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Healthy addition to downtown

Medical clinic, druggist to open in the Exchange

By: **Murray McNeill**
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JOHN WOODS / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS [Enlarge Image](#)

Clinic-One directors (from left) Robert Speirs, Peter Kaufmann, Ryan Chan, Kris Allen and Michael Stronger in front of their soon-to-be medical offices.

Another key service is about to be added to the downtown's Exchange District.

Two partners -- a pharmacist and a family physician -- have leased the main floor of the Maltese Cross Building at the corner of King Street and McDermot Avenue with the intention of opening a new walk-in clinic/pharmacy early in the new year.

"We're aiming for January," pharmacist Ryan Chan said, adding interior renovations are already well underway.

"It's going to be very rustic/contemporary. Lots of wood and stone."

Although there's just the two of them at the moment, Chan said a number of other health-care professionals are interested in joining the clinic. Hopefully, some or all of them will be on board by the time the clinic opens.

"It's going to be a team-work... or multidiscipline approach to health care," he said, but declined to reveal what kinds of other practitioners they are until and if deals are finalized.

Chan said as far as he can tell, Clinic-One will be the only medical clinic or pharmacy in the Exchange District. Although there are some on Portage Avenue and Isabel Street, they're outside the Exchange District boundaries.

"I see a lot of potential for a clinic in the area," he said, noting not only are more residents moving in, but a lot of people also work there.

"So I think there is a real need."

That view is shared by the two real estate agents involved in the leasing transaction -- CBRE Limited's Peter Kaufmann, who is the leasing agent for the building, and Shindico Realty Inc.'s Michael Stronger, who represented the Clinic-One partners.

Kaufmann said the Exchange District is finally starting to achieve the kind of critical mass needed to attract new services.

"You want neighbourhood services. That's a big thing," he said. "You don't have a truly livable community until you have a neighbourhood grocery store, a dry cleaners, a doctor's office, a dentist's office -- things like that. So to me, this is a wonderful thing."

Stronger predicted if Clinic-One is successful, other medical offices will soon move into the area.

"Our experience is that medical offices like to be surrounded by other medical offices," he said, because it draws patients to the area. "So I think it will certainly draw the interest of other medical-related services."

Kaufmann said the building's owners -- Winnipeg developers Mark and Shelley Buleziuk -- hope more health-care professionals move into their seven-storey heritage building.

Although two other tenants -- a screen-printing company and a promotional supplies firm -- currently lease the top six floors, Kaufmann said the second floor is expected to become available in the new year. And the hope is it can also be converted into medical offices.

He said the Buleziuks plan to redevelop the entire building.

The first step was to land a long-term, anchor tenant for the vacant main floor.

When the Buleziuks purchased the former warehouse a few years ago, their intention was to attract a retail tenant for the main floor -- maybe a restaurant or lounge -- and convert the other six floors into

apartments or condominiums.

But when they couldn't secure any parking stalls in the area, that plan was scuttled in favour of converting the upper floors into furnished offices.

A company they own -- Space2Work.com -- owns another boutique office building at 179 McDermot Ave., and it's fully leased. Kaufmann said the Buleziuks may still convert some of the upper floors into furnished rental offices if the existing tenants move out.

And they may still convert some of the space into residential condos if they can obtain parking spaces in the area.

The Maltese Cross Building is one of two downtown heritage building the Buleziuks are redeveloping. The other is the long-vacant Ikon Office Solutions building at 272 Main St., just south of Graham Avenue.

Kaufmann, who is also the leasing agent for that five-storey building, said the interior has been gutted, new elevators and windows have been installed, and they're almost finished pouring new concrete floors.

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Commercial real estate agent Robert Scaletta has changed addresses.

The veteran industrial sales and leasing specialist with CBRE Limited has left the firm to become manager, industrial properties for rival Shindico Realty Inc.

Since 2009, Scaletta has overseen the sale of more than 32 hectares of land to 20 different businesses in the Brookside Business Park, which is located within the CentrePort Canada development on the northwest edge of Winnipeg.

Know of any newsworthy or interesting trends or developments in the local office, retail, or industrial real estate sectors? Let real estate reporter Murray McNeill know at the email address below, or at 204-697-7254.

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