

Bucks County Courier Times

Lower Makefield Wegmans, other Bucks developments inch forward

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The coronavirus resurgence that began this past fall hasn't stopped a handful large development projects in Central and Lower Bucks from moving ahead.

Residential and industrial projects in Lower Makefield, Falls and Doylestown Borough have seen some significant developments since December. Together they have the potential to add hundreds of new housing units and more than 1 million square feet of commercial space. Some will take years to develop, while other could see groundbreaking this year. Here's what is in the pipeline:

Lower Makefield Wegmans and housing coming

Lower Makefield supervisors Wednesday received an informal overview for the Prickett Preserve at Edgewood mixed-use development plan approved by the township planning commission on Feb. 8.

The Feb. 17 presentation to supervisors was intended as a general overview of some relatively minor changes made over the past two weeks.

The preliminary and final land development plan from Yardley-based developer Shady Brook Investors LP and ELU DeLuca Yardley LLC was first presented to the commission in September.

The developers plan to re-subdivide five existing lots across 36-acres into two parcels, preserving and repurposing an existing historic farmhouse and barn; construct nine, three-story multi-family buildings for a 200-unit apartment with a clubhouse; construct seven commercial buildings consisting of a 100,000-square-foot Wegmans, a 3,000-square-foot bank and a 13,111-square-foot pharmacy as well as 35,750 square feet of retail and restaurant space in four other commercial buildings.

The proposal includes the preservation of a historic building and barn on a 5-acre lot occupied by C.L. Prickett Antiques. The buildings once were part of Edgewood Farms, which was built in the 1700s and owned by the Trenton Biscuit Co. family until the 1960s.

The buildings are planned as "anchors" to a community gathering space among the several commercial buildings, like an open passive-space park in the "retail village," the developer's website states.

The developer is also proposing a pedestrian path connecting into the residential plot near where Stoney Hill Road crosses over I-295.

Project engineers said the intention is to connect to an existing trail on the south side of Stony Hill Road, extend the path over the interstate and then connect to another existing sidewalk.

Since the developer can't widen the bridge, the plan now is to narrow traffic lanes to provide an eight-foot wide pedestrian walkway across the bridge.

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The pathway is part of a \$6.5 million commitment from the developer for traffic safety improvements planned across the development at Wegman's urging.

While the grocery chain is currently the only company to sign a lease in retail development, Vince DeLuca, of DeLuca Homes, said a surge of interest from others has moved ahead plans for construction on the commercial properties.

The commercial buildings were initially planned in phases as new lease holders were courted, but DeLuca confirmed Wednesday the seven buildings are expected to come in a single phase. The project, which could see ground breaking sometime in the summer or fall, is expected to generate about \$1.74 million in tax revenue a year, about \$1.1 million to the Pennsbury School District and \$200,000 to the township.

U.S. Steel redevelopment moves forward

In Falls Township, NorthPoint Development closed on its reported \$160 million purchase of more than 1,800 acres of the U.S. Steel site.

Last month's sale put the developer a step closer to its planned \$1.5 billion transformation of the property, building 10 million square feet or more of state-of-the-art warehousing over the next several years.

Amazon, Walmart, Chewy and other major retail businesses have been reported as possible tenants and could bring between 5,000 and 10,000 new jobs to the area.

Township officials are hopeful the project will turn Falls into an e-commerce hub for the at hoped to transform the township into an e-commerce hub throughout the east coast.

Former Intelligencer site slate for redevelopment

Doylestown Borough's planning commission also saw the newly revised plans from Cornerstone Tracy, LLC, for a mixed-use redevelopment of the former site of The Intelligencer on Broad Street.

The plans include one four-story mixed-use building and one five-story apartment building on the 7.5 acre property at 333 N. Broad Street.

The four-story building will have retail businesses on its first floor, while the apartment building will have parking on the first floor.

In total, three retail locations and 233 apartment units are planned for development and a traffic light is planned at the intersection of Broad Street and Atkinson Drive.

The borough's planning commission is expected to hold its preliminary and final review for the project at its meeting Tuesday.