

Growing in the 'gateway'

Cambridge Properties plans retail project at Charlotte-Huntersville border

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HUNTERSVILLE – Cambridge Properties could start building a 21-acre retail project called Huntersville Market on the Charlotte-Huntersville border as soon as next spring.

It's a development that one project official says has taken five years to make happen, thanks in no small part to the complexities that come with being on the border.

The project would be at the intersection of Prosperity Church and Eastfield roads, which is shaping up to be a "real retail gateway" between the two municipalities, Cambridge Vice President Jay Priester said.

The Huntersville Market project, approved by the town of Huntersville in 2008, is in the final engineering stages, according to public records and Huntersville Senior Planner David Peete. Projects costs could not be determined before this edition went to press.

The first tenant in the project would be a pharmacy, which would occupy a prominent spot on the corner of the roads, Priester said. Until a lease is finalized, he said, he wouldn't name the pharmacy company.

For four other retail outlets, including a major tenant, would be added to the project, according to plans in public records.

The area, already home to several major housing developments, holds great promise for future retail and residential growth, Priester and Peete agreed.

The intersection has just been named the future site of one of Harris Teeter's new, upscale 201central stores, slated for an existing building at 103108 Eastfield Road, a former Lowes Foods store.

Eastfield Road forms the border between Huntersville and Charlotte. Cambridge's Huntersville Market project would go on the Huntersville side of the street, while the 201central is going across Eastfield on the Charlotte side.

Housing developments in Huntersville and Charlotte, including Olmstead, McGinnis Village, Eastfield Village, Highland Creek and Skybrook, surround the Huntersville Market site.

"This intersection has the real potential to become a gateway" to the fast-growing town of Huntersville, Priester said.

Potential future growth, Peete and Priester said, would take place north of the intersection in a largely undeveloped part of Huntersville and unincorporated Mecklenburg County farther to the north.

To facilitate that growth, developers in the area will be required to extend Prosperity Church Road northward as they develop.

“We get to go first,” Priester said.

Prosperity Church, which runs north-south, dead-ends into Eastfield, which runs diagonally from the southwest to the northeast to form a three-way intersection.

As part of the Huntersville Market project, Cambridge has agreed to begin the extension of Prosperity Church Road northward, transforming the intersection into a four-way stop.

Cambridge has also agreed to make the roads at the intersection more at right angles by slightly altering the route of Eastfield Road. Cambridge will widen Eastfield to create turn lanes.

The right of ways through the Huntersville Market complex will measure up to 100 feet across, according to the plans.

“Of the 21 acres in the project, we’re giving up 7 acres to roadways,” Priester said.

The Huntersville Market project has taken five years to bring to fruition, Priester said. Its location on the border of Charlotte and Huntersville and the need to reroute, widen and extend roads have complicated the project, he said.

Also, drainage issues bedevil the site, he said.

Because of those issues, Cambridge has to deal with a least half a dozen state, county, town and city agencies, Priester said.

“The location has made this an incredibly complicated project,” he said. “We have to get everything exactly right, and as soon as one agency signs off on an aspect of the project, another agency says, ‘No, no, you have to do this.’”

By: Tony Brown – THE MECKLENBURG TIMES
