

## ***Plans for third tower progress - The City of Regina's planning commission gave its blessing***

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The City of Regina's planning commission gave its blessing on Tuesday to the proposed third Hill Centre Tower.

If city council approves the project on Monday, it will be "full steam ahead" on development of the 20-storey building at the northwest corner of Hamilton Street and 12th Avenue, said Rosanne Hill Blaisdell of Harvard Developments.

Construction is anticipated to start "almost immediately" after that approval, with completion for occupancy expected in late 2012, she continued after the special commission meeting called to discuss the proposal.

To build the tower means an investment of more than \$100 million, Hill Blaisdell told the commission. The 200,000-square-foot building would be the first "Class A" office space developed in Regina in at least 20 years.

"I can't say how excited we are to continue our historical investment in the downtown," Hill Blaisdell told reporters, noting the Hill family has been investing in Regina for four generations.

"I'm the fourth generation and I'm very proud and we're very proud to see continued growth. We're at a point in time where the economy is doing well and we're responding to that need and thrilled to be able to do it in Saskatchewan."

The third tower has been in the works for about three years. Implementation of the city's downtown neighbourhood plan last year resulted in changes to the design. The improvements will benefit pedestrians and the public in general.

The plans now call for several public spaces, including a permanent art gallery, where local artists can display their work on a rotating basis, and a meeting room where local groups can accommodate events with up to 80 people.

The shape of the building isn't exactly what is prescribed in the downtown plan, but glass canopies will provide a similar effect of reducing wind at street level.

That means the design is in the "spirit of" of the downtown plan -- and Harvard is paying the city more than \$400,000 in exchange for the exceptions, commission chairman Coun. Michael Fougere said, praising the private-sector investment and the confidence that represents in the city's economy.

The building has some design cues that tie it visually to the two existing Hill Centre Towers -- but it also includes new and environmentally friendly aspects, too, Hill Blaisdell said.

Several commission members questioned the number of parking stalls proposed to be assigned to the building. But Fougere noted the number is compliant with the bylaw and Hill Blaisdell said that Harvard doesn't expect any issues.

Fougere said he often hears complaints from Regina residents about parking. But, while he acknowledged "growing pains" downtown, he encouraged people to exhibit "patience and understanding."

"We need to understand that we have a concentration of retail and office space downtown," he said. "You can't park always in front of where you want to go. It just logistically isn't possible."