

Band is attracting many suitors

Industrial and residential opportunities on post-treaty reserve prove enticing to potential development partners

The Delta Optimist

Published: Wednesday, March 17, 2010

There's no shortage of interest from the development sector in partnering with the Tsawwassen First Nation to develop the band's lands, according to Chief Kim Baird.

The TFN's Economic Development Corporation held a well-attended aboriginal business showcase at Vancouver Community College's downtown campus last month to highlight the opportunities now available on the band's expanded post-treaty reserve.

"There was lots of interest from the development industry from two main sectors: industrial and residential," said Baird.



Tsawwassen First Nation Chief Kim Baird says the band has received much interest from potential development partners, particularly for its industrial land. The TFN plans to issue a request for proposals for a major industrial park this spring.

"A lot of the interest we've been getting already is unsolicited from people who see the immense opportunities."

In particular, the band would like to see a major logistics park developed on 135 hectares (335 acres) adjacent to the Deltaport container terminal.

"Because of its proximity to the port, it's also a prime opportunity to increase efficiencies and decrease truck traffic," said Baird, noting the TFN plans to issue a request for proposals this May.

She said there's been a consistently high level of interest in the TFN's industrial land.

"We're excited about seeing the interest that's been generated already and look forward to seeing a robust participation in the RFP," she said.

As far as potential residential development, Baird said the band doesn't have detailed neighbourhood plans. She said several property owners are having discussions with developers, but the TFN would be involved as the zoning authority.

"I understand there are a number of discussions with different residential property developers, none of that been finalized to my knowledge, but the Tsawwassen (First Nation) government would have to regulate that development," she said.

The TFN chief said as far as getting new sewer and water infrastructure, which has received government stimulus funding, the initial hookups will begin in about a year-and-a-half.

Baird said the band is also pursuing some commercial opportunities on the commercially zoned lands along Highway 17, near 52nd Street, and most of the interest has primarily been for retail opportunities, not hotels.

"We don't have a scope of a project there yet but we're working on the possibility for those lands, but what size I'm not positive just yet," she said.

Members of the Tsawwassen First Nation voted in favour of a proposed land use plan two years ago that's to shape the future of the expanded reserve. According to the plan, all TFN properties would be grouped into several logistical clusters of activity.

The plan has an area designated for open market housing, including a multi-family development overlooking the redeveloped Tsawwassen Golf and Country Club.

The industrial component off Deltaport Way would see the construction of warehouses, distribution and storage facilities.

An area just off Highway 17 was set aside in the plan as tourism/hotel.

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