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10K is Going the Distance

Oakland's Condo Craze Keeps Building

By Robert Carlsen



When Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown took office in 1999, he proposed the 10K Downtown Housing initiative, which called for attracting 10,000 new residents to the downtown area with the development of 6,000 market-rate housing units.

Though some skeptics thought Brown's goal was overly ambitious, the reality is that it has worked: The city's Community and Economic Development Agency said that the initiative has resulted in the start and completion of 61 residential projects with 7,925 units. Seventeen projects have been completed (representing 1,663 units), 15 projects are in construction (2,144 units), 20 projects have received planning approvals (2,196 units) and 12 projects are in the planning process (1,922).



Even if some of these projects don't make it to ground breaking, Mayor Brown should easily have his 10K.

The main project stemming from the initiative is developer Forest City's Uptown Oakland, a 14-acre mixed-use community that has a planned phase I completion set for December 2007.

The contractor on the project is Danville-based James E Roberts-Obayashi Corp. and the architect is MVE of Oakland.

Uptown Oakland is located between San Pablo and Telegraph, just north of the recently renovated Civic Center and adjacent to the BART stations. It will include some 60,000 sq. ft. of retail/commercial space, 1,200 mixed-income apartments, 400 off-campus graduate student housing units for U.C. Berkeley and 900 condominiums.

Another major development is City Walk. Developed by Seal Beach-based The Olson Co., it is bounded by 13th, 14th, Jefferson and Martin Luther King Jr. Way, adjacent to Preservation Park and two blocks from City Hall. City Walk is being built by general contractor UPA of Reno and the architect is once again MVE.

The five-story project, which includes 252 units over two stories of parking, will consist of lofts, flats and live/work units. Approximately 2,400 sq. ft. of retail space is planned for the ground floor.

City Walk's first completed units will come online later this year.

BayRock Residential of Emeryville, meanwhile, is developing its first Oakland property -- the 157-unit, \$44 million 8 Orchid luxury condominium building in the heart of Chinatown at Broadway and 7th St.

The general contractor on the 8 Orchid project, which is scheduled for completion in late summer 2007, is J.R. Roberts Corp. of Citrus Heights and HDO Architects,

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based in Walnut Creek, is the architect.

Lead architect Randy Harris said the 11-story building will have a contemporary design with "an Asian flair," with some reds and greens blended in the stucco and granite exterior. There will be 157 units, averaging 990 sq. ft.



The new-build structure is an eight-story patented structural steel tower over a three-story post-tensioned concrete podium garage that includes a basement for parking as well. Common areas include a 20-ft.-high entry lobby, community room, courtyards and a roof-top garden. BayRock plans to have approximately 3,600 sq. ft. of retail fronting the 7th St. side.

Oakland's renowned Jack London Square is also getting some residential attention.

Foremost is Pulte Homes' 438 Alice project, located south of I-880 and west of Lake Merritt Channel at 4th and Alice streets.

Scheduled for completion later this summer, the 93-unit, 184,000-sq.-ft. building features two floors of parking above grade and six stories of condominiums.

The general contractor on the \$35 million project is Seattle-based Howard S. Wright and the architects are Leddy Maytum Stacy of San Francisco and HKS, also of San Francisco.

Pulte Homes' project manager Chris Alwan said this is the firm's first true midrise development in California. "This is the direction we're going - urban infill," he said.



438 Alice will include a landscaped common area in the center of the building and floor plans range from 812 sq. ft. to 1,666 sq. ft. in one-, two- and three-bedroom condos. There also will be 10,000 sq. ft. of office space. Also currently under construction is Jade, a 78-unit, six-story mix of condos and townhouses located at 15th St. and Jefferson. Meritage Homes's new urban infill division Meritage

Metropolitan Living is the developer and is acting as general contractor in a partnership with The Arbor Building Group of Lafayette; HDO is the architect.

Jade's amenities include a courtyard deck, roof deck, and secured parking serviced by an elevator and stairs. Completion is scheduled for the end of this year.

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