

Ascension St. Vincent's plans to build hospital in northern St. Johns County

By Katie Garwood
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It operates a Health Center off County Road 210, which includes primary and urgent care services.

Ascension St. Vincent's is planning to build a hospital in northern St. Johns County along Interstate 95, spokesman Kyle Sieg said March 24.

"We can confirm that we are planning to build a new hospital in north St. Johns County along I-95," Sieg said in a statement.

"The area and type of facility were selected based on present and future community need. We are currently in the preliminary planning phase for this exciting new project," he said.

He would not provide further information on the specific location or timeline of the hospital's construction.

"Right now, we are completely focused on providing our community with compassionate, personalized care and keeping everyone safe during this trying time," he said. "Given this, we are unable to provide additional details about this project at this time."

Flagler Hospital in St. Augustine is the only hospital in St. Johns County. Ascension St. Vincent's operates a Health Center off County Road 210, which includes primary and urgent care services.

Baptist Health operates Baptist South at the border of Duval and St. Johns counties.

Ascension St. Vincent's also is constructing two free-standing ERs in Duval County and bought land for what appears to be a third.

The two under construction are at 9820 Hutchinson Park Drive in Kendall Town Center in Arlington and another is at 8083 Parramore Road near Collins Town Center.

Through St. Vincent's Health System Inc., Ascension St. Vincent's paid \$4.5 million to buy 5 acres at northeast Beach and Kernan boulevards. It bought the land from West Kernan Loan Acquisition LLC, whose managing member is Tamaya Property Holdings LLC.

Sieg couldn't confirm what the hospital system intended to do with the property.

JEA issued a service availability letter Feb. 21 for Envision Design + Engineering LLC for a project on the property named West Kernan FSED. Ascension wasn't listed on the service availability letter, but the project is described as a 15,000-square-foot free-standing emergency department.

In October, Ascension St. Vincent's President Tom VanOsdol said the free-standing ER projects reflect the Jacksonville health system's "desire to provide convenient access to compassionate, personalized care across our region."

Ascension St. Vincent's also is renovating the exterior of its Southside hospital at 4201 Belfort Road in the Southpoint area.

The city issued a permit March 23 for Gilbane Building Co. to renovate the outside of the hospital at a cost of \$22.56 million.