

# Grocery store opens at Capital Park in James Bay, library on deck

Carla Wilson / Times Colonist

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Rob Donovan of Magic Molly, a post-construction cleaning company, prepares the facade of the Red Barn Market at Capital Park in James Bay on Tuesday for its official opening today. Jan. 9, 2018  
Photograph By ADRIAN LAM, TIMES COLONIST

Shelves are stocked and produce is stacked for today's opening in James Bay of the Red Barn Market's seventh location in the capital region.

"We anticipate this is going to be a fairly busy store for us," Russ Benwell, a company partner, said Tuesday.

That's partly because the new 6,200-square-foot store on Menzies Street is within the mixed-use Capital Park development, home to 700 provincial employees so far, with more to move into offices currently under construction.

Benwell's also counting on foot traffic. A 7,150-square-foot library branch is slated to open in spring in Capital Park, just to the north of the grocery store.

Red Barn's new store features an extra-large deli, which is bigger by about one-third than at its other stores and designed to feed big lunch crowds.

It opens today at 8 a.m. on its first day. Regular hours are 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week.

A total of 60 staff are working there, with 20 of those full-time, said Benwell, who owns Red Barn with partners Peter Hanson, Ashley Bourque and Duncan Davies. Scott Downton, who has 21 years experience as a Walmart manager, is store manager.

Vancouver-based Concert Properties and Victoria's Jawl Properties are partners in the 6.2-acre Capital Park project. It includes about 240,000 square feet of offices, rental and strata homes, commercial space and a central plaza on the site bordered by Superior, Michigan and Menzies streets behind the legislature.

By the end of 2020, all components of the development are expected to be completed, said Robert Jawl of Jawl Properties.

The first of two major office buildings is now occupied. About 700 provincial employees working for the Environment, and Children and Family Development ministries moved into 525 Superior St. in mid-September.

Three historic houses on the property have been restored and were occupied in September 2016. Another 53 new rental units on Menzies Street were rented in November.

The library — still to be named — will open next, with hiring to begin shortly.

Jennifer Windecker, director of public services at the Greater Victoria Public Library, said the branch has a "modern design and décor that is complemented by floor-to-ceiling windows.

"There is an abundance of natural light," she said. "I think the community will feel at home in this branch."

It will be open Monday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday hours will be consistent with the rest of the library system with openings from October to April.

Jawl said "it's nice to see [the project] start to come alive."

The Menzies Street frontage is "really our forward-facing link with the James Bay neighbourhood. So we are thrilled to see that become active and start serving as the amenity to the community that we really hope it will be."

The second phase of construction has started with the second office building at 545 Superior St., where half of the space will be taken up by provincial workers, Jawl said. The remaining space has not yet been spoken for. That office building, which includes commercial space, is expected to be ready in late 2019.

The site's central plaza is being built now and will include a retail pavilion with a cafe.

“In the second half of this year, construction will start on Capital Park’s final component of about 115 strata residential units, Jawl said. Plans call for eight townhouses, with the rest condominiums, running along Michigan Street.

[cjwilson@timescolonist.com](mailto:cjwilson@timescolonist.com)

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