

NEW IN HOMIES & CONDOS

SATURDAY, JUNE 3, 2017 SECTION H

ON ON2

> HOW WE LIVE

Downtown vibe in the 905

'Manhattan North' is how one buyer sees Vaughan's new Transit City condo

TRACY HANES
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Gioia Di Giovanni loves downtown Toronto. She just doesn't want to live there.

Di Giovanni, 36, works in health care in the 905 and owns a condominium in Richmond Hill, close to where she was born and raised.

She wants to move up to a larger condo south of her current address and has found the perfect solution at Transit City — the first residential tower that will be built at Smart Centres Place in Vaughan, a 40-hectare master-planned development.

Smart Centres Place — 17-million square feet of retail office and residential space — will be a key component of the new Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC), aimed at bringing an urban presence to what had been predominantly a suburban community.

"As much as I'd like to be in the downtown (Toronto) core, the commute would be a negative factor," Di Giovanni says.

"What I enjoy about the new Vaughan Metropolitan Centre is that it has an urban feel. Vaughan is exploding — and I see it as Manhattan North."

Transit City, a 55-storey tower with 551 units will be built in partnership by Smart Real Estate Investment Trust (SmartREIT), Mitchell Goldhar and CentreCourt Developments.

When completed in 2020, it will be one of the tallest buildings in York Region and steps from the new Vaughan Metropolitan Centre subway stop and inter-regional bus terminal.

It will also be adjacent to a new 100,000-square-foot YMCA, as well as a centre for performing arts and library.



COLE BURSTON FOR THE TORONTO STAR

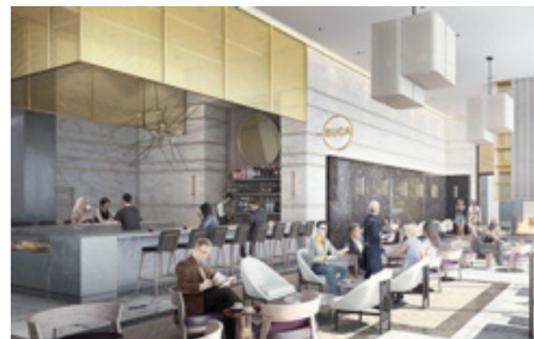
Gioia Di Giovanni and boyfriend Javier Perez check out the model of Transit City condo with builder Shamez Virani, right, and architect Don Schmitt.

"Convenience to services and activities is huge for me. Time is valuable and I really appreciate having those things close."

GIOIA DI GIOVANNI
INTERESTED
CONDO BUYER



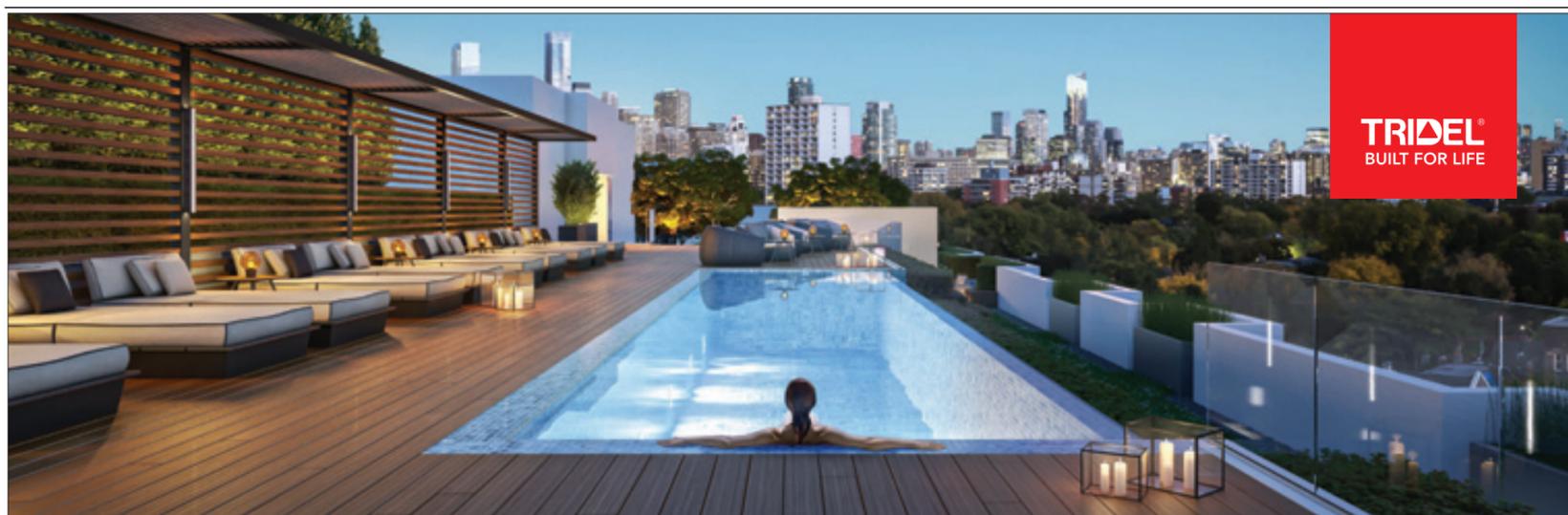
CENTRE COURT DEVELOPMENTS



CENTRE COURT DEVELOPMENTS

The building will be next to TTC's new Vaughan Metropolitan Centre subway stop. It will also have a Buca restaurant.

CONDO continued on H4



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>> HOMES & CONDOS

Convenience attracts buyer

CONDO from H1

"The location is ideal not only because of the subway and direct access to downtown but also because of the proximity of Hwy. 400," Di Giovanni says. "I do a lot of things on weekends in Collingwood and on Lake Simcoe with my family, and the highway makes it easy to get there."

And while she enjoys the busy city vibe of Toronto, she also appreciates that Vaughan does not have that.

"It's definitely not the same congestion as the big city — there's less stress and less noise," she adds.

She can be almost anywhere in Vaughan within 10 minutes via major roads; on the subway, she can be downtown at Union Station in 43 minutes or at Yorkdale Mall in 15 minutes.

Di Giovanni is looking forward to living in the midst of a live-work-play community, and is looking at buying a two-bedroom, two-bathroom suite. Her boyfriend, Javier Perez, is also considering the different condo layouts at Transit City as the pair determine their future.

One of the perks she'll receive as a Transit City buyer will be membership to the state-of-the-art Y next door and she'll be able to walk to shops and restaurants.

"Convenience to services and activities is huge for me," she says. "Time is valuable and I really appreciate having those things close."

Architect Don Schmitt of award-winning Diamond Schmitt Architects Inc. says Smart Centres Place "is a significant and important development that will be a model for smart growth in the 905."

"The building has a powerful, iconic design and will be a beacon for residential living," he says, describing the lobby as "a living room at ground



CENTRECOURT DEVELOPMENTS

A kilometre-long linear park, designed by renowned landscape architect Claude Cormier, will weave through the SmartCentres Place community.

floor" where the community will gather.

CentreCourt CEO Andrew Hoffman says Transit City — whose team also includes Figure 3 Interior Designers and internationally regarded landscape architect Claude Cormier — "will set a high bar" for buildings to follow. "We wanted to rethink the programming and experience of the lobby and we looked at hotels around the world," Hoffman says.

As a result, the Transit City lobby will be reminiscent of a luxury boutique hotel lobby and will include a Buca restaurant — the first outside of downtown Toronto, which will offer deliveries to condo residents.

Di Giovanni partakes in downtown Toronto's food and entertainment



COLE BURSTON FOR THE TORONTO STAR

Gioia Di Giovanni and Javier Perez discuss suite details with architect Don Schmitt, to their left, and builder Shamez Virani of CentreCourt Developments.



CENTRECOURT DEVELOPMENTS

The suites will be open concept and range from 500 to 1,000 sq. ft.

scene and Buca is a brand she's familiar with. "It's a good Italian restaurant with delicious food."

CentreCourt specializes in Toronto-area highrise developments close to major amenities, rapid transit and employment areas and has eight projects underway in the GTA. Di Giovanni says experience also influenced her decision to buy at Transit City. "I'm a second-time buyer so I've been through this process before — and I realized it's important to deal with a builder that's done this before."

The unifying feature of the Smart

Centres Place master plan is a one-kilometre linear park, designed by Claude Cormier, that will be lined by additional office buildings and residential and mixed-use condos. The park is another feature of her future neighbourhood that Di Giovanni plans to enjoy.

"I've realized the importance of not being dependent on a car," Di Giovanni says. "I'll be home from work in a few minutes and I'll have the rest of the day to hang out. With all the green space, I'll be able to go for walks every evening."

> TRANSIT CITY

Location: Hwys. 7 and 400, SmartCentres Place, Vaughan Metropolitan Centre

Description: 55-storey tower with 551 suites, steps from the subway and inter-regional bus terminal

Developers: Smart Real Estate Investment Trust (SmartREIT), Mitchell Goldhar, CentreCourt Developments

Suites: 500 to 1,000 square feet in one-bedroom, one-bedroom-with-den, two-bedroom, two-bedroom-with den and three-bedroom plans.

Price: From the mid-\$300,000s

Amenities: Hotel-inspired lobby with Buca restaurant and Bar Buca; access to YMCA with gym, swimming pool, basketball courts and daycare, and to city of Vaughan library.

Occupancy: March 1, 2020

Info: Sales centre at 100 New Park Place; 416-869-9268, email info@transitcity.com and online at transitcity.com

> LIGHTNESS OF BEING

GRIP THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

Set-in-stone statutes governing what constitutes great lighting do not exist for Lori Morris. "There are no rules in my design world," the Toronto-based designer tells **Vicky Sanderson**. "What makes (a fixture) right is not colour or style. If something is fabulous, as long as it is the correct proportion, it can work in the right space."

Cool, not cold: This art deco-inspired space is cool without being cold, an effect Morris achieves by creating "layers of visual interest." Here, the base is a tight palette of inky blacks and crisp whites repeated in broad horizontal lines on drapes and Greek-key patterns on furniture, which are echoed in a pair of fixtures that hang from the ceiling like earrings. Black floor coverings are bordered by bands of zone-defining white, and all those sharp angles are softened by the graceful curve of a grand piano.

The bedroom: Morris's favourite room is the bedroom, which she thinks is particularly well-suited to a blend of contrasting patterns and varied textures, extravagantly accessorized with pillows. Here, a pink feather fixture from France may be more frou-frou than functional, but Morris thinks its "humorous, subtle and sexy" vibe is a perfect fit. It's also reflective of her esthetic, which she calls "French harmonized — a blend of classic and modern French design that can be balanced in any proportion."

Kitchen equation: Questions of style may be up for discussion, but proper proportion is not, Morris says. "Once you drop a chandelier or fixture, you create a visual point of reference. Even if the fixture is stunning, if it's the wrong proportion, it will look off." Not so with this sculptural, serpentine brass fixture than anchors a



BRANDON BARRÉ PHOTOS

A pair of light fixtures that hang from the ceiling like earrings echo the Greek-key pattern in the furniture.

creamy, dreamy kitchen defined by an abundance of handsome architectural detail. Rather than risk getting it wrong, Morris says, it might be better to pick a ceiling-hugging, unobtrusive fixture that won't interfere.

Artful boudoir: While lighting must be functional, Morris says, it can also serve as "a big, beautiful focal point

— like a gorgeous piece of art." It does just that in this space, which channels a frilly French boudoir, using cream and latte shades, classic detailing and rounded lines that are repeated on both countertop and window treatments. Curves recur in a hanging light fixture made from a curtain of steel chains — an unexpected alternative to a conventional



A pink feather light fixture takes centre stage in the bedroom, amid a blend of contrasting patterns and varied textures.



Toronto-based designer Lori Morris says there are no rules in her design world.

chandelier dripping with glittering crystal.

Club room: Lashing of luxurious walnut and butter-soft suede, along



A light fixture that features a curtain of steel chains complements the curvy counter and is an unexpected alternative to a conventional chandelier.

with moody blues, browns and black, evoke a private club for well-heeled gentlemen of a bygone era. A vintage glass lantern has the visual heft to hold its own among other grand gestures — assertive architectural elements on the ceiling and window, richly veined stone, finely detailed panelling, weighty chairs with ribbed fabric, and a massive tree-trunk coffee table. The result is an exquisitely balanced room, with no single element outweighing another.

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