

## **St. Johns County mega development ahead of schedule, to start clearing land next month**

By Derek Gilliam  
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Phase one of Pavilion at Durbin Park will include 700,000 square feet of commercial space.

Phase One of St. Johns County's 1,700-acre commercial development the Pavilion at Durbin Park will start clearing land next month as road construction of the 9B interchange is ahead of schedule.

The Florida Department of Transportation will complete the 9B interchange that opens up the property being developed by Gate Petroleum and Gatlin Development about six months ahead of schedule, said Nancy Sumner, a real estate broker with the Shopping Center Group who represents Pavilion at Durbin Park.

"This is the catalyst for us to go vertical with our project," she said.

In a previous interview, Frank Gatlin, president and CEO of Gatlin Development, said that 2016 would be used for planning and identifying potential tenants for the first 700,000 square feet of commercial space that will be built in the up to 2.4 million-square-foot project.

Sumner declined to identify any of the potential tenants, but said that interest in the project is high.

"This project is moving at a much faster pace than any of us ever imagined and are expediting everything on all ends," she said. "The LOIs [letters of intent] starting pouring in after we showcased this project at Florida ICSC end of August in Orlando."

To facilitate the more than 50 Letters the Shopping Center Group has in hand, Gate and Gatlin have hired the services of Atlanta-based Hartman Simons & Wood LLP a law firm that specializes retail leasing on large projects.

The Shopping Center Group has also hired Kelly Smith from CBRE's retail team in Washington DC. She will be working with Sumner and Stephanie McCullough, also with the Shopping Center Group.

"We feel confident at this point that we can lease up to 1 million square feet in Phase 2 in addition to the 700,000 square feet in Phase 1," Sumner said. "In Phase 2 we are in negotiations with a furniture cluster, a very large entertainment cluster that will include a high end cinema and bowling alley, a large soft goods cluster as well as an organic grocer and several small shop tenants."

Leasing of the first 700,000 square feet of the development has reached a point where work on phase two has started to move forward.

“We have several national restaurant and retailers that have interest on the parcels fronting East Peyton Parkway [a planned road in the development] that we are starting to move forward on,” Sumner said.

She said potential tenants have reacted positively to the schedule moving up six months.

“They want to be open as soon as possible to capitalize on the housing growth in the area. In which this project is centrally located at the two major interstates”