

Riverview poised for significant growth

HF - Development

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Mayor Bruce Fitch touts his town's plans for future development and investment potential

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TIMES & TRANSCRIPT STAFF

Tyrene B. "Ty" Cahoon, builder of DVD factories, arranges to meet with Mayor Bruce Fitch at Riverview Town Hall. The Fitch family van is equipped with automatic seat belts which only Bruce can control. Ty soon realizes that until Bruce is finished his pitch, he ain't going anywhere, except west on Coverdale Road.

Ty Cahoon: Well, Bruce, tell me a little bit about your town, which I hear might become a city one day.

Bruce Fitch: (waiting to gey in Riverview Fire Department vehi-



Riverview Mayor Bruce Fitch says his town has everything a new investor could want.

Selling our cities

In a three-part series, the mayors of Moncton, Riverview and Dieppe were asked to deliver a sales pitch to "Ty Cahoon," a fictional businessman, in an attempt to lure him to invest money in their communities. Today we present the first part of the series as Riverview Mayor Bruce Fitch makes his case.

Mayor outlines Riverview advantages

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TC: How do you get along with the two cities here in the metro area?

BF: Many who live in Riverview shop and work in Moncton and Dieppe so they are definitely 'selling points' for us, but sometimes they overshadow our own large commercial area. I'll introduce you to Sherril Wilson, president of RBIC or Riverview Business Improvement Corporation, and she'll tell you about its 150 business members — the downtown, so to speak, of Riverview.

TC: OK, but where are we going now?

BF: We'll go west to the limit, then back to the east end to show you that development is happening all over town. Now here along Coverdale you're seeing high-density apartments, supermarkets, banks, a strip mall, but let's go down Biggs Drive, because I want you to see our Byron Dobson Arena. Two ice surfaces, Ty, and booked solid, but even during weekend tournaments the 'family skate' times is sacred and the 'adult skate' has live music for three dollars. Who can beat a deal like that?

TC: Who indeed? What else you got?

BF: The Riverview Tennis Club is here, a special, spring clay tennis surface unique to New Brunswick, lawn bowling, Harold Page Field for soccer and baseball, and hey, dogled races during our winter carnival. You sure don't see that everywhere. (We continue west on Coverdale, then head back and swing south on Trites Road and east on White Pine, touring several large and expanding subdivisions, until we reach 'Central Riverview' in the vicinity of a large, mostly empty but fully-serviced stretch of land.)

TC: Nice tour. Bruce. Your point?

BF: I have a friend who used to live in Toronto, where he fought traffic for at least two hours a day. Now he lives in Riverview, and in the summer he does his laps in the morning on the way to the golf course, plays for two hours and is still in the office by 8:30 a.m.

TC: There's a long town in terms of area. Ty — the longest commute can be 20 minutes from one end to the other, but the average is seven minutes. If you live anywhere in Central Riverview, by the way, your kids can walk to school — elementary, middle and high. The high school is also home to the Riverview Aquatic Centre, and people from all three communities go there.

I also wanted to show you that ITC and Minacs are two call centres that just moved to town — 1,000 jobs in all. We were able to provide for them, and you won't even be competing with them with your wage scales. I think we have ample workforce to fill those vacancies of yours.

And even if you choose Moncton or Dieppe for your factory, there are good reasons to point your people here to live — a good mix of entry level, middle and high-end housing, a tax rate 10 cents cheaper than Moncton's, and notice the pride of ownership in all these neighbourhoods! Our people take good care of their homes, and you'll see that pride spill over into your workplace.

TC: You're not even going to try for the factory?

BF: We're now in Findlay Park, an area poised for growth. It's an integrated zone which can take in your category of business, but also professional offices, retail, high density residential, and it's all pre-zoned. As you can see we've already got a Subway and Dollar Store here. You're on the cutting edge, Ty!

We're going to continue on now to Phase 4 of McAllister Park subdivision, which borders Findlay Park on one side and the golf course on another . . .

TC: Right, the Moncton Golf Club. I've heard that course is getting a little um, 'mature'.

BF: Interesting you should say that. The club owns a lot of extra land and is now working with the Clayton Park development people in Halifax on 150 housing lots in McAllister Park. The sales will help redevelop the course and provide the town with homes backing onto several of the fairways. It's the latest thing.

TC: Very impressive, Bruce!

BF: It is, but I also have a surprise for you.

TC: So tell me.

BF: Before I do, let me say that about two kilometres south of where we are now (Pine Glen at White Pine) we're planning an east-west connector road. Coverdale Road takes 25,000 vehicles a day, and this new road will swing behind the town to collect traffic there and have some of it flow backward instead of all down to Coverdale.

My surprise, Ty, is one of the biggest capital infrastructure projects in the Greater Moncton area. When Dartmouth and Fredericton got their bridges completed their industrial, commercial and residential all expanded dramatically. That's what we're looking at too. We expect our new bridge to be completed in two years and we think the best part of the east-west connector can be done in five.

(From Pine Glen/White Pine Bruce swings back northward on Pine Glen to Coverdale, then east to the far reaches of the town at Bridgedale. Bruce talks non-stop the entire time, waiting to motorists, bragging up the golf course, describing copious kilometres of groomed ski and all-season walking trails, the readiest access in Metro to Fundy Park and The Rocks, and so on. Finally we swing back west to the old Gungnissville Bridge.)

TC: Lovely bridge, Bruce.

BF: Remember, the new one is ready in 2005. I won't take you across this one because we might lose a mirror.

TC: I hear that happens to the best of us.

BF: Whatever you do, don't talk with your hands!

TC: Ha! Say, how about a tax break or a grant for my factory? What can you do for me?

BF: I can come to your grand opening and cut the ribbon; a lot of people would be excited about that. But seriously, Ty, you go to the province for grants and, as for us, we have to pay for the water and services we provide to you and all other citizens of Riverview, so no, we can't give you a break on things like that.

TC: No harm in asking. Bruce I meant no offence.

BF: None taken . . . now this new bridge will be four-lane, with a large sidewalk connected to walking trail. It will finally alleviate the perception that it's hard to get across the river. The reality is seven or eight minutes on the worst day, but even that will be completely eliminated in 2005.

TC: From the look of this riverbank Riverview must be the seagull capital of the world.

BF: Now that the dump is covered there's nowhere for them to go! Our hope is to extend the bridge roadway south to connect with Pine Glen, because the ring road will eventually swing up behind the golf course and up behind Findlay Park.

TC: Hmmm . . . that will make it easier to get out of Findlay Park for shift changes.

BF: Yes, and cut the travel time to the highways for your parts shipments and product distribution.

TC: Me and the wife n' kids like to get out to the farmer's market back home in Truanto, to bad you don't have . . .

BF: Well it's funny you should mention that. There are two different markets in the area now and the original group is looking to come to Riverview to this site right here beside the old bridge.

Now, the new bridge will create synergy for the larger community in a positive way. Look at its proximity to the N.B. Trail, the downtown city market and so on.

Being attached to the trail system as it is, people on Saturday morning will go to the city market and then the farmer's market.

I just hope the provincial and federal governments will get on the bandwagon and not throw roadblocks up, because . . . hey! Did you see that RCMP cruiser go by? Who says they don't come to Riverview?

TC: Not me! Sum it all up for me Bruce.

BF: We feel that we deliver a high level of service and a high quality product which the residents appreciate. That makes for a happy community and proud citizens, with a sense of ownership and commitment. If you had a business here, you would become part of the family very quickly.

TC: Nice to meet you Bruce, thank you.

BF: Call any time.

Hey, Chief (turning to Ty, with meaningful expression) That's Doug Hamer, a lifelong resident of our town, Ty. I think city status is there for Riverview if we want it, though I'm getting some interesting feedback; long-term concerns like the potential effect on the tax rate and other associated costs.

A lot of people choose to live here just because of the small town feel and the family atmosphere. You go to the rink, you meet your neighbours, they don't 'turn over' twice a year. It's a very safe place. People here like to stop and talk on the street.

TC: Not too highfalutin'. BF: Absolutely right. On the other hand, Riverview was amalgamated from three smaller communities in 1972 and today, with 5,000 families and a population of 17,650, we are the biggest town in New Brunswick.

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