

City, meet water.



LEAN BACK AND BE THEIR GUEST

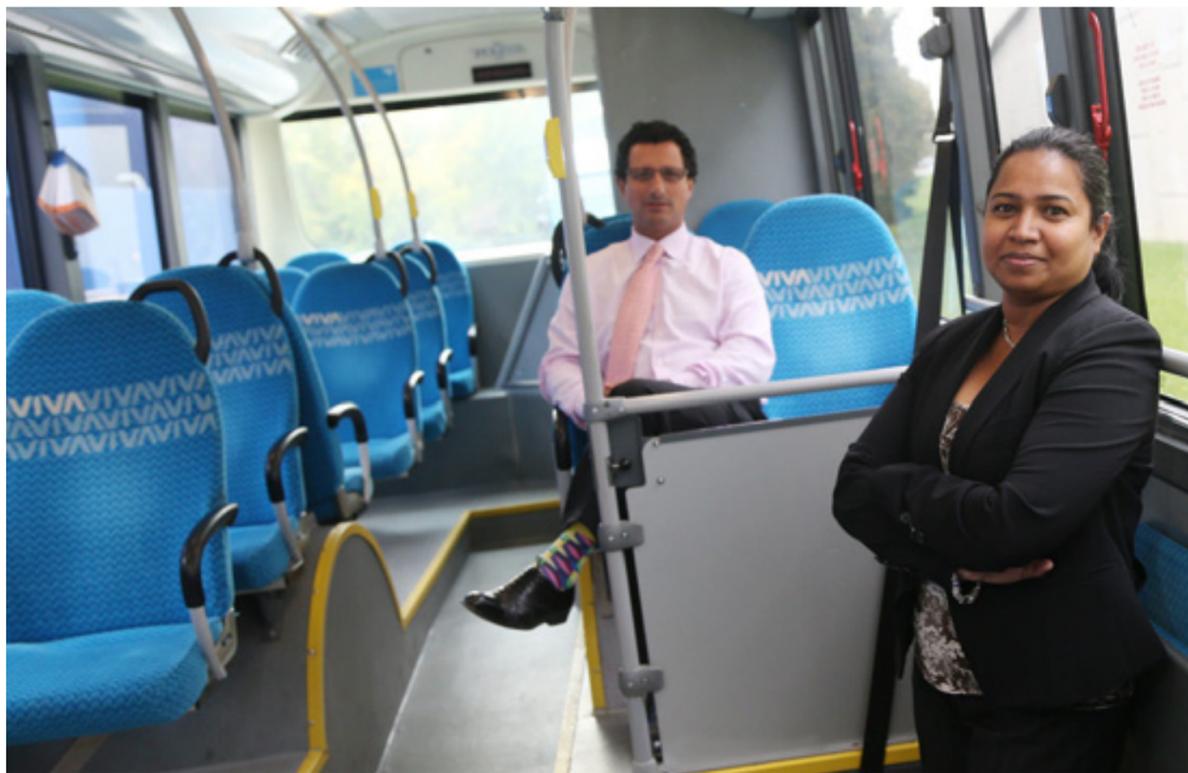
Famous Eames lounge chair a product of family pride, **H12**

NEW IN HOMIES & CONDOS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2013 SECTION H

CE ON2

When transit opens doors



RENÉ JOHNSTON/TORONTO STAR

Vincy Chakkalal bought her condo at Centro Square, Woodbridge, because of transit accessibility. Liberty Development senior vice-president Marco Filice, rear, says, "Every one of our developments under construction right now is within 50 feet of a bus."

Condo owner bought on new route that encouraged Liberty to build

RYAN STARR
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Vincy Chakkalal doesn't own a car.

So when the Woodbridge resident recently went condo shopping, it was a top priority for her that the building be close to transit options.

"That's my means of getting around, whether I go shopping or go to work," says Chakkalal, who works in early childhood education.

Her must-have was met when a friend told her about Centro Square, Liberty Development's two-tower project at Weston Rd. and Hwy. 7.

"I'll step out of my condo and the bus stop will be right there."

VINCY CHAKKALAKAL
HOMEBUYER,
CENTRO SQUARE

Centro Square will be located near two major transit lines currently under construction: the York Region's Viva express bus Rapidway, a dedicated bus lane that will run down the median of Hwy. 7 and stop at Weston Rd; and the expanded TTC Spadina subway line, which will extend north to the new Vaughan Metropolitan Centre station, being built just east of Centro Square.

"It'll be a prime location for transit," says Chakkalal, who ended up buying a 600-square-foot, one-bedroom-plus-den suite. Now selling for its second phase, available Centro Square units range from 540 square feet to 1,140 square feet and prices start at about \$270,000. "I'll step out of my condo and the bus stop will be right there."

TRANSIT continued on H8

> LIVING GREEN: ONE IN A SERIES

No corners, less energy used in their round house

CAROLA VYHNAK
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

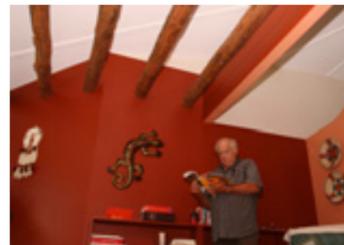
PERTH, ONT.—Ian MacDonald not only thinks outside the box, he builds outside the box.

"I don't like houses with square corners," says the proud owner of a round home — built from a prefab kit — where he and his wife Patricia have lived for three years.

The self-taught builder wanted the freedom "to step out of conformity and tradition, and use my creativity." Enter the orb, which not only opens up design possibilities by eliminating angles, it's also the most energy-efficient shape for a building, according to Deltec Homes, the North Carolina company that made their kit.

MacDonald's vision for a spherical space began to take shape after he saw an ad in a magazine on log homes. Which his wife vetoed. Intrigued, the couple visited Deltec's factory and model home in Asheville, N.C., where they were "amazed" at the way the panelized building system was created.

ROUND HOUSE continued on H19



Round-home builder Ian MacDonald in his "casita," a den inspired by American southwest architecture.

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» HOMES & CONDOS



Centro Square, in Woodbridge, will have a stop for Viva's Rapidway dedicated bus line at the front door.

In 905, easy access to transit a key feature

TRANSIT from HI

"So I won't have to travel far and I won't have to worry about heavy traffic and congestion, and it'll make it convenient for people to come visit me."

Liberty Development has made transit accessibility a key factor in its forward-focused development strategy. "Every one of our developments under construction right now is within 50 feet of a bus or potential subway line," says the company's senior vice-president, Marco Filice, noting that more and more buyers in the 905 are seeking condos that offer transit access.

"There's a younger generation of buyers who have an interest in sustainability and may not own a car," he says. "And there's also the move-down generation, who may have a car but they might want to leave it underground and take the bus or subway to a restaurant or to go shopping."

"So the fact we can provide them with transit access at their doorstep is a huge plus," adds Filice. "That choice has really been missing in the 905."

Liberty's transit-oriented approach is aligned with the goals of York Region, which has been promoting a shift away from sprawling lowrise

development and toward the intensification of its existing urban areas.

"Everything we're doing here (with transit) is about creating a framework that invites place-making, and supports the transition from being a suburban community to a more urban community," explains York Region Rapid Transit Corp. president Mary-Frances Turner.

York Region is predicted to grow by half a million people over the next two decades, she notes, and much of that growth will be concentrated, by design, along the Hwy. 7 corridor.

So having a corresponding transit network to service this intensified development will be key to ensuring future sustainability of the region.

"Development and transit aren't things that just happen beside each other in a random fashion," Turner says. "We have to be thinking about this holistically."

In Toronto, the promise of a new transit line triggered the development of 155 Redpath, a 36-storey, 470-unit project near Mt. Pleasant Rd. and Eglinton Ave. E. Available suites, 396 sq. ft. to 1,403 sq. ft., start at \$209,900 and go to over \$1 million.

The condo's proximity to the new Eglinton Crosstown LRT line has, in turn, played a significant part in attracting buyers. "There are lots of great sites around Toronto, but not a lot of them that have access to a 19-kilometre-long LRT line, which connects to mass transit that lets you travel anywhere in the city," boasts Todd Cowan, a managing partner with CD Capital, the firm developing 155 Redpath in partnership with Freed Development.

"The transit options open the project up to a whole group of buyers who don't live by the car."

Transit-oriented developments are also more alluring to renters, whether they're cash-strapped students or professionals just starting out in their careers. For the typical city-dwelling renter, car ownership simply isn't an option, so being near transit becomes essential.

And any condo that's attractive to renters is attractive to investors, notes Peter Freed, the co-developer of 155 Redpath. "When investors are thinking about making an investment, transit is a major part of that decision," he says.

"If a project is not near transit it might not even be worth considering."

For Aura, the 78-storey mega-condo that's nearing completion at the corner of Yonge and Gerrard Sts. in downtown Toronto, a direct connection to the TTC's subway system drove the project's success.

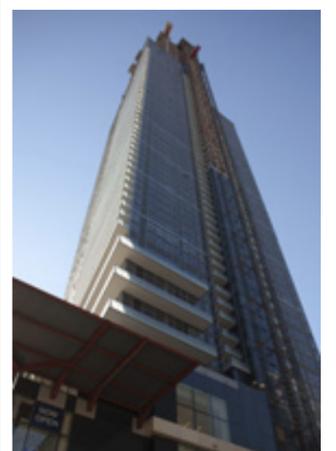
"Transit access is definitely one of the main reasons why people are choosing to buy here," says Riz Dhanji, vice-president of sales and marketing for Canderele, the developer of the landmark project, which will be the tallest residential tower in the country when it's completed next year.

(Plans call for Aura's underground to eventually be tied into the city's PATH network, as well.)

When it comes to sustainable urban design, it doesn't get much better than having Canada's tallest condo tower located right on top of a subway line. Available suites range from 1,458-sq.-ft. executive suites to 3,055-sq.-ft. penthouses, \$1.2 million to \$3.7 million. (Aura's top floor is an 11,370-sq.-ft. penthouse, \$18.5 million.)

"To increase the amount of people living downtown and to reduce sprawl, intensification above subways and other major transit nodes is critical," Dhanji says.

"So for a tall tower with close to 1,000 suites and more than 2,000 people living there, this location couldn't have been more ideal. What better way to have a majority of those people taking transit on a daily basis?" "That's just smart city planning."



Aura condos, Canada's largest residential tower being built at Yonge and Gerrard Sts., is right on the Yonge subway line.

Grand Opening

This Weekend!

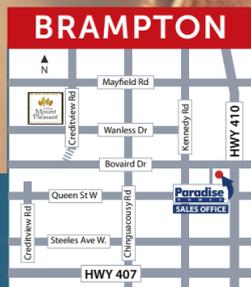
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