

Huge plans for Bamberton unveiled

BY ANDREA RONDEAU
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Three Point Properties has unveiled plans for the old cement factory property at Bamberton worth hundreds of millions of dollars.

The company made its intentions known during a press tour of the site Monday and a public open house Tuesday evening at Brentwood College.

Three Point is making the move in anticipation of beginning a rezoning process with the Cowichan Valley Regional District.

If the rezoning is approved, the dusty industrial site can be transformed into what project developers envision as a residential and commercial seaside community of 3,200 homes.

"It's a very significant project," said Gwyn Symmons of City-Spaces Consulting, which is putting together the layout of the planned settlement. "This is a truly spectacular piece of Bamberton. It's really stunning."

Three Points Properties has spent \$10 million on the old industrial site already, performing remediation so it will be habitable.

"We are within weeks of completing our site remediation," said Michelle Mahovlich, who's been heading up the three-year cleanup.

From 1912 to 1982, a cement manufacturing facility and a small town occupied the Bamberton site. The industrial operation left the property with a lot of contamination, including 40 tonnes of asbestos, oily water and fuel lines, and 90,000 dump-truck loads of contaminated soil.

Other developers have come and gone because of the massive clean-up required. Three Point moved the affected soil into a rock quarry on the site, dammed it and capped it with clay, creating its own on-site soil storage facility.

Ross Tennant, of Three Point Properties, said what really attracted investors to the site is the five kilometres of shoreline and superb views. While other planned communities are centred around golf courses, he said, this one will be centred around natural scenery and waterfront.

The idea is for Bamberton to develop into a "gateway" community for the Cowichan Valley, he said, with a small waterfront town (which will include such things as boutique hotels and a brew pub) surrounded by park and a mix of housing.

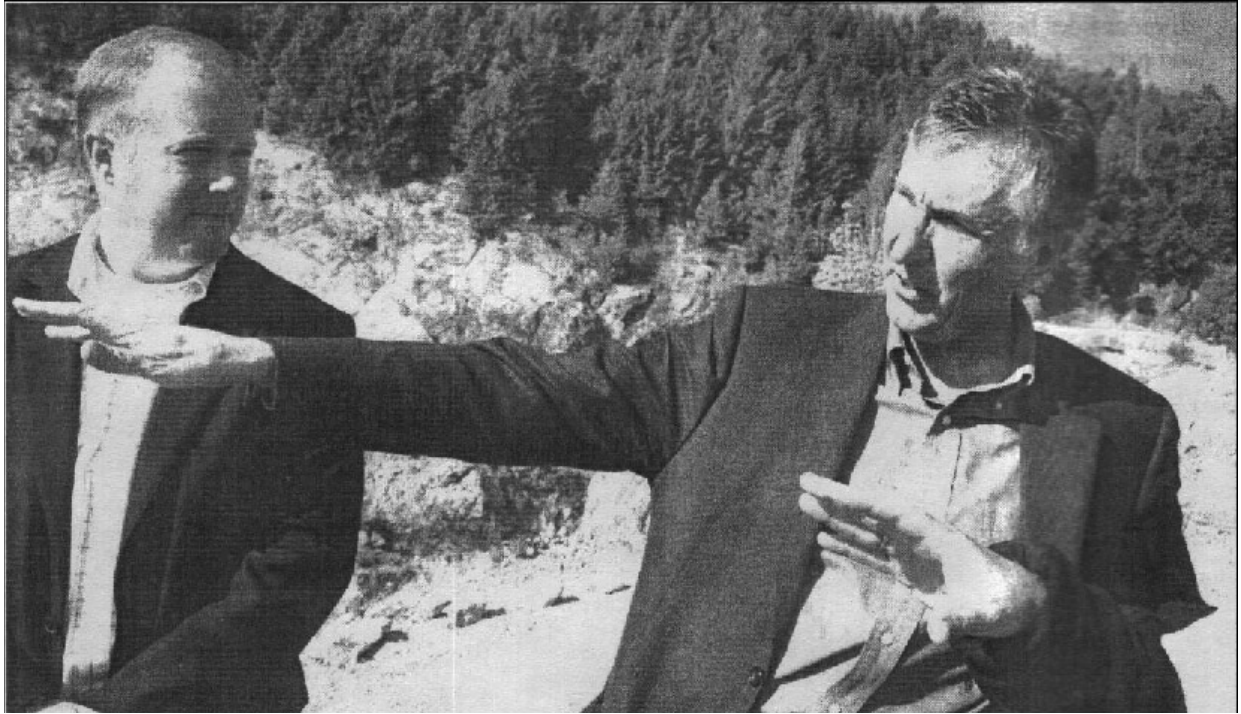
They'd also like to be the new home of the Mill Bay ferry to Brentwood Bay, Mahovlich said.

Symmons said they'd like construction to start no earlier than 2009. The project will take 20 to 25 years to complete.

Future residents are expected to be about half retirees and half working families, with the north side of the development offering higher-density housing and the south side parkland dotted with single-family homes.

Symmons and Mahovlich say the new community is not intended to be exclusive. Instead, they said, the vision is for something that will be a mix, with housing attainable for a range of buyers.

Twenty-two kilometres of trails, rock climbing and possibly a hill-train to take people through the rugged landscape gondola-style are other ideas they are considering to make the community a "distinct experience."



Ross Tennant (left) and Gwyn Simmons explain the project to reporters, noting the spectacular waterfront and the \$10 million in site remediation which has already taken place.

PHOTOS BY ANDREA RONDEAU/CITIZEN

