



Coming Attraction

Published: 07/26/2008

By Ashley Fuller
Cherokee Tribune Staff Writer

The doors to a major retail center in Canton will open in March, with construction of the office and residential elements of the projects to follow.

The site of Canton Place, a 414.3-acre mixed-use development on the south side of Highway 20 east of Interstate 575 exit 19, is buzzing with activity.

The \$200 million-plus development when completed will include a shopping center, hospital, hotel, offices, houses, town homes and apartments.

Construction is moving along quickly for The Sembler Company's 800,000-square-foot shopping center, Canton Marketplace, which fronts the development.

The \$160 million shopping center is set to open in March and will create thousands of jobs, said Sembler spokesperson Nick Gold of Gold Concepts Public Relations.

The center's three major tenants are a 178,137-square-foot SuperTarget, a 139,410-square-foot Lowe's home improvement store and an 89,911-square-foot Kohl's department store.

Other stores signed on include Best Buy, Books-A-Million, Dick's Sporting Goods, Off Broadway Shoe Warehouse, Office Max, PetSmart, TJ Maxx and ULTA Beauty. Dining options include American Deli, Chick-fil-A, Jim and Nick's Bar-B-Q, La Parilla, Logan's, Olive Garden and Taco Mac. A SunTrust Bank also will be part of the project.

"We are excited to see those things open," Canton Mayor Gene Hobgood said. "That means more sales tax dollars for the county and the city."

Sembler also has started construction on Commerce Parkway, the road that runs adjacent to Canton Marketplace and eventually will connect Highway 20 to Highway 140/Hickory Flat Highway.

Sembler is constructing the first quarter-mile of the road, which will be completed by March. A traffic light also will be installed at the shopping center's entrance.

The company will work with the city government to build the second quarter-mile of the road to Canton Creek.

City Manager Rob Logan said the city is acquiring right-of-way and easements for that part of the project. A construction start date has not been set, but "it shouldn't be too much longer," Logan said, adding the work should take about 90 days.

The final stretch to connect the road to Highway 140 would be built by developers who own the surrounding property, Logan said.

Northside Hospital-Cherokee also is making progress on its plans to build its new home at Canton Place.

The hospital owns 70 acres at the site and is negotiating to purchase another 70 acres for future expansion.

"It will give us the ability to grow vertically or horizontally," hospital CEO Billy Hayes said of the additional land.

The initial phase of the new hospital, which will include grading and parking, will begin next spring.

Ground will be broken on a medical office building and outpatient center next summer.

Hayes said permitting would take about eight months and construction about 12 months, with a target opening date of the summer of 2010.

A timeline for construction of the rest of the hospital facilities and a total cost has not yet been determined.

NH-C officials also have not made a decision about how the current hospital on Hospital Road would be used once the new facility opens. A construction project is under way at the current facility to expand its surgical suite.

Canton Place's zoning also allows a total of 1.5 million square feet of office space as well as a 150-room hotel and 913 residential units.

York Properties recently filed plans with the city to build 351 apartments in the development. The apartments do not require a rezoning, and Logan said construction will begin once Commerce Parkway is open.

Plans for other construction in the development such as offices, a hotel and more residential options have not yet been filed with the city.

afuller@cherokeetribune.com



Construction crews work on buildings at Canton Marketplace, the shopping center portion of the mixed-use Canton Place development on Highway 20 east of Interstate 575 exit 19.

Photo by Amber McCloskey