

Toronto's hidden gem by the water

► Mimico on the Lake is an old neighbourhood about to be reborn

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To drive along the Lake Shore in Mimico by the Lake in Mimico a few years ago was like going back in time to 1950s Toronto.

The rows of motels, little clapboard bungalows, retro strip malls and drab brick apartment buildings have remained untouched for years.

But all that is about to change with a revitalization of the waterfront in the quaint, little community just west of downtown.

Waterside community

All the hotels are now gone and Mimico by the Lake, the section of south Etobicoke that extends from Parklawn to Royal York Road., is slated to be the city's next promising waterfront village.

One of the first new projects is Davies Smith Development's Eleven Superior condominiums, a lowrise of nine storeys currently in preconstruction with a sales centre on Lake Shore Boulevard West., the site of a former, neglected retail building.

"I think everyone is happy with this development, because this has been a derelict building for ten years. The building is very old," says Graham Chalmers, owner of Davies

Smith.

"The big appeal is that it's going to be a nice neighbourhood. It's in the works. I would say in about five years this area will be wonderful; better shopping; a much better lake shore than it is now," says Chalmers.

He foresees the project to be a catalyst for further development.

"A lot of developers will start to zero in on it."

Artists' area

Mimico has long been a pocket of arts and culture in west Toronto.

Susan Nagy is Executive Director of Lakeshore Arts, a community cultural centre and not-for-profit charity with a storefront gallery on the Lake Shore.

"There's lots going on and I think that's what people that purchase a condo are going to find out, not just that they have access to the water, but there's a very committed and active community," she says.

Nagy, also an area resident, believes that the revitalization is important because it will increase the centre's membership base and provide an opportunity for local artists to reach a broader audience.

New link to the city

The recent addition of



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► Warning: You may be tempted to take up sailing if this is your daily view.

Mimico Square opened up the main street to the water's edge.

"They've just announced phase II of the Mimico Linear park and that's going to link up the waterfront from one end of the city to the other, and that's really exciting for this community as well, because we've kind of been cut off," says Nagy.

David Pritchard, owner of Birds and Beans coffee shop, a charming and contemporary new venture on the Lake Shore, looks forward to the new link to the city.

"One of the issues that we have as a business is because we're right on the lake, which is wonderful to be on the lake, but there's no customers out on the lake, so the development we hope will bring some density so that it will bring more people living, and in fact working in the area."



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► New restos and shops are starting to open up in the area.