

First scoop for 'cornerstone of White Rock's revitalization'



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Heritage photos, a Swiss alp horn, bratwurst and an excavator helped mark the groundbreaking of White Rock's newest town-centre highrise this week.

The Tuesday afternoon event played out on land in the 1500-block between George Street and Johnston Road –the site of the soon-to-be-underway 23-storey building.

"You have been part of the history of this site, or you might be part of the future of this site," PARC Retirement Living chairman and owner Rainer Müller said, addressing the invited crowd that included city officials, business owners and residents of existing PARC projects.

"We trust this PARC building will honour the intention of the vision of White Rock."

The 202-unit White Rock tower, expected to open in summer of 2019 and located at the city's entrance just south of the Surrey's 16 Avenue, will offer [independent-living rental accommodation for seniors](#).

First proposed in December 2015, it is expected to breathe new life into the town centre. Mayor Wayne Baldwin predicted it will be "the cornerstone of our revitalization."

"At the end of the day, this is going to be a project that is really going to be a trademark of White Rock," Baldwin said Tuesday.

It is PARC's first project south of the Fraser River, and includes a two-storey retail and amenity building that will front on Johnston Road and connect to the highrise via a walkway.

The highrise – described by one attendee as "like a cruise ship, only it doesn't move" – is to include multi-purpose space that will be available for community use. Artwork including framed archival photos that celebrate the site's history will be part of the decor.

Two of those photos were presented to former property owners Vic and Irene Michaluk, of Penguin Meats, and mother-daughter Ellen Kennett and White Rock Coun. Lynne Sinclair, whose family farm once occupied the site.

In presenting the photos, Müller promised “that we will take good care of this beautiful site, the same way a good farmer would do.”

Russell Hobbs, PARC’s VP of operations and construction, told *Peace Arch News* demolition should get underway within the next two weeks; site excavation is expected complete in August; and, the tower will be up in “probably 18 months’ time.”

Hobbs said efforts to alleviate the impact on traffic include rental of contractor parking spots at Semiahmoo Shopping Centre and Central Plaza.

“It’s a hotspot, we’re aware of that,” Hobbs said, of parking pressures.

A sales/presentation centre is expected to open early next year.



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