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WEST END BROWNFIELD CLEANUP

Catalyst for Longbranch

By Mark Ostler

A contaminated former industrial site in the southwest corner of the city is almost clean and the owners hope the planning applications that are moving through the approval process will spark more development interest in the Longbranch community.

An innovative, more environmentally friendly remediation technique is being used to remove oil and solvent contamination at 3600 Lake Shore Boulevard West, just east of Brown's Line, which for decades was home to an auto parts manufacturer.

The project, a joint venture of **Diamondcorp** and **Kilmer Brownfield Equity Fund**, which was specifically created to remediate brownfield sites, will be the first commercial-scale application of the technique that uses a form of iron mixed with clay that is added to soil and groundwater to clean it of chlorinated volatile organic compounds.

"This technology's been around for a few years, but in a different application. In the context of brownfields, it really hasn't been used," Kilmer managing partner **David Harper** told a group during a site visit yesterday morning, adding that the clean water and soil will be reused on the site. "Many environmental programs just dig and haul. What that means is you just take the contamination from your site and dump it in a landfill."

"As we develop more and more brownfields, we're trying to understand how we can reuse materials, but also achieve the objectives that meet the environmental goals of the redevelopment, as well as comply with the environmental regulations that are in place," Harper continued.

While site remediation is weeks away from completion, the developers have been working concurrently on planning applications for official plan and zoning by-law amendments. Submitted this past spring, the proposal calls for mid-rise condominium buildings that could measure between eight and 12 storeys along the site's Lake Shore Boulevard frontage and approximately 200 townhouses,

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ORC PROPOSES NEW PROCUREMENT MODEL

SME Squeeze?

The **Ontario Realty Corporation** held a public open house for interested vendors in Toronto last Tuesday to discuss new and more cost effective sourcing models for procuring professional services. Land use planning professionals concerned with the ability of small and medium sized firms to compete have raised questions about the proposed options.

Material presented at the open houses outlined three proposed new vendor management approaches—two approaches involve dividing the province into regions that vary depending on the service. One option involves selecting one vendor per service per region and another proposes selecting multiple vendors per service per region. The third option is to establish one vendor per service province wide. The fourth option is to maintain the status quo. The consultation taking place in open houses across the province and through an online survey is intended to assist ORC in determining which option to select.

Meanwhile, an ORC statement released to *NRU* earlier this week indicates a preference for the one vendor per region option. When asked whether the ORC will be selecting multiple vendors of record for the land use planning stream for each region, ORC spokesperson **Julia Sakas** responded with the following statement: "ORC is

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with a total of about 550 residential units. Some at-grade retail space is proposed along Lake Shore.

The site had been of particular concern to local councillor **Mark Grimes**, who, on the site visit yesterday, said he hopes the development will catalyze change in the area.

“It’s very important that we have these infills [and] they don’t sit for years,” Grimes said. “I believe this project is going to be the boulder in the still pond for Longbranch. I’m excited to see a piece of this magnitude—10 acres—cleaned up.”

Immediately to the north of the site are CN rail tracks, which require a 30 metre setback from residential uses. Some industrial uses remain in the area—there is a large employment area immediately north of the tracks and some industry, including an oil processing plant to the west of the site—though there are low-rise residential neighbourhoods to the east and south of the site, as well as two mid-rise apartment buildings.

The official plan includes a site-specific policy for 3600 Lake Shore Boulevard West, with different parts of the site designated as parks, mixed-use and neighbourhoods. Though the current plan for the site includes all three uses, they are not located in the same areas as the official plan sets out. Lake Shore Boulevard West is also designated as an avenue.

The site-specific policy applies to 17 hectares of land between Lake Shore Boulevard West and the rail line and envisions 2,200 new residential units on those lands. The site at 3600 Lake Shore Boulevard West measures 4.33 hectares and a preliminary staff report from late July states that “[t]he approximately 550 units proposed in this application are a proportionate share of the total allocation” for the policy area.

More than 90 per cent of the materials from the demolished 240,000-sq-ft. manufacturing building that used to occupy the site will be recycled and some will be used on-site.

The remediation portion of the project also received some funding from the federal non-profit foundation **Sustainable Development Technology Canada**, which was created by the federal government 10 years ago. The organization operates a \$550-million SD Tech Fund, geared towards new technologies that address climate change, air quality, clean water and clean soil, as well as a separate, \$500-million fund that supports new renewable fuels. SDTC screening and evaluation (water and soil) manager **Keith Watson** said that by providing funding to riskier projects such as this, his organization is helping companies prove the value of new, innovative technologies that will more quickly clean up contaminated sites.

“It provides the opportunity to bring an inventory of land that otherwise would be hard to develop—or maybe



Above: A rendering of the proposed Lake Shore West residential development.

Courtesy of Diamondcorp

Right: Crews demolishing the former auto parts manufacturing plant.

Courtesy of Kilmer Brownfield Equity Fund



not develop as quickly because it’s expensive or difficult—in our urban areas back into the land market,” Watson said. “It helps not only the brownfield industry, but the real estate industry and of course, all of us because we have more efficient use of our infrastructure.”

The province also seems optimistic about the project. The **Ministry of the Environment** is using it as a test for a new streamlined risk assessment process that is intended to make the development of remediated brownfield sites quicker. **Chris Thompson**, the provincial brownfields coordinator with the **Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing**, was also on-site yesterday and spoke of the project as a great example of proper brownfield development.

“This is in many ways, an ideal example of a site that has access to both regional and local surface transportation, has a number of advantages in terms of the location close to the lake, makes use of existing services and helps to build up an existing mixed-use area,” Thompson said. “There’s a lot to this kind of development that’s a really good example of what we want to see in the long run coming forward, as we seek more efficiency and more concentration in growth patterns in Ontario.”

Remediation is expected to be complete in the coming weeks, at which point the environment ministry approval process to allow residential uses on the site will begin. That process will take up-to-18 months for the sections of the site that had higher contamination levels. Meanwhile, city planning staff is still evaluating Diamondcorp and Kilmer’s planning applications.