

CFB CALGARY

# Marda Loop braced for population boom

BOB BERGEN  
CALGARY HERALD

A population surge and development boom is set to take place in the trendy Marda Loop area in the city's southwest as the first phase in the redevelopment of CFB Calgary picks up steam.

"I can tell you the people and businesses in the area are certainly looking forward to this dream come true," said area alderman Jon Lord.

"It's been a long winter for them."

## THE ISSUE

Marda Loop redevelopment.

■ **WHAT'S NEW:** Struggling business owners eagerly awaiting arrival of new residents.

■ **WHAT'S NEXT:** Up to 6,000 residents expected.

Of 80 businesses in the area, 16 have either closed down or changed hands since the families of soldiers formerly housed at Currie Barracks on the east side of Crowchild Trail moved to Edmonton in 1996

and 1997.

Lord said even the businesses that survived still suffered.

"It will be welcome relief from the kind of damage they've had to endure," Lord said.

Brian Tivadar, owner of the Sugar-daddy Bakery and Pastery Shop, said upwards of 90 per cent of the Golden Grain's customers were soldiers or their relatives.

"It's been a tough up-hill climb, but I think there is light at end of the tunnel," said Tivadar, who bought the former Golden Grain Bakery two years ago, just as the last soldiers were leaving.

At its peak, military married quarters housed 3,000.

With redevelopment there could be



Shannon Duncan, Calgary Herald

A new home on the former CFB Calgary married quarters nears completion.

up to 6,000 in the same space, Tivadar said.

"Things are starting to change already," he said.

Along with refurbished former military housing that is now selling like hot cakes, Ald. Barry Erskine said a newly relocated Safeway store is earmarked for the Loop's west end between 21st and 22nd Streets, south of 34th Avenue.

"There are 20 commercial/retail businesses going on the same site. This creates new anchor tenants for the Marda Loop business district that will expand its boundaries," Erskine said.

The driving force behind the changing fortunes of Marda Loop is the Canada Lands redevelopment of the homes vacated by the military.

"When this all became public knowledge in May, we received in the range of 250 phone calls in the first month," said Todd Morrow, who in charge of sales and marketing for Garrison Woods homes.

"It started getting crazy so we thought we'd better get a sales centre

open quick," he said.

Morrow expects the entire 59-unit first-phase of former military homes south of Flanders Avenue to be sold by mid-March.

Twelve of the 19 single family homes, which start at \$160,000, remain.

Of the 40 duplex units, which start at \$140,000, just 11 remain.

In addition, 26 estate homes priced in the mid-\$300,000s are being built on a cul-de-sac.

"We have 100 names on a waiting list," said Morrow.

To the north of Flanders Avenue, closer to Marda Loop, Sandlewood Developments has begun building 56 executive townhouse units ranging in price from \$150,000 to \$325,000.

"We have deposits on 48 of the 56," said Sandlewood's Rob Widdowson. "The first move-ins will happen by the end of May."

Ceco Developments Ltd. is still pursuing permits for 172 condominium units in roughly the same area that will range in price from \$106,000 to \$275,000.