

# Redefining the condo community

► Can Toronto create sustainable mixed-income neighbourhoods?  
► Or is affordable housing for all just a dream? ► Metro investigates



**DUNCAN  
MCALLISTER**  
@METRONEWS.CA

New condominium developments in Toronto are addressing the need for affordable housing with mixed income units, and big plans are underway by Waterfront Toronto to transform the waterfront into a diverse, mixed income and sustainable community.

Meg Davis, vice-president of development for Waterfront Toronto, tells Metro, "For the East Bayfront in total, there will be about 6,000 residential units and similar numbers in the West Don Lands."

As part of the East Bayfront Precinct Plan, the City of Toronto has mandated that a certain percentage of this total are affordable units.

"The City Official Plan requires that 20 per cent of the housing on public lands in the East Bayfront be affordable rental housing and that is defined by 100 per cent of the CMHC average

rent for the Toronto area — it can't be any higher than that," says Davis.

As part of this objective, a consortium comprised of Mark Guslits & Associates, GHK and N. Barry Lyons Consultants have been retained to develop a strategy for affordable housing in the West Don Lands.

Most of the East Bayfront development so far has been commercial, and Waterfront Toronto is just now starting on the residential component.

Also, in the first phase of the West Don Lands project, Toronto Community Housing Corporation is building 243 affordable rental units with about half of those designated for seniors and the other half for families.

"So we do have a project actually already underway there, with occupancy sometime in 2013," says Davis.

And in both precincts Waterfront Toronto is required to have another five per cent of low-end of mar-



► A rendering of Bayside's Bonnycastle Street.



► Artist rendering of East Bayfront and the Bayside development site.

ket condo units.

"They're owner-occupied units, they're not rental but they are small units that are a little bit more affordable and again that's defined by the City," Davis explains.

The mixed income model attempts to address the problem of social isolation, where whole neighbourhoods have been marginalized by income and circumstances.

Efforts by city councilors, private developers and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation to redevelop ghettoized, large-scale public housing projects, aim to transform these communities and turn them into mixed-income neighbourhoods.

The Regent Park revitalization project is a prime example.

Proponents of the mixed

income model claim that a middle-class presence builds social capital and provides salutary role models to the community.

But at the same time, critics of public housing redevelopment warn against gentrification of these communities and have quoted statistics that show a relatively small percentage of original residents returning to the redeveloped areas.