

REAL ESTATE

Confidence builds in core of the City

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"I believe it will continue to attract new businesses and residents and it will become a thriving core."

Zensner said she likes the people, interaction and the support of the Kitchener Downtown Business Association, "and the new spirit that is evolving." She has been there since 2005, and even when she had to move her business from Ontario Street to larger quarters, she stayed downtown. The new location is on King West across the street from City Hall. "I needed to expand and I decided to remain in Kitchener downtown. The business people have been great supporters," explained Zensner.

Lynn Haddrall, editor-in-chief of The Record is pleased with the newspaper's move from its former Fairway Road location in Kitchener to its location in the former Sears store in Market Square. "Our move here was a sign of support for this core," said Haddrall.

In May 1973 The Record (then the Kitchener-Waterloo Record) had moved from its downtown Kitchener location to Fairway Rd. And while it thrived there, the paper chose to come back downtown 32 years later in January 2005.

The core was the, "best business deal and it also gave us the opportunity to participate in the regeneration of the Kitchener core," said Haddrall. "We have supported some of the current projects in terms of trying to get more people to relocate downtown and some of the industrial uses that are now turned into lofts (Kaufman, Eaton's and Arrow Lofts). We also supported things like the university projects in the downtown

core," added Haddrall.

She characterizes the move back to the downtown as "a huge vote of confidence in the future of the downtown core."

Haddrall said The Record staff often eats at nearby restaurants and does shopping downtown – no need to drive to a mall.

There's a great view of Kitchener's Centre Block – an immense city project currently under review that will involve King, Young, Duke and Ontario Streets. The goal is to find the best uses for the block – so a variety of recommendations are being reviewed to determine whether best use will mean a library, and residential and/or commercial buildings. It's a project that will take years and cost millions to complete. Not everything is all roses and rainbows in the core. Currently, 15,100 tonnes of hazardous soil are being removed

from Joseph and Gaukel Street. This project started over two years ago and is expected to be completed in July 2007 at a cost of about \$19.5 million.

From 1882 to 1958, the City ran a coal gasification plant on this site. The by-product of heating coal to produce gas energy was coal tar, a toxic sludge that was buried at the site in tanks and an open pit. Nobody realized how toxic to human health the stuff was back then, but the City, which owns the site that was once the post office, is determined to clean it up.

The Gaukel Street Project is separated into four phases which include major road reconstruction and underground infrastructure work in the Joseph/Gaukel/Richmond Street area.

The goal is to eventually use the remediated site for residential housing.



Karen Redman: Building a "Sense of neighbourhood."