

Downtown Kitchener



Tannery District redevelopment focuses on downtown creative space

Imagine it. Corporate and social space. Restaurants. Retail. Landscaped courtyards. Office space for the emerging technologies, multi-media, financial and health sciences industries.

That's what the redevelopment plan is for the Lang Tanning building, located directly across the street from the University of Waterloo's new Downtown Kitchener Health Sciences Campus. Recently, representatives from **Cadan Inc.**, the development company that purchased the former brownfield site, unveiled its vision for the property.

The redevelopment is an example of how the City of Kitchener is leveraging its \$30 million investment in the UW's new School of Pharmacy, which will be located at the corner of King and Victoria streets.

"We want the Tannery District to be more than 9-5, to be a real destination," says **Lana Sherman**, managing director of **Cadan Inc.** "We want the area to emanate a dynamic energy that accommodates work time and personal time."

"**Cadan's** interest and confidence in Kitchener's downtown is another sign that the private sector supports our vision for a re-energized downtown," says Rod Regier, the city's director of economic development. "Investments like the one **Cadan** is making are a key part of our vision and our plan for the downtown."

Cadan Inc., plans to transform the historic building into a district for convergent industries – a home for technology, life sciences, and creative resources to share ideas and space, and to feed off one another's innovation.

"Creative people want to be around other creative people. This will be the perfect place for them," **Sherman** says, adding there are plans in the works for future uses for the historic 350,000 square-foot building, which was at one time the largest tannery in the entire British Empire.

Once the developer's \$30-million renovation process is complete next year, the site will feature two buildings. One will offer space for local artisans, while the other will be designed to house new office and retail space.

The buildings will offer a total of seven floors between them – four in one and three in the other – with each floor containing approximately 20,000 square feet of useable space. The floors will be connected by stairs and elevators, so there will be opportunities for industries to lease space comfortably on more than one floor if they so desire.

The floor plans will be open, with exposed brick walls and wood ceilings, which will preserve and pay tribute to the building's heritage. There will be plenty of public space built in – both inside and outside the building. A private courtyard will be designed to accommodate outdoor festivals, as well as the people in the building who are looking to enjoy some leisure time in the fresh air.

"While the building will offer adequate parking for visitors and tenants, we will be encouraging alternative modes of transportation by creating special entrances for bicycles and scooters, says **Sherman**. We will have showers available in the building for people who want to freshen up after riding into work; and we will also be organizing a car-sharing program for those who work in the building."

"This project is a perfect fit with our aim to build a healthier urban economy," says Regier. "Market interest in the downtown is definitely growing, and a big part of that stems from the innovative attitudes of businesses and developers like **Cadan Inc.**, who have great enthusiasm and vision for the core."

Upgrades to the existing artisan building have started, with the work expected to be complete by the end of 2008. Renovations to the entire building will continue through 2009.