

**developer - st. john**

# Atlantic Canada retail rising on the tide of Atlantica

**tn Troy Northrup****Northrup Group**

In Saint John, New Brunswick, an hour's drive from the border between New England and Canada, retail shopping is undergoing a transformation never seen before in this region. Led by local real estate developer Troy Northrup, an entirely new shopping experience is being created that will see the historical city of Saint John rapidly become "a drive-to destination, not a drive-through city." Located between the scenic Bay of Fundy, famous for its record high tides, and the beautiful Saint John River, the New Brunswick's largest urban population area is now the home of East Point Shopping, Atlantic Canada's first life style themed retail development.

The city of Saint John is strategically located in a region being promoted as "Atlantica," a commercial trading region beginning

in Atlantic Canada and reaching across the Canadian American border into the northeastern U.S. The Atlantica region is a natural north-south trade corridor for commercial goods, intellectual property, energy and tourism. Atlantic Canada is also home to two major seaports in Saint John and Halifax, and Saint John is rapidly building its reputation as a regional energy hub with its oil refining, liquefied natural gas and nuclear and thermal power generating capacity.

My latest retail development is located in the center of the largest single concentration of retail stores in Atlantic Canada. Situated on a commanding plateau overlooking the eastern portion of the city, hence the name East Point, the shopping destination is setting a new standard for development in the region. Following the trend in major American cities to open air lifestyle centers, we have taken the time to incorporate a number of lifestyle features into the east Point site to ensure that everyone visiting here will enjoy a truly unique shopping experience. There are numerous green treed islands throughout the parking areas, wide "Arizona styled"

sidewalks fronting the retail shops and custom lighting, park benches, planters and even cast iron bollards, "reminding us of Saint John's rich marine history."

The massive 80-acre site is being developed in stages with the first phase anchored by a Home Depot location and the recently opened second phase home to several fashion retail outlets including the first Urban Planet store in Atlantic Canada. A new Hilton Hampton Inn, currently under construction for an opening this fall, will cater to both retail shopping visitors and business clients. The development of phase three of the project will commence this year with announcements of additional stores and the construction of new buildings expected to start very shortly. The completion of the East Point development will increase the space in the immediate East Saint John shopping area to some 2.3 million s/f and Saint John will have the single largest concentration of retail shopping space in Atlantic Canada.

East Point, which sits atop a first of its kind underground water retention basin to control storm water runoff, was designed

and constructed to give shoppers the feeling of a community main street. Storefronts are highlighted with cultured stone and matching canopies to give what Northrup describes as "a welcoming community feeling" to the development. We estimate that landscaping costs are some four times the industry standard for this type of project and are confident that it will prove to be a wise investment for us and our tenants.

Saint John Mayor, Norm McFarlane shares the enthusiasm for the development. "This project raises the quality bar for retail development in our region. The Northrups are changing the shopping experience for those of us living and visiting in Atlantic Canada. It is tremendous to see the California/Arizona style open air shopping concept coming to our community and this will change the way people shop in our community".

Saint John itself is in the midst of a significant economic and social transformation. Thousands of new service sector jobs, a new liquefied natural gas terminal and pipeline, modernized thermal and nuclear power plants and the

pending construction of a second oil refinery are a few of the estimated \$25 billion in projects on the books for the city and immediate area. Steve Carson, the CEO of Enterprise Saint John, sees Saint John as the new "energy hub" for Atlantic Canada with the city's economic direction focusing on taking advantage of the Atlantica concept "a revived economic trading and business region stretching from the Canadian Atlantic Provinces across to the American New England states and down into the New York area."

There is a strong sense of pride in our city and as a citizen and developer I want to retain and build on this proud feeling that we see exhibited in our community in so many ways. Whether it is Atlantica, Atlantic Canada's Energy Hub or simply the economic transformation of Canada's oldest incorporated city, Northrup will be playing a key role in the future of Saint John.

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**Troy Northrup is the East Point developer for Northrup Group, Saint John, NB.**

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