

Development of former NCR site taking shape



Waterloo Region Record

By [Terry Pender](#)

WATERLOO — By summer's end, the first phase of a massive, mixed-use redevelopment on the former NCR property in Waterloo should be fully leased, says the developer.

Sobeys, Sun Life Financial and Regus Group are the latest to sign leases for the Waterloo Corporate Campus development at Northfield Drive and Weber Street North, said Mark Kindrachuck, president of [Intermarket Real Estate Group](#).

The first phase of the development will contain 123,000 square feet of office space, and 75,000 square feet of retail space. About 40 per cent of that is now leased and negotiations with other tenants are going well, Kindrachuck said.

"I believe actually we will have it fully leased in the next two months, by the end of the summer," he said of the first phase. "There is lots of activity on the site. We are going full bore."

A Sobeys grocery store will occupy a 53,000-square-foot building. The Sobeys store across the street on Weber Street will close when the new outlet is opened, likely this fall.

Sun Life's wealth management department is taking 15,000 square feet and Regus, a provider of furnished office space, is leasing 20,000 square feet.

The 40-acre site used to be the home of a plant and research and development centre where NCR Corp. made automated banking machines. NCR closed the plant in 2007 and moved the R&D facility to Northland Road in Waterloo.

The Waterloo Corporate Campus, one of the largest redevelopments of a former industrial site in Waterloo Region, is a hive of construction activity. The \$150-million project calls for up to 18 new buildings, including a 57,000-square-foot data centre.

The ambitious redevelopment was approved by Waterloo city council in October 2013, just as BlackBerry was rapidly downsizing. The downsizing resulted in a glut of office space in north Waterloo, and a vacancy rate of about 25 per cent.

"So it was a little challenging" to find tenants at first, Kindrachuck said.

Intermarket, also the developer of Sportsworld Crossing in Kitchener, worked to differentiate its new development from the former BlackBerry properties. BlackBerry typically constructed buildings with few or no amenities nearby.

Intermarket is taking a different approach with Waterloo Corporate Campus, a mixed use development where an estimated 3,000 workers will have more transportation options — there will be a light rail transit station across the street on Northfield Drive — and they will be able to socialize after work and run errands on breaks. Doctors, dentists, restaurants, banks, a fitness club and a grocery store will all be on hand.

"We have to be able to have our people walk at lunch, and actually get some of their errands done," Kindrachuck said.

The Sobeys is a huge boost for the development.

"After work, people can pop in, do their grocery shopping, they can go home. So it saves them another trip on a busy weekend," Kindrachuck said.

Five informal, fast, counter-style restaurants providing pizza, burgers and subs will be part of the redevelopment along with two sit-down restaurants with patios. In the next two months, Intermarket expects to announce a major retailer for one of the buildings now under construction.

"We are building the buildings now because we have the confidence that by the time they are completed people will be moving in," Kindrachuck said.

Kindrachuck is excited that Regus is an anchor tenant. Regus is a multinational corporation that provides flexible office space on short-term leases to other companies. It has 2,300 locations in 120 countries. Kindrachuck said Regus will be ideal space for businesses that need short-term leases and the ability to quickly expand offices. The target market includes technology entrepreneurs and international company looking test the market in Waterloo Region.

"We think that is going to be very good for Waterloo Region," Kindrachuck said. "We are hooking them up with 3D printing capabilities," he added.

The data centre will be a huge asset for the development, Kindrachuck said.

"In the data centre world, some people want disaster recovery for some of their big customers, some people want operational stuff and some want backup," he said. "So we will have the ability to provide different levels of data centre space for people."

The data centre will be the single most expensive building in the development with an estimated cost of \$50 million. It will have two independent power supplies, backup generators, two sources of high-capacity fibre optics, emergency lighting and a powerful ventilation and cooling system.

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