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## The Makings of a Modern Community

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Master plan experts often talk about a singular feature or element — maybe a clubhouse or shared amenity space or common historical theme —that creates a sense of place, a key piece that helps a community gel.

In the case of Seton — a new urban center for south Calgary — it's the community itself, the combination of thoughtfully arranged spaces and opportunities for exciting modern urban lifestyles.

Swiftly shaping into Calgary's most desirable one-stop, work-live-play community, Seton pulls it all together, Brookfield Residential Vice President of Commercial Warren Paulsen says.

"We started with a founding vision: 'to provide an urban community, in a suburban location, offering a vibrant, dynamic environment for people to work, shop, learn, play, stay healthy and live — in essence, a place of great identity and pride for all citizens of Calgary,'" he says. "There is no singular element that is more important than another. The whole of Seton is greater than the sum of the parts."

The ultimate vision and the vision Brookfield Residential has had since the beginning of planning stages, in 1999, is to provide an urban community in a suburban location — in essence, downtown for southeast Calgary. Area structure and land-use plans were approved by the city of Calgary in 2004 with a 15-year plan to construct the community, which is set on 365 acres.

"The whole of Seton, with its variety of uses and the connections between these uses, will create the sense of place," Paulsen says.

Built around Calgary's new South Health Campus, the plans include:

Over 2.5 million square feet of office and retail space;

- A 16-acre central park;
- A public library;
- A public high school;
- A Cineplex theater;
- A hotel;
- 1,300 condo residences;
- A 300-unit nursing home;
- An assisted-living project;
- An active main street; and
- A regional recreation center.

The entire area is to be serviced by convenient transportation options, such as light-rail transit with the future Green Line. With a dynamic, downtown-like core that can serve neighboring communities that combine for a population of 120,000 people, the developer expects the total population will make it the equivalent of Alberta's third-largest city and one with Canada's youngest average-age population.

"We anticipate job growth will come in the early days through health care, pharmaceutical or wellness-related companies," he says. "In time, Seton's amenities will attract other employers looking for an alternative to downtown Calgary."

Seton is currently around 20 percent complete and will continue to take shape over the next 10 to 15 years.

Already nearing completion is the Seton Professional Centre (SPC). With experienced general contractor **Bird Construction**, it is planned and designed to be an important component of the community's commercial spaces.

The SPC will provide Class A commercial medical office spaces, which are considered the highest-quality space on the market with state-of-the-art facilities, top-notch fixtures, amenities and excellent accessibility according to Baldwin Asala, project manager with Bird. The building was thoughtfully designed by Gibbs Gage Architects from the ground up while taking full cognizance of the concept and its connectedness to the general Seton development.

The building has two below-grade parkade floors for approximately 200 cars and splits into two buildings with three above-grade structural steel floors with concrete toppings, a mechanical penthouse floor, and an exterior elevated precast parking structure in the courtyard. Each building has a street entrance on the northeast and northwest corners of the site, while a breezeway between the buildings connects Front Street to courtyard parking in the rear, which opens up to other areas of the development.

The exterior facade is a combination of glass, white spandrel glass, composite metal panels in soft off-white and rich blue colors for recesses enhanced by LED lighting and rich black stone for shafts and end walls.

"The material contrast will be tender and complementary to its environment with a style of tranquil elegance that is consistent with the entire Brookfield development at Seton," Asala says.

Asala credits Bird's experienced site supervision and leadership blended with talent from trusted subcontractors for keeping construction — starting in November 2014 with a target completion date of June 2016 — on schedule.

"It is always about branding, directly or indirectly, for our clients," Asala says. "They are always looking for ways to differentiate themselves from the competition so that their branding strategy influences what and how we build for them.

"We try to capture the intention of the brand into the process either through a design/build method or a stipulated sum agreement process," he adds. "We always make sure that the brand is in the space which connects them client to the customer."

Meeting those goals is about getting the details right, Asala says.

"It has always been and will always be about details," he says. "At Bird, we take pride in our attention to detail and our pursuit of innovative solutions. Our commitment to a philosophy that puts people at the center of our work fosters a deep sense of community."



The SPC highlights one of Bird's core strengths: a high sense of detail from project inception to completion.

Keeping the project moving forward with such broad goals requires ongoing focus, Paulsen says, as well as teamwork.

"In any project, there are a multitude of participants who enable the project to move ahead," he says. "In the early days of planning, we worked collaboratively with the City of Calgary to achieve what, at that time, was one of the most diverse and complex land-use plans ever put together in Calgary."

Alberta Health Services was also a major participant by bringing the South Health Campus to Seton, he says.

"A significant amount of planning and cooperation was required to enable this large facility to fit in appropriately with our vision," Paulsen says. "The Alberta Health Region was and still is an excellent partner to work with. Our architects, planners, tenants and builders also all contribute to the vision."

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