

# New year kicks off with construction

Business continues to boom at Vancouver Waterfront; five new blocks starting construction this year

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*Courtesy of Gramor Development. Five new blocks that are a part of Vancouver's \$1.5 billion Waterfront Development Project will start construction this year.*

A new flock of cranes are coming to Vancouver's \$1.5 billion Waterfront Development Project in 2020 – with business booming and five new blocks starting construction in the new year.

Blocks 6, 8, 9 and 12 already contain several completed restaurants, wineries and bars, including WildFin American Grill, Twigs Bistro, Maryhill Winery, Barlows Public House, Stack 571 Burger and Whiskey Bar, Pepper Bridge Winery and Amavi Cellars. And at least three more are in the process of opening, including a new Latin Kitchen and Margarita Bar, Airfield Estates Winery and Brian Carter Cellars. The completed blocks also contain some residential units and office space, with Block 6 tenants that include the M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust, Chicago Title and OnPoint Credit Union. As for the five new blocks and new construction coming in 2020, four will include residential housing and one will have housing specifically for seniors, said Barry Cain, president and owner of Gramor Development, the primary contractor.

"It's becoming more and more a place where people are living," Cain said. "It will be really nice to get the (Hotel Indigo) finished this year, and then it will have a nice feel of being complete."

The Hotel Indigo on Block 4 is an eight-story 138-room hotel. The block will also contain a 40-unit residential building with ground floor tenants that include El Gaucho and Naked Winery.

A new tenant, Directors Mortgage, also just signed a lease for 2,922 square feet in the Block 6 offices, which is a great sign that the development is broadening with more work options for residents, Cain said.

"As far as vacancies, everybody's doing really well," Cain said.

Gramor also finished work on a water feature at the site in 2019, which will likely be turned on again this March, Cain said.

"It's just amazing how well the project has been accepted," Cain said. "People can find parking, all the restaurants are doing really well. We're really happy with how things have gone so far."

Block D, which is part of the Port of Vancouver's Terminal 1 section of the project, will continue work through 2020 and into 2021 on the AC by Marriott Hotel. The seven-story hotel will have 150 rooms, 4,500 square feet of upper floor office space and 1,500 square feet of ground floor retail space. Right now, the port is doing grading work for the project.

"We've moved forward with the ground stabilization and construction for the beginning of the AC by Marriott," said Jonathan Eder, the port's executive project sponsor for Terminal 1. "In 2020, it will be a construction zone. Longer term, though, people will be able to walk in front of the hotel, have places to sit and places to view the river."

During the grading work, the port also found hundreds of 100-year-old wood pilings from a dock made around the turn of the last century. Port workers have been pulling out those pilings and replacing them with concrete for its new dock. Eder said one of his goals is to find a way to incorporate that wood back into the project somehow.

"The silver lining is that we have maybe 400-500 of these 100-year old Doug Fir pilings, and we're thinking about how we can use them in the new development," Eder said. "None of it was treated, but we think it can be milled. It could become signage, or siding, or part of the Vancouver Landing Bridge. We're looking at it now and saying 'hey, we've got some truly great material.'"

The port is also in negotiations right now with the Lincoln Property Company in Portland for projects on its blocks C and A, which likely could be an office building and more residential units.

The port had a pre-application meeting for those blocks on Jan. 9, and discussed a seven-story mixed use development with 109,960 square feet of office space, 22,572 square feet of retail, 174 residential units and 520 above-ground parking spaces.

Back on the Gramor side of the project, grading work has started on Block 20 for a seven-story apartment complex that will be finished in 2021. Tenant improvements are also underway on Block 9 for the Latin Kitchen and Margarita Bar, which is expected to open this spring, and ground floor tenant improvement work has started on Block 8 for Airfield Estates Winery, which is expected to open this winter.

"It's going to be a really upscale Latin restaurant," Cain said of the Latin Kitchen, which hasn't fully settled on a name yet. The restaurant is being built by Jorge Castro, owner of Jorge's Tequila Factory, which announced it was going to move to the Waterfront Project space in August.

New projects have been planned for five more blocks as well: Projects on Blocks 3,7,17,18 and 21 all are in preliminary review with the city of Vancouver. Included in those are a six-story apartment building on Block 17, a seven-story 750-space parking garage with 12,000 square feet of ground floor retail on Block 7, and a 12-story senior housing facility with 200 units and 219 parking spots on Block 18.

"We were creating an entirely new district in the Vancouver Metro area that wasn't there before and we knew we wanted it to be world class," Cain said. "In order to do that, we had to convince everyone that when it was done, it would be a success. I can confidently say that we're well on our way to meeting that vision and in fact, it is exceeding my hopes for the site."