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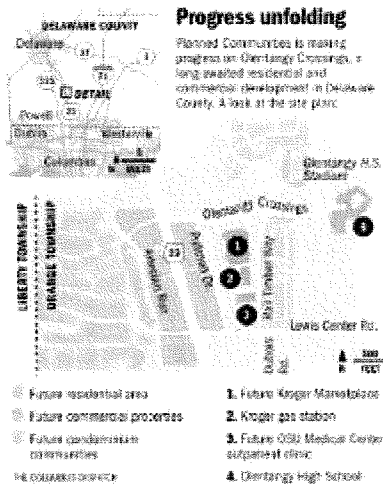
## Construction Zone

Olentangy Crossings adds Kroger, OSU

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By Mike Pramik

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH



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Kroger and Ohio State University have added significant name recognition to a Delaware County development that's taken five years to get off the ground.

The two will become major tenants at Olentangy Crossings, in the still-growing southern part of the county. Kroger has started work on a Marketplace store there, and OSU Medical Center plans to lease space for a 30,000-square-foot outpatient health-care office that will be linked to the Kroger store by retail space.

It's solid news in the slow development market. Southern Delaware County has been ballyhooed this decade as one of the fastest-growing regions of the country, but as is the case everywhere else in central Ohio, the pace of building there has slowed.

Delaware County is on pace for about 500 building permits this year, said Scott Sanders, executive director of the Delaware County Regional Planning Authority. That's down from 683 last year, 835 in 2006 and 1,311 in 2005.

Three banks had staked out acreage at Olentangy Crossings, but Kroger and OSU add heft to the 265-acre development, said Geoff Ortlip of developer Planned Communities.

"In a market like this, it's really nice to get some positive news out here," Ortlip said. "I think the big thing is the potential for growth in the area. There's a tremendous amount of ground in the immediate area, the potential for a lot of houses in the immediate area when things do turn around."

Kroger is backing up that notion with a 124,000-square-foot Marketplace concept. It will be Kroger's largest Marketplace of the six that are open or planned in central Ohio, said Jeff Bieber of the supermarket's real-estate division.

Marketplaces are larger, more-upscale versions of Kroger supermarkets. They offer general merchandise such as office supplies, furniture and bed-and-bath items. They have expanded food offerings, with an emphasis on organics and full meals.

They also have stores-within-a-store, such as Fred Meyer Jewelers and Starbucks.

Kroger has been considering a site north of I-270 along Rt. 23 for a few years. Bieber said the store should open in 2009.

"While the rest of the (region) seems to be at a standstill, it's one of those markets that we identify as having positive growth both in households and income level," he said.

The Kroger store will be just east of Rt. 23 and north of Lewis Center Road.

At the other end of the site will be the OSU outpatient center. It will offer primary care, cardiology, radiology, physical therapy and sports-medicine services. The building will be owned by Planned Communities and leased to Ohio State University Health System.

Part of the space will be subleased to OSU Physicians Inc., an OSU Medical Center-affiliated practice plan that has more than 40 sites in central Ohio. Only a handful of those centers offer multiple specialties, said Dan Like, chief operating officer of ambulatory services for OSU Medical Center.

"Two years ago, we developed a plan with our physician group to really extend our programs into the community," Like said. "We needed to take ourselves out of the main medical campus and put them in locations where patients live and work.

"We feel (the Lewis Center) community is certainly underserved. OSU has little to no presence that far north, and many physicians and clinical staff live up there."

Between the medical center and Kroger will be 32,000 square feet of retail space. Ortlip said he's uncertain whether Planned Communities will develop the space or sell the rights to another developer. But he expects tenants to include neighborhood service-type companies.

Olentangy Crossing has plenty of space available for retail and commercial outlots off Rt. 23, and three residential developments are expected to help fill out the development.

The biggest is west of Rt. 23, where an expected 150 single-family homes are to be built. Ortlip said Planned Communities has opened 110 home sites, mostly to custom builders. Truberry Homes and Compass Homes have models there, and Fischer Homes is planning one, Ortlip said.

Village Communities plans to build 108 ranch-style condominiums and 50 townhouses in the northeast corner of Olentangy Crossings.

Another condo development is planned for land east of the Kroger complex. Ortlip said it's

uncertain who will develop that property, which has been zoned for 96 townhouses.

## OSU cleared at Gowdy Field

The Ohio State Medical Center's foray into Delaware County will be preceded by a much-bigger operation.

The university's trustees recently approved the lease of the five-story office building at Gowdy Field next to Time Warner Cable's local headquarters. The medical center will lease the 137,000-square-foot building to set up an outpatient center.

The building will include a center for women's health, clinical programs for plastic surgery, ophthalmology and ear, nose and throat practices. It also will have six operating rooms for outpatient surgical procedures.

OSU said it will have 300 employees at the building, which should open next summer.

## Brick-a-brac

- Urban Active has opened a temporary gym at Graceland Shopping Center, where it is building a 48,000-square-foot center at the former site of Burlington Coat Factory. The mega-gym is expected to open in the first quarter of 2009.

Meanwhile, Graceland is set to welcome a new tenant. Qdoba Mexican Grill said it will open a 2,400-square-foot restaurant there in November.

- Mount Carmel Health System and Fairfield Medical Center said they will begin work this week on an emergency center in Canal Winchester.

The two are jointly developing the \$35 million health-care center near Rt. 33 and Diley Road. The complex, which is expected to open in late 2009, will include an emergency department and a medical office building for specialty and primary-care physicians.

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- Construction Zone is a weekly look at construction, development and real-estate news in central Ohio.

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