

Downtown Vancouver gaining grocery store, more apartments

By: Chuck Slothower in Real Estate and Development March 14, 2017 3:38 pm

Gramor Development has entered into exclusive negotiations with the city of Vancouver, Washington, to develop a seven-story mixed-use building with a ground-floor grocery store and 250 apartment units in downtown.

The City Council approved the selection of Gramor on Monday. The city owns the one-acre Block 10 site bounded by Columbia, Washington, West Eighth and Ninth streets.

Construction on the vacant property is slated to begin during the second quarter of 2018, according to the developer.

Plans call for a 30,000-square-foot grocery store topped by six floors of apartments. They will be a mix of studio, one- and two-bedroom units.

The development "will go a long way towards helping to deal with our housing crisis," said Teresa Brum, economic development division manager for the city. "We're still around a 3 percent vacancy, so we're pleased to add new units."

Vancouver officials, like their counterparts in Portland, are eager to activate the streetscape, Brum said.

The project "meets the city's vision for downtown, for vitality and really activating the first-floor space of downtown buildings," she said.

Two underground sections will provide 277 parking spaces. The U-shaped building will meet or exceed **Green Globes** criteria, the developer said.

Downtown Vancouver currently lacks a grocery store. The Vancouver Food Cooperative, which was at West Evergreen Boulevard and Main Street, closed a couple of years ago.

Vancouver has sought a downtown grocery store since at least 2007, when it was identified as a need in the **Vancouver City Center Vision Plan**, Brum said.

"We've had so much pent-up demand," she said.

Gramor has built 25 grocery stores, including one in Happy Valley that in November became the first **Fred Meyer** to open in Oregon in five years. The developer is in discussions with grocery store operators to lease space in the new building in Vancouver.

Gramor is also developing **The Waterfront**, a billion-dollar project along Vancouver's Columbia River frontage. The master plan for the 20-block project calls for 3,300 multifamily units, 250,000 square feet of restaurant and retail space and 1.25 million square feet of office space.

The first phase, set to open in spring 2018, encompasses a 120-room boutique hotel – **Hotel Indigo** – from InterContinental Hotels Group as well as 250 apartments on two blocks and 45,000 square feet of retail shops along the Columbia River.

Gramor President Barry Cain could not be reached for comment. But in a prepared statement, Cain said, "Block 10 is an ideal location for a grocery store development. Currently, there is no supermarket in Vancouver's city center, and with the strong demand that exists today along with the unprecedented growth to come over the next three to five years, filling this gap will have an increasingly positive impact on the community for years to come."