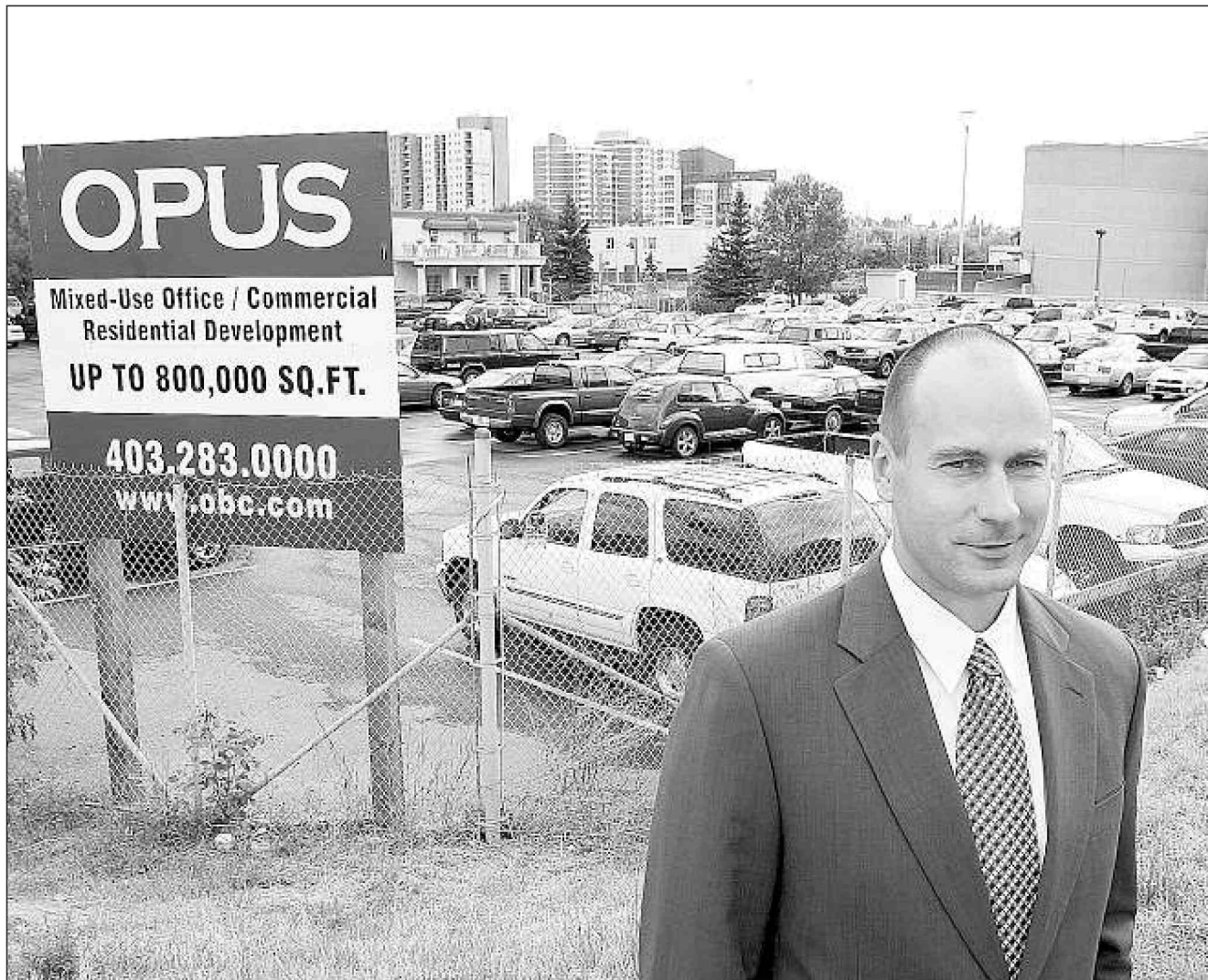


DOWNTOWN REAL ESTATE



Greg Fulmes, Calgary Herald

Brad Krizan, director of leasing for OPUS Building Canada, at the site of the planned 850,000-square-foot office and condo development on the eastern edge of downtown, which will consist of two high-rise buildings.

Tower project set to kick-start East Village

Development planned for police association land

MARIO TONEGUZZI
CALGARY HERALD

A planned development to include up to 850,000 square feet of office, residential and retail space will transform the east end of downtown Calgary and serve as a gateway to the future development of the East Village area.

The Herald has learned that **OPUS Building Canada** is planning to construct a 17-storey commercial tower of 380,000 square feet for office and retail use as well as a 17-to-19 storey residential condo tower in a downtown block currently occupied by the **Calgary Police Association** office and parking lot — between 3rd Street S.E. and Riverfront Avenue and 6th Avenue and 5th Avenue S.E.

Construction for both projects could begin as early as the first quarter of 2007, with occupancy slated for 2010. The commercial tower would be built on the west side of the block, with the residential tower on the east side. The block takes in an area of just over 118,000 square feet.

Brad Krizan, director of leasing for OPUS Building Canada, said there is "huge opportunity and potential in this East Village area."

"We're really on the cusp of that," said Krizan. "I'd call this the transition zone between the downtown and East Village. Development is starting across the street with Bow Valley College doing their redevelopment and that work is going to start this year and

the whole flavour of the area is going to change.

"East Village is likely going to develop in a bit of a domino effect. As you keep moving each block east, you have more and more new development and new projects. This is the gateway into the East Village. So it's really the prime entry point."

Richard White, executive director of the Calgary Downtown Association, said the development will "certainly be catalytic."

"Everybody's waiting for something to happen in East Village and so I think for them (OPUS) to take that site and do something with it is very exciting," said White.

With future plans for a new Bow Valley College, a new University of Calgary urban campus and a new Calgary Public Library in the vicinity, the OPUS project is going to be "part of a transformation" in the area.

"This is a private sector initiative," added White. "One of the things that this distinguishes itself from, say, the library and Bow Valley College (is) that this is a private-sector initiative. It will create a new tax base for the area."

He said the key for the eastside area is for it to be developed by a number of different developers and developed over a 10-year period so "that it doesn't have a certain homogeneity to it."

"If we take and create every building

that looks the same and it all gets built within five years, it will have the sameness of a suburban office park or a suburban development because everything gets built with the same materials, it has the same look, it has the same sheen to it," said White.

"What you really want is for every block to have a slightly different character to it. It can be linked and that's what I think the East Village plan will do. Each block needs to have at least two uses. Ideally, it would have three uses — a public use, a residential use and an office use. That would be ideal. That means somebody needs to be there, has a reason for being there, 24/7. . . . That's when you get urban vitality. You don't want to create an office ghetto. You don't want to create a residential ghetto."

Krizan said the office tower would have street-level retail and on the second level as well. The office component can serve either institutional uses like government or the private sector, or a combination of the two. It will be connected to the Plus-15 system. A conceptual design is currently being developed.

"(The entire project) meets a bunch of different criteria. It spreads out the office workers in the downtown core. It creates again another residential opportunity for people to live and work in the core. And it's really close to transit and access," said Krizan.

"With all the different development projects that are happening, the location of the core shifts around a little bit. You've got more and larger-scale projects developing on the eastern side of downtown, which is effectively pulling the core eastward."

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**BRAD KRIZAN,
DIRECTOR OF
LEASING FOR
OPUS BUILDING
CANADA**