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A 40-story building at Raleigh's North Hills? Kane Realty wants the option

HIGHLIGHTS

Kane Realty sees the North Hills area growing taller. The developer wants the city to allow for skyscrapers up to 40 stories in the Midtown district, where Kane has tried to foster downtown-style density.

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Kane Realty sees the North Hills area growing taller. The developer wants the city to allow for skyscrapers up to 40 stories in the Midtown district, where Kane has tried to foster downtown-style density.

The request comes as Raleigh finishes a new set of development rules that will change zoning requirements for about 30 percent of the city, including North Hills. The planning board may take up Kane's request on Tuesday morning.

A 40-floor building, standing about 500 feet, would be the tallest in Raleigh.

Though Kane has no immediate plans for buildings of that size, the developer figures it's best to speak up while the larger zoning changes are in motion.

"We've always envisioned taller buildings here, and more density," said John Kane, founder of the company. He wants the 40-story limit, he said, because the next-highest zoning district allows only 20 floors.

"Our plan has always been to get the ground-level retail working, then establish the offices and the hotels, and then go more dense," Kane said.

North Hills already is home to a handful of tall buildings. The headiest are the 17-floor Captrust Tower and the half-built, 18-story Tower Two, both standing east of Six Forks Road, where city zoning already allows buildings up to 35 floors, according to Kane.

The proposed new limit would open about 47 more acres to taller buildings, including the main North Hills area and its northern extension.

Currently, those areas are handicapped by "archaic" city rules on building heights and setbacks, Kane said. The citywide rezoning plan should fix some of those problems, he said, but the current proposal caps the main North Hills acreage at only three to 12 stories in height.

While Kane wants increased height limits on almost all of his development, he says there's only room for a few more skyscrapers.

"Keep in mind, we don't have that many parcels left to develop," he said. "We're certainly not going to change what we already developed."

The most likely locations for new, tall buildings would be the site of the parking deck behind J.C. Penney and the site of the Exxon gas station at Six Forks Road and Lassiter Mill Road, Kane said.

The height request would have to clear the planning commission and, ultimately, the city council.

But even if it all comes to fruition, Kane could face competition in the race to the top. The proposed new rules would allow buildings as tall as 40 stories in much of downtown, too.

