

Top insurance firm heading to new Burnside centre

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One of Canada's biggest insurance companies is relocating its Atlantic operations from downtown Halifax to a slick new complex under development at Burnside Park by the Hardman Group.

The Dominion of Canada General Insurance Co. will be an anchor tenant in a three-storey, 60,000-square-foot office complex under construction at the intersection of Burnside Drive and Wright Avenue, Bill Hardman, Hardman Group president, said on Tuesday.

Hardman said his company's development and commercial components planned for the neighbouring Dartmouth Crossing retail area are combining to create an attractive alternative to downtown Halifax.

He said the intersection of Burnside Drive and Wright Avenue is one of the busiest in the city.

Hardman Group is developing a 6.5-hectare business campus at the intersection, the former location of a water tower dismantled about six years ago by Halifax Water.

"The tower was located at this location to take advantage of the topography in the area," said Hardman. "The site offers fantastic views of Halifax Harbour and the Burnside area."

The Dominion of Canada will relocate to its new campus location at Burnside shortly after the building is completed in September.

The company currently has offices in Purdy's Wharf Tower II at 1969 Upper Water St.

The insurance company has committed to 20,000 square feet of space, but this could change before occupancy.

"This flexibility is part of the appeal of locating in a new location where there is lots of space available," said Hardman.

Hardman Group wants to construct a new building at the location each year for the next five years.

All the buildings will adhere to strict environmentally friendly standards.

In addition to the office campus part of the development, there will be a retail component at street level along Wright Avenue.

Hardman said the completed development will feature green space with square footage equivalent to the size of two football fields.

"Some businesses want to be downtown, some need to be downtown," he said.

"But others are discussing new possibilities with their staff and determining the downtown core is not essential."

He said Dominion is relocating to the business campus because of the ease of access for staff, free parking and the advantages of a campus setting.

Downtown parking is averaging about \$160 per month, he said.

Scott Beattie, Dominion's regional vice-president of business development, said the company liked the rent and the space for expansion.

"The move is something we have been looking at for over a year," he said in a news release.

J.W. Lindsay Enterprises Ltd. is constructing the first building at the campus.

The design is by Lydon Lynch Architects.

(bpower@herald.ca)