Crossing.

Intermarket originally planned to start construction last March but work was held up because of negotiations with the province over the final location of the transit hub, Kindrachuk said.

A group of local and provincial politicians were on hand for the news conference.

Regional Chair Ken Seiling said Sportsworld Crossing fits with the region's strategy to redevelop and intensify previously-used sites.

He also welcomed the transit component, saying there will be public transit close by "one way or another."

Kitchener Mayor Carl Zehr said though the city has placed much of its

focus on rebuilding the downtown, it also recognizes that other sites need to be rejuvenated and intensified.

As well, he was impressed with the quality of the project.

"What you're doing is not simply in vogue, but the right thing to do."

David Caplan, provincial minister of public infrastructure and renewal, said the project is an excellent example of a "greyfield development" where a project once used only part of the year will now be redeveloped and utilized year-round.

GPM bought the property in 2005 after the previous owner filed for court protection from creditors.
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