

BUSINESS

SPORTS

Grizzlies, Powell River battle it out >B6

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DARREN STONE, TIMES COLONIST

Ken and Patricia Mariash, left, and Colin Bosa view a model of the Bayview site on the Songhees. Bosa's Vancouver company has agreed to build the second tower, shown at centre, and possibly the third at left.

Bayview adds new partner for Songhees condo towers

Vancouver's Bosa aboard with smaller units planned

ANDREW A. DUFFY
Times Colonist

Cranes will be hovering above Songhees this fall as the Bayview development kicks back into gear after bringing in a new partner for the next two phases of the \$1-billion development.

Vancouver-based Bosa Properties has partnered with Bayview to take on the development of the second — and possibly third — condominium tower.

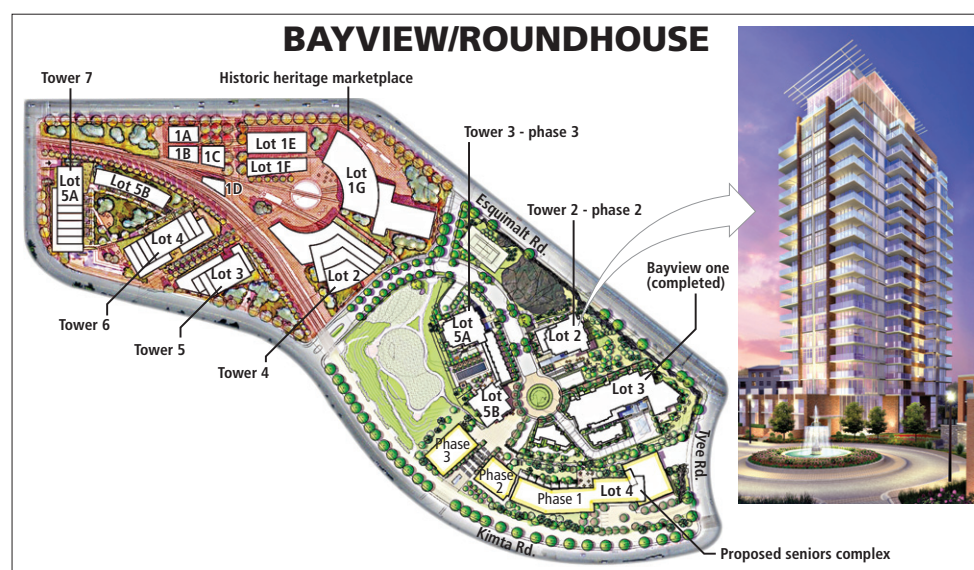
"We felt we needed some help with the long-term build out and we were extremely impressed with the Bosa family group, their construction expertise, marketing and sales expertise and especially their ability to deal with the demographics and marketing," said Ken Mariash, Bayview's managing partner.

Terms of the partnership have not been released, other than that Bosa has agreed to develop the second tower on the 8.09-hectare site and has an option for the third tower.

Colin Bosa, chief executive of Bosa Properties, said they anticipate being in the market this summer with construction to start in the fall and completion of the first tower within two years.

Mariash said the next two phases of the development are likely better suited to Bosa. He noted that what Bayview did in its first tower — large, high-end suites in excess of 1,000 square feet — is not what the current market will absorb.

"Now we find the sweet spot in the market is 700 to 800 square feet and they



are much more qualified to do that than we are," Mariash said. "Some of the suites we delivered are too big for the market. They are sold but a three to four year sell-out is clearly not what you aspire to."

That's where Bosa comes in. One of the company's latest projects, the 34-storey Sovereign in Burnaby's Metrotown, sold out in less than a day.

And while he doesn't think that will happen at Bayview, Bosa said the next two towers will appeal to a broad swath of buyers.

"What is important is to hit certain price points," said Bosa. "We're seeing that in the Lower Mainland and we expect the same here."

Bosa said that means making smaller suites and options to cater to a whole spectrum of people.

The next two towers at Bayview make that possible as they have been redrawn and designed after the city approved a move to more slender towers with 17 and 21 storeys as opposed to the originally planned 11- and 13-storey structures.

Bosa sees a chance the smaller suites could start below \$300,000 and range upward, but he said the finish and quality will reflect the high-end style estab-

lished with Bayview's first tower.

That was one of the attractions that pulled Bosa to Victoria, though he said the fundamentals at the site, the master-planned community and the city's attributes lay the groundwork for a successful project.

"We think Bayview provides us with good fundamental real estate — good location, good product and we want to bring it to the market at a good price," he said. "First and foremost we believe in Victoria. We wouldn't be here if we didn't. There's stable employment, good education and its a preferred destination of baby boomers perhaps looking at retirement."

For Mariash, who recently bought out his American partners in the Bayview and Roundhouse projects, Bosa's involvement does more than get construction started on the site again.

It allows him to focus on the remediation of the Roundhouse — still an estimated three years away from being complete — and prepare the 4.25-hectare former Canadian Pacific Railway site for the development of shops, pubs, restaurants, offices, a hotel,

residences, community space and a rail-line maintenance facility.

Mariash said they will also continue work to prepare other sites around the 8.09-hectare lot for development. "The two sites Colin and his group will do are pretty much ready to go," Mariash said. "But there's still lots to do."

Bosa is an integrated development company and tends to keep its projects in-house — they plan it, build it, market and sell it.

"We have a good command of the whole process and getting things built on time and on schedule — basically getting on with things as we control so much of the process," Bosa said.

Once the cranes are up, it's rare that they stop working until the project is complete, he said.

Bosa said while they will bring crews across from Vancouver, they intend to work with as many local trades as possible.

They are still in the design phase of the floorplans and interiors.

"We want to make sure we are putting out a good product, so as much as we want to get to market as quickly as we can we don't want to rush that," he said. aduffy@timescolonist.com

Quake kits, water flying off shelves

Specialty retailers say customers stocking up after disaster in Japan

DARRON KLOSTER
Times Colonist

Orders for earthquake survival kits are pouring into Greater Victoria specialty retailers and bottled water sales are spiking as locals react to the disaster in Japan.

The Better Business Bureau is also warning Victorians about the inevitable emergence of fraud as well-intentioned people scramble to help the Japanese with donations.

One water company is even fielding calls about systems that filter out radiation as Japan's nuclear facilities break down and concerns mount over leaking radiation travelling overseas.

Big-box stores like Walmart and Zellers as well as grocery and camping stores are selling items like blankets, first-aid kits, non-perishable food, plastic tubs and bottled water as consumers augment existing earthquake kits or assemble new ones.

At Custom Safety on Dupplin Road, owner Robert Clarke has been working non-stop making custom kits for homeowners and businesses over the last several days.

He's filling a 300-kit order for the Department of National Defence and another 200 kits for a Sidney company with more than 100 employees.

"Most of the customers want to update what they already have," Clarke said Tuesday. "But there are a lot of businesses and companies coming in and looking for kits for their 10 employees."

Kits range from one-person packages to duffel bags that accommodate several dozen. They include everything from first-aid supplies, radios, flashlights, whistles and masks to specialized vacuum-packed foods that are low in salt and last up to five years. Prices start at about \$60.

"We have enough stock to handle what's coming in now," said Clarke. "But we will have to re-order in the next few days."

Clarke has a 10-day supply on hand and is currently ordering more from U.S. suppliers.

Gary Watts, who owns Columbia Fire & Safety on Garbally Road, said the company is taking orders for earthquake kits, with the soonest deliveries by the end of the month or early April. "The phone's been ringing off the hook and just about everything in the store is sold," Watts said. "But new inventory is on the way."

A trio of deadly quakes, starting in Haiti last year followed by New Zealand in February and last week in Japan, has jolted Victorians out of complacency.

"We're seeing a lot of younger couples buying for the first time, but also a lot of older people who are [re-supplying]," said Clarke.

"Everybody is buying. Everybody wants to be prepared."

Disaster relief officials say people should be prepared to be on their own for at least 72 hours in an emergency — and have the basics of survival such as water, food and essentials such as lighting, blankets and matches.

Mengo McCall, director of business development for Canadian Springs — the country's largest water-cooler bottle company with operations in Langford, said there has been an increase in water sales over the past two days as homeowners and companies stock 18-litre bottles in storerooms and basements.

"Every person should have four litres per day in the event of an emergency, so we're seeing a noticeable spike," said McCall.

He said several calls have come in from people asking if the company can provide filtration for radiation. McCall said he was calling filter distributors Tuesday to see if the company could acquire such filters. He wasn't sure if they were available or how effective they would be.

The Better Business Bureau of Vancouver Island is warning the Japan quake is bringing out the fraudsters who prey on people wanting to donate. It occurred following the tsunami of 2004, Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the earthquake in Haiti last year, the BBB said.

"Whenever there is a major natural disaster, be it home or abroad, there are two things you can count on. The first is the generosity of Canadians to donate time and money to help victims, and the second is the appearance of poorly run and in some cases fraudulent charities," said Rosalind Scott, executive director of BBB Vancouver Island. "Not only do people need to be concerned about avoiding fraud, they also need to make sure their money goes to competent relief organizations that are equipped and experienced to handle the unique challenges of providing assistance."

The BBB offers tips to help people decide where to direct donations on its website, vi.bbb.org

Meanwhile, city restaurants and other businesses are taking donations to help with disaster relief. Medi Lao, owner of the Geisha Bar, 542 Herald St., is raising funds this Sunday for the Red Cross. Customers who donate \$5 or more get a free yan roll. A Victoria media company is matching the funds raised and it's hoped governments will do the same, said Lao.

He raised \$1,400 for the Red Cross in 2008 after a devastating quake in China, and hopes to eclipse that total on Sunday.

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