

The Mathis Report: Fountains at St. Johns planned along County Road 210

The project is designed to include retail, restaurant and medical office development.

By Karen Brune Mathis
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Commercial development is a hot commodity in northern St. Johns County, where thousands of houses are proposed and stores, offices, restaurants and entertainment venues are projected to follow.

That's on top of the existing communities, such as Nocatee.

To serve that market, developer David Ergisi hopes to break ground in the first quarter of 2019 on the Fountains at St. Johns, a 186,000-square-foot retail, restaurant and medical-office development north along County Road 210, east of Interstate 95. There also are up to four outparcels.



“The vision is for this to be the best synergistic multiuse development in Northeast Florida,” said Ergisi, president and CEO of Cross Regions Real Estate.

Ergisi said he hopes to complete the first phase of 30,000 to 60,000 square feet by year-end 2019 and then start on the remaining space for completion by the end of 2020.

Ergisi formed DAR Investments One LLC to buy the 23.8 acres in May for the Fountains at St. Johns and said he has a contract to buy 30 acres to the north to develop as Fountains North. That would be bought under another LLC.

The development is north along County Road 210, east of Interstate 95.

He paid \$4.34 million for the property, according to St. Johns County property records. He declined to estimate the total investment cost.

The Fountains at St. Johns project is designed at 1620 County Road 210 W. with frontage on that road as well as on I-95.



“It’s a great site to create mixed-use development,” Ergisi said, noting its proximity to Nocatee, St. Augustine and Ponte Vedra. He said 5,000 homes are planned or under development nearby. The back part of the center is designed as a medical development to include an outpatient surgery center, he said.

“We want to create a medical hub for St. Johns County,” he said, including practice specialties. Ergisi envisions patients visiting and having a choice of activities before and after appointments or as they wait.

He said the retail and restaurant tenants, which he declined to identify until leases are signed, are local and national ventures with strong track records.

Retail tenants will complement one another, such as a fitness center, hair salon, dry cleaner, massage service and other types of uses.

Restaurants will reflect diverse cuisine. “I like to have smaller retail businesses and restaurants with the right concepts,” he said, but emphasized he was not looking for startups.

He said he was “having conversations” for a grocery store in the Fountains or Fountains North but declined to elaborate.

Developer David Ergisi hopes to break ground on the project in the first quarter of 2019.

He seeks stores and restaurants that “suit the needs of the area” and he described the leases to be executed as tenants who are “established, well-liked and successful.”

He said they reflect a mix of national and local proven restaurant and retail concepts. “We love local business. We want to support local business,” he said, adding that those need to be a good fit for the center.

Ergisi said Cross Regions developed specific criteria of what it wants. “We are going to have very restrictive design and development guidelines,” he said.

Ergisi said the 30-acre site that he wants to buy could accommodate 250,000 to 300,000 square feet of space. That project could break ground in late 2019, he said.

The Fountains at St. Johns comprises several buildings with the final configuration to be decided, although the design elements have been determined.

There are walk-throughs, outdoor seating, covered sidewalks that could accommodate patio dining, and fountains. He said the name was chosen because fountains evoke a feeling of relaxation.

“We want people to come and stay and spend time,” he said.

He described the design of the center as “soft modern” with arches and Mediterranean elements. Colors are whites and grays.

The outparcels can be developed through a ground lease, build-to-suit or by sale.

Cross Regions will handle all aspects of the project – development, selling, leasing and management.

Ergisi created Cross Regions six years ago in Jacksonville and has expanded to an office in Istanbul and soon, Boca Raton in South Florida.