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New Monaco in Peachland praised on all sides

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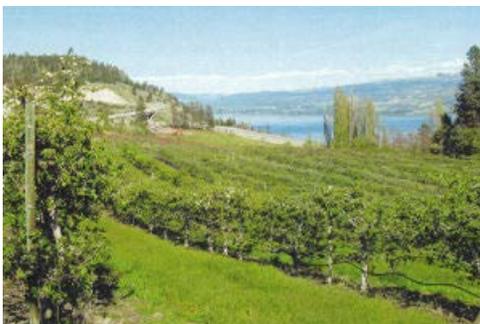
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Posted: Thursday, May 1, 2014 2:39 pm

Dorothy Brotherton, Westside Weekly | 0 comments

Politicians have nothing but praise for New Monaco managers and town staff who have put together a regulatory document for development of the north end of Peachland, the biggest master-planned neighbourhood the town has ever seen.

"I appreciate the developer who has been very open in every step," Coun. Eldon Kerbes said. "I trust that will continue."

Mayor Keith Fielding said the document outlines an approach that provides flexibility, but with clear parameters.

Coun. Cindy Fortin added New Monaco has been very thorough in the planning process, and Coun. Vern Moberg said, "We're moving in the right direction."

Coun. Eric Hall said it's no surprise council unanimously endorses this project.

"I'm impressed by the large commercial component that will bring jobs," he said.

Employers targeted are medical and health services, information technology, education, hotel and hospitality services, food, arts and culture, retail, and engineering

Drought Orchards

The Drought orchards, as they looked here in May 2011, will become part of the New Monaco development.

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and design businesses.

All this praise comes as documents finally hit council's table to push ahead with a comprehensive development zone bylaw, an amendment to the official community plan to create the New Monaco neighbourhood development permit area, and a phased development agreement.

The 51 hectares (125 acres) between the highway arms of Highway 97 and the Okanagan Connector will be the site of a mixed use community.

An area sector plan was approved in 2011.

"The neighbourhood is envisioned to become a complete community, where a mix of residential, office, retail, commercial, research and health-care oriented uses will offer residents and workers opportunities to work, live, play and learn within the community," said Cory Gain, Peachland's town planner.

Sewer, water and roads will all be done by New Monaco Enterprises, not taxpayers, as the project unfolds over 15 to 20 years. The plan is for three distinct areas: A village, a central area and a western neighbourhood. The village at the eastern end of the property will feature the mixed uses, with a hotel, shops and parks among multi-family

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residences. The neighbourhood will transition to low density residential at the western end.

The housing mix will include low, mid and high-rise condos, townhouses, residential flex units (meaning a lock-off suite within a multiple-family dwelling,) single-family homes and secondary suites. Tall buildings will be kept below the sight-line of the Connector, to preserve the view.

A concept hugely popular in Peachland, community care facilities for seniors are part of the plan. Altogether, New Monaco plans 2,800 residential units and 250,000 square feet of commercial, retail or cultural development, with natural areas, parks and trails integrated throughout.

The commercial bits will go up first, followed by residential. The first phase of the village would have 200 mixed residential units, the second phase 600, plus 100 for tourist accommodation.

The central area would come next with 1,960 residential units, and the western area would be built last with 40 single family homes.

Sustainability is playing a big part in the concept of New Monaco, sitting as it does on an arid hillside.

Desert-friendly landscaping and multi-family structures aim to cut in half the amount of water used in these homes, compared to the average Okanagan home.

Mark Holland of New Monaco said, "A lot of us who are on the project have spent a good deal of our professional lives pushing the edges around sustainability."

The developers expect New Monaco to be a demonstration project to other communities that face water challenges.

Researchers from UBCO are working with the developer to find best practices for water conservation.

A parks master plan will be put in place soon, with five percent of the site provided to the town for parks, and another 20 acres beyond minimum requirements.

Ecologically sensitive land is to be protected. New Monaco will contribute \$1,000 for affordable housing for every market-value unit, that money to go into the town's housing opportunities reserve fund.

A public hearing will be scheduled soon, and construction work could begin by the end of this year. New Monaco won the top award for small town planning in Canada in 2012 from the Canadian Institute of Planners.

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