

# ALL ABOUT AMENITIES

**Matt Durnan**

**A** more perfect representation of “going green” you couldn’t script than a developer’s plans to demolish a gas station and auto maintenance shop in The Beaches neighbourhood to make way for a bicycle-centric development.

**Windmill Developments** is seeking to build an eight-storey, mixed-use 56-unit boutique condominium apartment development at 1161 Kingston Road, with a sharp focus on outdoor living and active transportation and an emphasis on cycling.

Windmill’s application was circulated among **City of Toronto** divisions in January of 2021 and is in the first stage of approvals (notice of approval conditions).], the last step before receiving final approval.

The proposed development includes a one-to-one bicycle parking space to unit ratio, while having a vehicle to unit ratio of 0.5:1. The building will also include areas dedicated to bike repair and cleaning.

“There’s building performance elements and it comes to all the elements of sustainable living, which increasingly is [focused] around mobility. We increasingly find that even if you want to have a car, no one wants to drive around Toronto today if you can help it,” Windmill Developments president **Jonathan Westeinde** told *NRU*.

“So what can you do to provide

modes of transportation that make getting around easier and not having the hassle of having a car?”

Encouraging and emphasizing things like bike-share programs and electrified bikes are top of mind for Westeinde, who himself uses an electric bike to get around the city.

It’s one thing to opt out of owning a vehicle and instead, taking the more environmentally-friendly option of using a bicycle or electric bike to travel, but challenges can arise when it comes to living in the city and needing a place to park and/or work on your bike.

“Even not for such green initiative type buildings, more and more these days, bicycle parking is becoming a requirement by city by-laws,” **TACT Design** principal **Michael Krus** told *NRU*.

“By virtue of that, they [bicycle parking spots] have become a factor right in the design of buildings.”

An increased focus on accommodating cyclists, while simultaneously shifting away from building parking stalls and parking structures has a net impact on the pocket books of both developers and home buyers.

As development becomes increasingly more driven by proximity to transit and the establishment of complete communities, vehicle parking has found itself dropping down a few rungs in terms of how it is

prioritized.

“As you get more and more central, there’s a trend towards a decrease in parking and there’s two components to that,” Westeinde said.

“One is the active transportation element and accessibility, and the other is pure affordability; parking is becoming extremely expensive to both build and sell. We’re focused on getting people into homes affordably. If you’re building something and someone’s only ability to get around is by car, you’re forcing them to buy a parking stall”

Features such as a bike wash and bike maintenance area within the building are key amenities that will be at ground level, maximizing convenience for bike owners when it comes to being able to clean, maintain and park their bikes without having to carry them through building halls and in elevators.

These types of amenities are becoming more and more common in developments in the city as apartment living begins to adopt the same comforts of home seen in single-detached homes in the suburbs.

“This is deemed as ‘positive living’ function, and we’re providing things like workshops, craft rooms, kids play areas; you’re recreating spaces and environments where people can indulge in gardening or repairing their bikes, because living in a

small suite in a condo, you can’t really take apart a bike, so we want spaces that facilitate and promote this kind of thing,” said Krus.

“They never really were such a desired function, but now they’ve become pretty much a standard. So now, what people are able to do around a home simply because you have a basement or backyard or garage, all those attributes that can be taken for granted at a single-family home, those are being incorporated into condos.”

Community response to the proposed development has been largely positive, according to Westeinde, who gave a nod to **Cycle Toronto** and its work in promoting active transportation in the city.

“You look at the success that Cycle Toronto has had, and biking is multiplying as far as locations and uses go...with things like electric scooters coming in and this last-mile to five-mile electrification of transportation for things like electric bikes and scooters, it’s really transforming how you get around the city.”

Sales for units at 1161 Kingston Road are currently underway and Westeinde expects shovels to be in the ground on this development by the end of the year.

*NRU reached out to Beaches-East York councillor Brad Bradford for comment on this story but he was unavailable to speak before time of publication.* 🌱