

West Village: Residential-retail mix takes shape

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Brad and Chrissy Boggess are glad the muddy construction phase has passed and that people and businesses are moving into West Village, a major mixed-use development that will have about 1,100 homes and many stores and restaurants.

The Boggesses, who live nearby, have watched construction transform the 63 acres at Atlanta Road and I-285. Just four years ago, kudzu vines, aging homes and lots of an acre or more covered the land. Then the Pacific Group began patient negotiations, buying lots one at a time for more than a year.



Andy Sharp/AJC

(ENLARGE)

The Atlanta skyline shows up through the haze beyond the West Village. The mixed-use development is set for completion in five years.

The company bulldozed the old homes and dreamed up one of Cobb County's most significant mixed-use developments. It is growing into one of the county's highest-density neighborhoods, with 23 units per acre of condos, townhomes, apartments and single-family homes.

When done in five years, the development will be worth an estimated \$450 million.

"I'm here about three times a week," often pushing her son Webster on walks, Chrissy Boggess said.

"And as soon as the restaurants open, it'll probably be every day."

Most of the buildings and homes rise two to four stories. Condo buildings up to eight stories high eventually will be built. The development mixes commercial shops and spaces for up to seven restaurants on the ground floors, with people living above them.

"You can't go anywhere else [in Cobb County] for this intown-type living," said Keith Dixon, who is among the first residents.

"You don't have to hop in your car to go anywhere. You can walk down the street to retail, to Starbucks. And it's only 20 minutes to the airport. What could be better?" said Dixon, who has to travel often for work.

Dense mixed-use developments were a budding idea in Cobb County four years ago. To bring the development to full bloom, county commissioners had to grant many exceptions to zoning regulations. For example, they allowed the Pacific Group to put a grassed median and cobbled crosswalk along Oakdale Road, which splits the project.

They also allowed the construction of such details as outdoor fireplaces and decorative stone pillars along some of the streets.

Those are the distinguishing details that Woody Snell, a partner in the Pacific Group, points to with pride.

"It's the little things like that that really make the project," he said. "A lot of this is like an experiment for Cobb County."

Prices range from the low \$200,000 range to well beyond \$600,000 for homes being built by development partners Monte Hewett Homes and Ashton Woods Homes.

Atlanta Road is becoming a major corridor for mixed-use developments in Cobb County.

North and south of West Village, John Wieland Homes and Neighborhoods has built two mixed-use developments, One Ivy Walk and Olde Ivy.

Nearby Smyrna pioneered the downtown mixed-use model on a smaller scale and has plans to create another development at Jonquil Plaza on Atlanta Road.



Andy Sharp/AJC

(ENLARGE)

Details like these old-style street lamps are among West Village's distinguishing features, some of which required exceptions to zoning regulations.