

The latest babble? Dabble. Kimberley Seldon’s new online design magazine

Dabble here, Dabble there, Dabble Dabble everywhere. Isn’t that catchy? It’s a stack of text from the index of Kimberley Seldon’s new online magazine, *Dabble*. It’s free to subscribe. The magazine is devoted to best mates: design, food and travel. The first one is available for viewing at dabblemag.com. Issue 1 escorts readers through an ambitious heaping of stuff. The most memorable is a tour

NOW HATCHING

of David Carter’s fanciful townhouse; he’s an interior designer in London with a thing for dark walls and quirky gewgaws (large Jesus wearing felt slippers, anyone?). You can stay overnight; it’s his home; it’s a hotel; visit 40Winks.org to find out how. Interior designer Erinn Valenich shows

off her transformation of a Beverly Hills home. Prague also gets the spotlight in a big way. Next, it’s to Nashville and a roundup of best design and food depots. *National Post*



*Thornhill forecast?
Ten acres of mixed-use
development
By Alex Newman*

WORLD NEWS

Yonge Street’s story unfolds like a novel, beginning as an ancient Native Indian trail linking Lake Ontario to northern parts. By 1793 the street had become an integral part of Upper Canada’s development, forming the spine to the province’s network of concession roads. Stretching from Toronto’s waterfront north to Lake Simcoe, it’s the most prominent street in Toronto’s north-south axis, and became the backbone for the transit system when subways were built in 1954. As development spread north, growth was concentrated along the Yonge subway line with anywhere from 10,000 to 25,000 people living or working within one square kilometre of stations, especially Eglinton and Sheppard, says former Toronto chief planner and transit consultant, Paul Bedford. Where the subway stops — at Finch, intensification hasn’t. From Yonge and 401 north to Steeles is chockablock with new buildings, and it’s not stopping at the city limits. A huge new mixed-use project called World on Yonge just north of Steeles is well underway. And in spite of indefinite delays on a proposed subway extension — while the provincial government examines congestion and budget issues — buyers are snapping up condo suites, with the first phase almost sold out, and small business owners camping out overnight to place bids on the retail and office space.

World on Yonge has its prologue, too. In the early 1990s, even before the provincial government started to talk about smart growth, Markham was looking to intensify, says Mayor Frank Scarpitti. “We saw opportunity to do something different than low-rise subdivisions.” American architect and urban planner Andres Duany, co-founder of New Urbanism, was hired to design the Markham Centre at Warden and Highway 7 as a vibrant people-oriented community and the largest LEED development in North America. Initially, people resisted the new type of approach, especially the high-rise component, but it marked a period of lively public engagement for the town, with design charettes and townhall meetings held regularly to encourage public discussion and opinion. Meanwhile, buyers’ tastes

were changing — partly a young demographic accustomed to condo life, new immigrants arriving from places where apartments are standard and an aging population that wants services close by. Increased demand for high-rise development converged with Ontario’s Places to Grow legislation that encourages municipalities to intensify in places where there’s existing infrastructure. So Markham investigated more nodes to develop. In 2007, they hired internationally noted architect and planner Peter Calthorpe to design a former industrial site at Yonge and Highway 7. The project — Langstaff Gateway — pushed even the provincial-density limits with buildings as high as 50 storeys planned for Yonge Street frontage and drew public criticism for its Manhattan-in-Markham aspirations. Another study examined how the Steeles and Yonge corridor could reasonably support increased densities and mixed-use developments. Within that context, World on Yonge was born. Architect Clifford Korman, whose firm Kirkor Architects designed the complex, says the 10-acre site provided the ideal opportunity for creating a “true mixed-use community,” with 1,223 residential units spread over four high-rise towers, and a half million square feet of non-residential space that incorporated a 117-suite hotel stacked vertically on an 11-storey office building. Street-front retail is housed in

a two-storey podium with an interior shopping mall. Built on grayfields — environmental lingo for parking lot — that once surrounded a Hy & Zel’s megastore, the silver-LEED standard project will have substantial green space. Public parkland is suitable for community events, promenade-like courtyards will serve the retail component and a two-acre green roof is for residents’ use. Of the four condo towers,

“The silver-LEED project will have substantial green space

the two fronting Yonge Street are 31 storeys each, elliptical in shape with chamfered ends, and rotated on a 30-degree angle to create a courtyard effect and open the sightlines to the pedestrian mews. The other two are immediately behind, stepped down to 17 and 18 storeys respectively, and connected by a glass walkway. A network of shops at the courtyard level, called Shops on Yonge (like Shops on Don Mills), are contained in the two-storey podium at the base of the glass towers. Indoors, there’s a fitness centre, media room, billiards, golf simulator, guest suites and party room; in the next

phase a swimming pool will be added to the amenities list. Suites with wraparound balconies and nine-foot ceilings boast a design that was borrowed from Liberty’s award-winning two-bedroom condo layout at Eko Markham Centre that they developed in 2005. Anchoring the northern portion of the site is the 20-storey office and hotel building. It takes advantage of a 30-metre setback for non-residential use, created by the active rail line adjacent to the property line. Mixed-use developments aren’t exactly new along the northerly stretch of Yonge Street. Hullmark Centre at Sheppard and Celsius near Churchill are two examples. Transit, however, remains the biggest challenge. The Yonge subway extension has been delayed for valid reasons, as Mr. Bedford explains: “The problem is one of both lack of funding and the huge overcrowding issue that would result on the entire line and especially at the Yonge-Bloor station. The possible extension of the Sheppard subway between Yonge and Downsview stations could divert overcrowding. These issues are all interconnected and must be addressed before the Yonge subway is extended. It all comes down to money, which will be the subject of the required investment strategy to be developed by Metrolinx on or before June 1, 2013.” Nonetheless, Liberty Development’s vice-president

Marco Filice makes no effort to conceal his disappointment and frustration with the delays. “This project is a complete community. With its balance of employment, residences and shops it’s an ideal example of reducing car reliance and relieving traffic gridlock.” He touts World on Yonge as an example of sustainable development through urban intensification, with its Silver LEED designation and low parking ratio of 1.1 spots per unit — more like what you’d find downtown. It’s frustrating the powers that be as well. One of the strengths of the provincial Places to Grow plan was creating urban growth centres tied to transit, Mayor Scarpitti points out. “Although we don’t want to see high-rise popping up everywhere, the Town of Markham has made deliberate attempts to intensify in a few key areas.” Despite transit woes, World on Yonge has been selling very fast thanks to the demand for high-rises in that area, and its proximity to amenities and highways. That’s a good thing for reducing — or eliminating — green field development (on farmland). “World on Yonge is a good example of sustainable development that doesn’t just incorporate sustainable environmental features, but encompasses the complete package — residential, retail, and offices,” Mr. Scarpitti says. *National Post*

CONDO CULTURE

Navigating through the reserve fund study

POINTERS

By MARILYN LINCOLN

Q *Our board of directors recently informed us a reserve fund study is underway. Do we, the owners, receive a copy of the reserve fund summary and do we get to vote on the proposed plan regarding the results of the study? I have heard that these studies could result in huge condo-fee increases or special assessments.*

A Within 120 days after receiving a reserve fund study, the board must review it and propose a plan for future funding. Within 15 days of proposing a plan the board must send all owners a notice containing the summary of the study. The notice must include a summary of the proposed plan and a statement indicating the areas, if any, in which the proposed plan differs from the study. The board must send the corporation auditor a copy of the study, a copy of the proposed plan and a copy of the notice that was sent to the owners. The board must implement the plan within the next 30 days. Owners are not eligible to vote on the proposed plan. The board is not legally required to seek owner input. However, I would suggest the board call an owners’ meeting within the 120 days of receiving the results of the reserve fund study. Owners should be aware of what the study has revealed and the possible financial changes that may occur as a result of the study. Directors could clarify at the meeting exactly why condo fee increases may be necessary or if special assessments are predicted for the near future. Unfortunately, those condominium corporations who did not contribute enough money to their reserve fund and avoided major repairs and replacements may be facing significant financial adjustments. ■ Marilyn Lincoln is a condominium owner, director and author of *The Condominium Self Management Guide, 2nd ed.* Send questions to marilyn-condoguide@hotmail.com. *National Post*



MORTGAGE RATES 23.03.11

Rates are subject to change. Selection of financial institutions may vary weekly. Figures supplied by Fiscal Agents

	Variable rate	6months	1yr	2yr	3yr	4yr	5yr		Variable rate	6months	1yr	2yr	3yr	4yr	5yr
BANKS															
ATB Financial	3.80	4.45 - 6.30op	3.50 - 6.30op	3.75 - 6.50op	4.35	4.99	3.99	Equitable Trust	-	6.30op	3.50 - 6.30op	3.75	4.35	4.99	5.34
Alterna Svgs/Alterna Bk	2.75	4.40 - 6.30op	3.10 - 6.30op	3.70	3.89	4.09	4.04	Home Trust Company	3.00	4.45	3.49	3.99	4.09	4.69	4.69
Bank of Montreal	2.85	4.45 - 6.30op	3.50 - 6.30op	3.75	4.35	4.19	4.19	Investors Group Trust	n/a	4.55 - 6.50op	3.50 - 6.50op	3.75	4.35	4.99	5.34
Bank of Nova Scotia	3.00	4.55 - 6.45op	4.30 - 6.50op	4.05	4.35	4.99	5.29	MTCC	n/a	4.55 - 6.45op	4.30 - 6.50op	4.05	4.35	4.99	5.29
Canadian Western Bank	-	4.45 - 6.45op	3.50 - 6.50op	3.75	4.35	4.99	5.34	MRS Trust	n/a	2.90 - 3.45op	3.15	3.50	4.15	4.40	4.60
CIBC	2.85	6.70op	3.50 - 6.35op	3.75	4.35	3.79	3.99	ResMor Trust Company	-	-	3.89	-	3.74	-	4.04
HSBC Bank Canada	2.80	4.45 - 6.20op	3.50 - 6.35op	3.75	4.35	5.14	5.44	OTHER							
ICICI Bank Canada	2.35	-	3.05	3.55	3.89	4.09	4.04	Comtech Credit Union	5.00	6.60 - 8.40op	2.89 - 9.00op	3.49	3.79	3.99	3.95
ING Direct	2.25	-	2.95	3.40	3.89	4.09	4.04	DUCA Fin. Service C.U.	2.25	4.40	2.77 - 5.75op	3.27	3.76	3.86	3.96
Laurentian Bank	n/a	3.95 - 6.70op	3.19 - 6.70op	3.75	4.35	4.99	4.09	FirstLine Mortgages	2.55	-	-	3.65	4.10	4.39	4.34
Manulife Bank	3.50	-	2.90	3.35	3.60	4.00	4.05	First National Fin. LP	2.25	4.45	2.95	3.35	3.80	3.94	4.04
National Bank	n/a	4.45 - 6.70op	3.50 - 6.30op	3.75	4.35	4.99	5.34	Industrial Alliance/IAP	n/a	-	3.50	3.75	4.35	4.99	5.34
President's Choice Financial	2.25	-	-	3.30	3.64	4.04	3.99	Macquarie Financial Ltd.	2.80	-	3.00	-	3.60	-	4.14
Royal Bank	2.80	4.05 - 6.30op	3.20 - 6.30op	3.75	4.35	4.19	4.19	MCAP	2.35	-	3.50 - 6.30op	3.75	4.35	5.14	5.44
TD Canada Trust	2.85	-	3.09 - 6.50op	3.35	4.35	4.19	4.09	Meridian Credit Union	2.40	4.45	3.45 - 6.55op	3.70	4.30	3.85	3.88
TRUST LOAN															
AGF Trust	n/a	-	4.25	3.75	4.35	4.99	5.34	MFL RightMortgage	2.65	-	2.98	-	3.40	-	3.91
Effort Trust	n/a	3.60 - 6.30op	3.45 - 6.30op	3.70	4.30	5.10	5.40	PACE Savings & C.U.	-	4.45 - 6.70	3.50 - 6.45	3.75	4.35	4.99	5.34

*Also offer 7- to 10-year mortgages. op = open mortgage. n.a. = not available from company. ro=renewals only dashes (–) mean companies not quoting at present. ror=rates on request.