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Saturday, May 18th, 2024



## Base31 development plans come with many questions from residents

[Administrator](#) | Oct 27, 2023 | [Comments 14](#)



### Story and photos by Sharon Harrison

Base31 developers expect shovels in the ground in spring 2025, beginning what they hope is the first of 7,500 units spanning a 25-year-plus timeframe around the old army camp formerly known as Loch Sloy.

Presented at a public information meeting Wednesday evening was an outline of Base31's proposed re-development plans for its 750-acre (304 hectare) site located at 343 County Road 22.

Questions and concerns raised by residents were wide-ranging, and included connectivity to Picton Main Street, transportation options, water servicing, affordable housing and rental options, possible site contamination, as well as how thousands of new residents will find doctors and dentists.

Hosted by Base31's developer and agents, the presentation at the Prince Edward Community Centre in Picton was accompanied by a few information boards displayed at the front of the room, along with representatives who took questions before and after the presentation.

An official plan amendment application has been filed by the developers that they hope will facilitate the development of the massive site to a year-round destination arts and cultural commercial hub.

Representing the applicant, consultant Eric Turcotte with Turcotte Strategies, an urban planner and urban designer, gave an overview of the concept and the vision of the plan, as well as talking about the official plan amendment.

"The plan is to move in the spring to start developing the draft plan," said Turcotte, which he said means addressing the layout, dividing the land and defining parts.

He said the first phase of development (Village A) is north of Kingsley Road where they anticipate about 350 units.

"In the base itself, in the revitalization area, 100 rental units within that area, and as well that includes five per cent of affordable housing" (he noted they are looking at five per cent of the entire build to be affordable housing).

"Following that, the idea, and the goal, would be to start construction in the spring of 2025, which is a fairly quick timeline, and that would be before our first phase of development."

Turcotte emphasized they would be accommodating a wide range of opportunities, including housing for seniors, special needs and seasonal workers among them, with a variety and range of sizes and types to include affordable rental, different kinds of ownership opportunities, short-term housing, family-sized homes, homes for seniors as well as apartments, townhouses, and so on.

He described it as "an interconnected open space network, and a range of residential, non-residential, and cultural opportunities on full municipal services".

"The idea is not to have one size for all, for everyone," said Turcotte. "In the villages, is a place we say a wide, diverse range of housing types, such as rental, townhouses, condo, what we are hoping is to create a very, very wide range of housing opportunity within the County."

The lands in question (formerly those known as the Camp Picton and Picton Airport site, and more recently as the Loch-Sloy Business Park) are bordered to the west by a steep escarpment leading to Marsh Creek, to the north by Picton Heights and the Macaulay Mountain Conservation Area, to the east by Clarke Road, and to the south by a wooded slope that leads to County Road 10.

Turcotte reminded that the site contains 25-30 per cent open (green) space.

The 70-acre revitalization district, which currently occupies many of the barrack buildings with retail and businesses, will continue fostering its revitalization, growing its economic development, continue its renovation and refurbishment, etc. and will be the site's "cultural heart".



A question session followed the presentation which saw a good selection of detailed questions and concerns raised.

Issues included the removal of the airport, what transportation options were being considered (such as transit), to asking about whether there was enough water to service the site, and a push for more affordable rental housing options to cater to the County's low-income population (where it was noted a 1,000 people were on a wait list – with a seven-year wait), among many other questions.

"Is there enough water to service Base31's development plans for the 7,500 units, or only the initial 350 units, and where is it coming from?" asked Dorothy Bothwell.

She also suggested increasing the complement of affordable housing from the suggested five per cent, to 10 per cent or more, and over the entire site, not just the CIHA (Community Infrastructure and Housing Accelerator) phase.

Steve Willis, with consulting firm Stantec, spoke to the newly-minted CIHA program which came into effect in 2022 with Bill 109 which Base31's development plans hope to take advantage of the expedited process.

"Municipalities in Ontario have very few tools in the tool box that they can use to encourage land owners, and people who are building projects, to do affordable housing projects or other things early in the process," explained Willis.

He said the County has made the decision, because of the urgent need for affordable housing, and the particular lack of rental housing in the community, to try to encourage an early delivery on a small portion of the site for "the heritage restoration efforts, and also the building of affordable housing".

Willis further explained the new tool allows the municipality to request an order from the minister of municipal affairs and housing that simply speeds up the planning and approvals process.

The CIHA portion of land however only applies to 30 hectares of the site, "and that is because we are trying to ensure that should this be approved, some of the earliest development includes affordable housing projects".

The idea also came up during questions whether Base31's developers would help pay for the water infrastructure, where Bothwell noted right now the developers would only have to pay a connection charge since a development charge does not exist for Picton (as it does for Wellington).

"How do we get more money than a connection charge for the water when Picton doesn't have an area-specific development charge for water and wastewater?" asked Bothwell.

Willis responded to the water upgrades question by saying, "for the first phase (which represents roughly 10 per cent of the whole site), there is an interim servicing agreement with regards to water and sewer available with the improvements that the applicant is willing to pay for to bring to the site".

He further noted that the balance of the site (approx. 90 per cent) has to wait for the other County regional water strategies and master servicing plan to be done to know how they are going to be serviced, "and they can't proceed until that is completed, so it is tied to that."

Addressing questions about whether the airport will be removed from their plans, Willis confirmed, "The aerodrome will not remain".

"Part of it is, there is a need for the revitalization of the district, and it's very important in terms of what we bring to Base31 and the community, and is helping to serve as many people as possible," he said. "If we remain with the airport in place, we would not be able to provide all those amenities, housing and services, and jobs."

One audience member noted how the airport is of historical significance, "and is actually the reason that Camp Picton was created, for the training", where she wanted to know what was being done to honour and acknowledge the critical part of the history of the airport.

Several residents expressed concern about how Picton Main Street and the Base31 re-development plans would relate to one other and how they would connect, where Turcotte said they want to support Main Street.

"It is not to take the life out of Main Street, absolutely not, we want to support it," said Turcotte, as another audience member brought forward a neat idea.

"What would it take to get developers to put a funicular from the parking lot on Main Street up here, big enough to take wheelchairs and strollers and people, and do something creative, dynamic, that actually allows a true flow and would probably be a better 'attraction'," she asked.

"Are we going to see something that is so creative that really addresses the people in the Heights who don't have cars who need to get downtown, back and forth, that really integrates with the build vision?"

One gentleman pointed out with the 7,500 units proposed, it would mean an increase of about two-and-a half times the current population of Picton.

"If you try to drive down Main Street, and actually use Main Street during the summer, you know it's not too easy to do that as there's a lot of traffic."

"How do you think about how a population of 10,000 in the context of an existing population of about 4,000?" asked another.

Member of the public, Don Wilford, prefaced his liveable and sustainable living commentary by using the words of Swedish environmental activist, Greta Thunberg, by saying, "How dare you come before this community tonight and talk about development over the next 25 years and not mention climate change. How dare you."

The public meeting was an information meeting only, with no decisions being made at this time.

All planning documentation relating to the proposed Base31 re-development can be found on the County's website.



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-  **Fred says:**  
[Monday, October 30th, 2023 at 6:11 pm](#)

I fail to see any details that Base 31 is only in it for the money. They have stressed community engagement and betterment from the onset. The opposition to their proposal at this stage is over the top.

-  **Dan says:**  
[Monday, October 30th, 2023 at 8:45 am](#)

Has base31 considered a monorail? It could loop around the county at all of the spots that tourists like and drop everyone back off safely at their Air BNB at the base.

This doesn't help the county and the suggestion that more people need to come here is ludicrous.

-  **DeeDee says:**

Monday, October 30th, 2023 at 6:59 am

With recent reports of coyotes entering residential areas and developments from Bird House City east to residential areas east of County Road 8, and the subsequent killing of pets and small animals in their fenced yards, one concern not mentioned is the forced migration of wildlife into the urban area.

The increase of predators into the town of Picton is a safety concern when development of fallow areas adjacent to urban centres occurs.

Of course, developers' goal is financial gain – no doubt. But, we cannot have our cake and eat it too. They have planned for mixed housing, apartments, semis and single residences. But what of the softer services?

The last family diner on Mains Street has closed. BMO is moving to the outskirts of Picton to the FOODLAND complex. Main Street storefronts are now rife with real estate offices and stores catering to the higher wealth demographic immigrating to PEC and culinary venues that are far out of reach of the long term residents.

If this is to be a community, will there be retained outlets such as grocery stores or restaurants on site that will serve "ALL" demographics?

It is important that we remain diligent that we protect our cultural heritage by ensuring we are telling our story and not allowing the narrative to be significantly altered to accommodate a vision. This can be assisted through conversation with the developer and the municipality.

On a positive note, this development will not be gobbling up our prime agricultural land, like on the Loyalist Parkway. Perhaps our municipal leaders can give more consideration to the protection of farmland now, since this development should provide a supply of homes that could negate the need to build on prime ag and wetlands.



4. *Chuck says:*

Sunday, October 29th, 2023 at 9:45 pm

Many do not believe that scenario. We are growing and are adapting accordingly. Municipal governance was never meant to provide cheap housing on the taxpayers back. This is not a County issue, it is Country wide.



5. *Angela says:*

Sunday, October 29th, 2023 at 8:55 pm

They are trading on the history angle to get what they really want – money. If this development proceeds it will irrevocably change the face of the town. If the population swells as projected how do we accommodate it? The new hospital will be obsolete almost before it opens. Fire and policing services will be inadequate and there will be no doctors to provide health care for the newcomers.



6. *Gary says:*

Sunday, October 29th, 2023 at 5:51 pm

Seems a lot of naysayers when Base 31 is trying to present a reasonable path forward. I think the connection to our Downtown is a great feature.



7. *Joanne says:*

Sunday, October 29th, 2023 at 9:40 am

They talk as though they are actually doing something great for the people of Prince Edward County. They are building thousands of houses for profit nothing more! Don't be fooled, it will be at the expense (and detriment) of all of the residents of PEC. Our municipal government needs to wake up!!



8. *Sandra Thompson says:*

Saturday, October 28th, 2023 at 4:45 pm

I am concerned regarding the water as for years and years now there is no town water on Loyalist Parkway just down from the June Motel I'm not understanding where the fairness is. Also every time there is a new build in town they say it will be low income housing but that never happens



9. *Mike Barnes says:*

Saturday, October 28th, 2023 at 7:08 am

I mean, what could possibly go wrong?  
Give power to one company over the majority of the population?  
Ignore our Official Plan?  
Risk health on contaminated ground?  
Destroy part of our heritage?

Yes please!

All in the name of housing and jobs. And 95% of the population can totally afford new houses. So take advantage of a government green light and go go go! That has NEVER turned out bad in our past experience.



10. *Mike says:*

Saturday, October 28th, 2023 at 6:23 am

5% will be affordable housing? That number should be 60%, and zero short term rentals should be allowed.

There is a housing shortage. This development in the form they are looking for it to be in will do nothing to help with housing in the County. You already know the homes that will be sold will be in the 500-800k range for the cheap homes, and over 1 million for the most expensive ones. And you know the rent will be based off the current over inflated rent prices in the area. I mean, when Fairway apartments go for almost 2k for a 2 bedroom, you know the rent is too damn high.

It's just more gentrification of the county, and another way to drive the locals out. The owners of Base 31 only care about how many more dollars they can put in their pocket, not about the residents of PEC.



11. *SS says:*

Friday, October 27th, 2023 at 9:53 am

It's good to see some details emerging about the roadmap for this new set of developments.


I was not at the meeting, but I was wondering if anyone asked how heavy trucks and other vehicle traffic, plan to get to and from the "... first phase of development (Village A) is north of Kingsley Road where they anticipate about 350 units ... "

If I'm a construction worker and live anywhere other than the Heights, I have to get to / from the work site.


And, for construction material deliveries (cement, stone, lumber, etc.) all that material needs to get to / from the work site.

The main accesses, it seems to me, will be from either via Union St. and the Church St. Hill, or Highway 22 from County Rd 10. Would be interesting to hear from residents of this area, as well as possible suppliers of construction material.


Pretty big vision, but to be fair, they are saying it's a 25-year thing. Good on countylive.ca for the coverage.

12.  SM says:  
[Friday, October 27th, 2023 at 9:14 am](#)

As Mr Dylan sang, "The times they are a changing". What once was will never be again. With that in mind, one should look to the positive aspects of this proposal. Unlike other development proposals, this one actually includes a plan to include affordable housing. This one is working to preserve existing heritage. Will there be issues? Of course. Look at their plans and their application. They seek to integrate with the community unlike other builders who put up "Little boxes made of ticky tacky" (credit Pete Seeger).

13.  KB says:  
[Friday, October 27th, 2023 at 5:45 am](#)

Re: "If we remain with the airport in place, we would not be able to provide all those amenities, housing and services, and jobs."  
Using serious social issues as a give and take, a bargaining tool to get what they want, to sway your mind. If you have this, then you can't have that.  
Offering something and then putting conditions on it.  
This is the pitch that uses one offer to cancel another.... There is always a choice. This is about base 31 making \$\$\$\$ . I need to see more facts, less marketing.  
Show me, don't tell me. I want to support this but I'm having troubles with commitment and credibility.

14.  JennyD says:  
[Friday, October 27th, 2023 at 5:32 am](#)

Smoke and mirrors – hitting all the right words, such as affordable housing, revitalization, redevelopment and so on. Don't be fooled – base 31 is not doing all of this to be nice and helpful and I don't get the feeling they care whether the community is thriving or not. What I do see is a lot of pride, greed, wrath, envy, lust, gluttony and sloth.

## How Would Different Dog ...



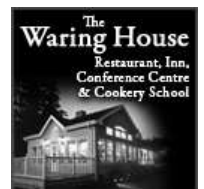
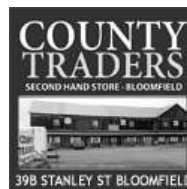
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