

## Bamberton hearing could lead to some tweaking

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Bamberton developers say they may be “tweaking” their plans to build a community on the old cement plant site after hearing concerns during the first of four planned public meetings on the project.

“The things I heard loudly were concerns about development on the south part of the property and putting the development under some kind of third-party environmental branding, like Smart Growth or something along those lines,” said Ross Tennant, a managing partner of Three Point Properties.

“Those are legitimate concerns and in some cases I think we’re going to have to tweak our plan and address some of the concerns the people brought forward.”

Approximately 200 people showed at the Cowichan Regional Valley District-hosted Tuesday night meeting at Mill Bay’s Brentwood College to hear and see plans for the proposed development.

The ambitious project is a proposed four-stage, 25-year plan to build nearly 3,200 homes that would house about 8,000 residents.

The 630 hectare community would also boast a commercial centre, kilometres of trails and a seaside promenade.

The company said it has already spent about \$12 million in remediation costs to clean the contaminated area.

Tuesday’s meeting was ostensibly about land use, however, some in the respectful crowd voiced concerns about density, increased traffic volumes and environmental issues.

“If we’re thinking long-term as developers we ought to be embracing (environmental issues) and I think there’s a lot we can do, coming out of that meeting, to get on that program a little bit more,” said Tennant.

One unique feature of the developer’s plans on the shore of the Saanich Inlet includes adding truly affordable housing for seniors, by way of subsidized dwellings, and for young families through an international, nonprofit ecumenical Christian housing ministry.

“Habitat for Humanity is an organization I’m really excited about. I’ve seen what they’ve done and it seems to make a big difference,” said Tennant.

The overall Bamberton plan calls for eight Habitat homes to be built, he said.

“We want to have this healthy community where you’d have below market housing, but you’d also have some more lavish examples of residences so you’d have what we believe to be a healthy and diverse community that showed a real spectrum.”

Addressing traffic concerns in part, the developer proposed relocating the Brentwood Bay ferry route from Mill Bay to the Bamberton location.

“We talked to Malahat First Nations that currently have the ferry landing and financially they don’t really benefit from it and they’ve found the traffic coming through their community wasn’t really something they wanted either,” said Tennant.

“They said they’d like to see it go and we said we’d like to get the go-ahead from the community to accept it because it helps to psychologically put the Bamberton project on the map.”

BC Ferries also sees some benefits to moving the landing area, not the least of which is the trip length would be cut by a third and would allow the ferries to make more trips during the day.

“It seemed like one of those rare things where we could get all the parties to agree this might be something to do,” said Tennant.

The next public meeting for Bamberton will be held March 27 at Brentwood College to discuss sewer, water and roads, among other infrastructure plans.



*Ross Tennant, a managing partner of Three Point Properties, speaks to a crowd of about 200 during a public meeting Tuesday to discuss a proposed development at the old Bamberton cement plant site.*