



arnett foster toothman pllc

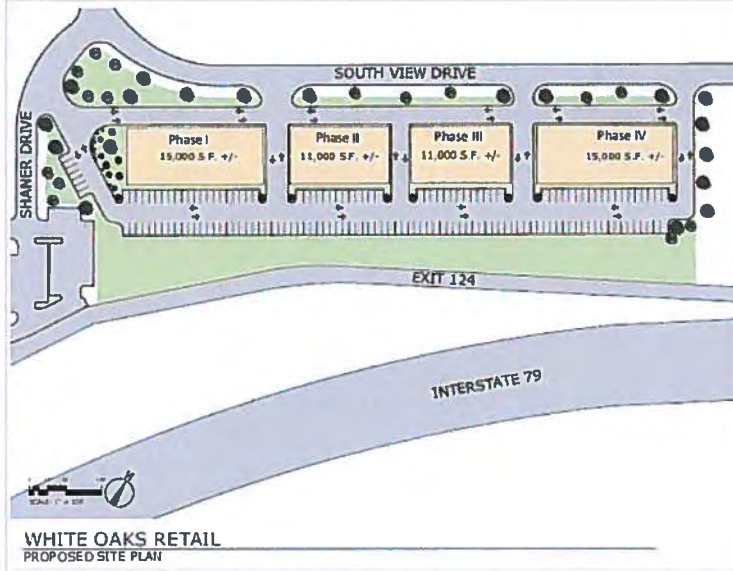


## New Restaurants, Shops, Retail on Way To Bridgeport's White Oaks Development

By Jeff Toquinto on January 06, 2013 via [Connect-Bridgeport.com](http://Connect-Bridgeport.com)

For those of you clamoring for new business, new restaurants and new places to shop, there's some really good news on the horizon here in Bridgeport. Ground will likely be broken and construction will likely be started on the first of four phases for the new White Oaks Plaza within the next 30 days.

The plaza, according to Martin E. O'Boyle, will be first class retail development at the White Oaks development situated along Interstate 79. The plaza to be constructed will actually be the property directly along I-79, said O'Boyle of the Commerce Group, located out of Deerfield Beach, Fla.



For those curious about the location, Marketing and Real Estate Manager for White Oaks Vanessa Richter said it will be easy to find.

"It will be located between the Courtyard by Marriott (currently under construction near the off ramp's intersection with Jerry Dove Drive) and South View Center ... It's an area of roughly 4.5 acres," said Richter.

So what's in store? While negotiations just have gotten started for landing tenants, O'Boyle's vision is already in place.

"I think you might see a restaurant, not a McDonalds or a Burger King, but maybe a restaurant that you would see in a strip center," O'Boyle said. "You might see a coffee shop. You might see a UPS, a Kinkos, a Fed-Ex. You might see an optical store. You may see some type of soft goods user store, like a men's clothing store or a uniform store or something like that."

For anyone that thinks O'Boyle is blowing smoke, it may be wise to know that he said he's already been involved with more than 200 of these projects. Plus, since his company closed the deal to secure the land Dec. 24, it's imperative to make that land provide a return on that investment.

"I actually made our first leasing call Wednesday ... You don't want to get off on a fast track that's going too fast, but I would not be surprised to be able to announce reasonably quickly the addition of a well-known coffee establishment to the development."

Bridgeport Community Development Director Randy Spellman isn't surprised at some of the businesses that O'Boyle is talking about. He understands not only the concept O'Boyle is bringing to the White Oaks site, but the covenants that have to be met as part of the land sale. "I know they've begun soliciting interest and information and it's going to be more of a strip type of development," Spellman said. "They're looking for more of the upscale retail to encompass their plans. It will match what's already in place, as far as the look, at White Oaks."

To date, no plans for development have been submitted. Considering the deal was closed for the property just prior to Christmas, that's not unusual. However, O'Boyle said plenty of planning has already been completed on their end.

According to O'Boyle, the four phases of the development will be marked by four buildings. The first building will be 15,000 square feet, the second and third buildings will be 11,000 square feet and the final building will also be 15,000 square feet. The buildings will be unique one aspect. O'Boyle said they will be 40 feet high.

"We wanted to have something masculine. When you have the fast traffic that's going by along Interstate 79, you need to have something to give you that exposure," he said.

The retail development will depend heavily on the massive amount of traffic along Interstate 79. However, the goal is to capitalize on an audience of potential customers already in place.



"We're looking at a good blend of tenants that primarily can feed off of the employees and customers of the hospital, the FBI and the (White Oaks) park itself," O'Boyle said.

While the size of the buildings is in place, any design standards will have to meet – as mentioned previously – the standards of the White Oaks development Richter said the covenants and restrictions have to be met so that all the development throughout White Oaks meshes and provides a cohesive look.

"It's fairly standard as far as what a developer deals with. Here, the design of the buildings has to comply with standards and be reviewed by the White Oaks Architectural Review Committee (ARC)," said Richter. "Everything will fall in line with the general theme."

The ARC is headed by Thrasher Engineering's Craig Baker.

As for when the first business will be open to the public, O'Boyle didn't have a date. He did, however, have a rather optimistic outlook.

"We expect to be fully leased with Phase I before construction on Phase I is complete," he said. "We're just going to go right down the line."

**Editor's Note:** *Top picture is a proposed site plan, which could change as the development moves forward. Bottom picture shows a sign clearly visible along Interstate 79 announcing the new retail portion at White Oaks.*



© 2013 Connect-Bridgeport.com