

PEOPLE&PLACES



Shaffer: You wouldn't want to take just any date to the fetish prom. PAGE 3M

Mom2Mom: Our memories of time together are what we cherish. PAGE 3M

THE NEWS&OBSERVER

Midtown Raleigh News

NEWS&VIEWS

Cartoon: Illustrator Luke Lang takes a peek at Capitol Boulevard, the unsightly gateway to Raleigh. PAGE 2M

Schools and water rates: Readers speak out on the possibility of new school hours and on how much we pay for water and sewage service. PAGE 2M

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Awards: Seven students win \$2,500 scholarships. PAGE 5M

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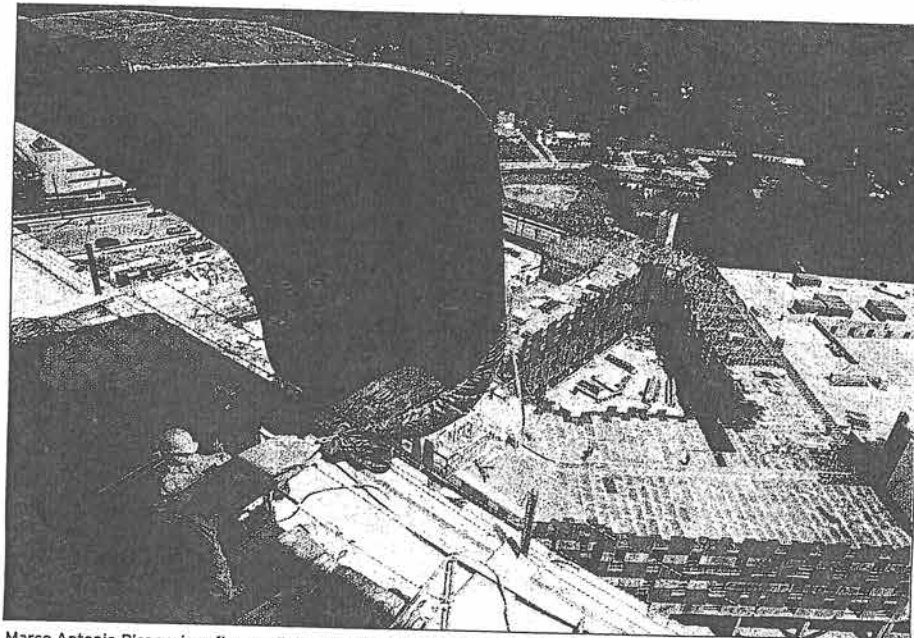
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Economic woes don't deter North Hills' growth



Marco Antonio Picas mixes fireproofing material while working on the CapTrust Tower at North Hills. The 17-story office building will include restaurants and retail space and is scheduled to open before the end of the year.

STAFF PHOTO BY ETHAN HYMAN

BY MATT EHLERS | STAFF WRITER

RALEIGH

Despite the tightening economy and an overall downturn in the construction business, an expanded North Hills continues to rise from the dirt on the east side of Six Forks Road. Nearly all of it is on schedule.

■ A building that will include a two-level Harris Teeter, more than 400 apartments and additional ground-floor retail space is under construction. If all goes as planned, the grocery store will open this fall, as will the first batch of apartments.

■ The CapTrust Tower, an adjacent 17-story office building to include restaurants and retail, is also scheduled to open before the end of the year.

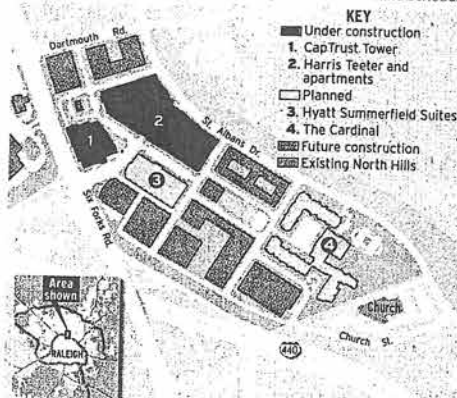
■ Crews will break ground on The Cardinal, a high-end retirement community, in late summer or early fall.

■ Only a planned hotel, a Hyatt Summerfield Suites, is behind schedule. Although he hoped to break ground on the hotel this year, developer John Kane said last week that he couldn't pinpoint when construction might begin.

SEE NORTH HILLS, PAGE 4M

NORTH HILLS EXPANSION

The construction of North Hills' sister development across Six Forks Road is coming along. Financing for most of the 50-acre site was secured before the economy soured. Only the hotel is behind schedule.



- KEY
- Under construction
 - 1. CapTrust Tower
 - 2. Harris Teeter and apartments
 - Planned
 - 3. Hyatt Summerfield Suites
 - 4. The Cardinal
 - ▨ Future construction
 - ▤ Existing North Hills

'I'm really heartened to see that it's proceeding, despite problems in the market.'

NANCY MCFARLANE

RALEIGH COUNCILWOMAN WHOSE DISTRICT INCLUDES NORTH HILLS



The North Hills project could see \$1 billion in development, including 1,800 residential units, 4,500 feet of retail space and 800 hotel rooms. A Hyatt Summerfield Suites was scheduled for construction this year but has been delayed.

STAFF PHOTOS BY ETHAN HYMAN

NORTH HILLS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1M

"The financing market is challenging out there," he said.

The 50-acre development has benefitted from financing that was secured before the economic crisis began. Although money isn't available at the moment to build the hotel, financing for The Cardinal has been lined up.

"We're really fortunate in that regard," Kane said. "We're counting our blessings."

Eventually, the site could see \$1 billion in development. Plans call for 1.5 million square feet of office space, 450,000 square feet of retail space, 1,800 residential units and 800 hotel rooms. The eastside development mimics the mixed-use success of the development across the street.

"I'm really heartened to see that it's proceeding, despite problems in the market," said Raleigh Councilwoman Nancy McFarlane, whose district includes North Hills. "I think people are looking forward to it."

She has concerns about the increased traffic, but she said the city will work through those issues as they come up.

Markita Keaton of Cary, who visited North Hills recently with her 6-year-old daughter, KaLa, said she enjoys the walk-



Antoine Jordan works on the sprinkler system at the CapTrust Tower. A retirement community is also planned for the area. Ground-breaking is set for late summer or fall.

able shopping and entertainment district. "It's family-friendly and well-designed," she said.

But she wasn't sure about the expansion on the other side of the road. Keaton said she wouldn't walk across busy Six Forks Road with her daughter, and probably wouldn't get in her car to do so, either. Kane's long-range plans include a shuttle or trolley system so people could get around without climbing back into their cars. "I think that would be appealing," Keaton

said. "But there would have to be a pretty compelling reason to leave these central stores."

In the short-term, Kane said plans include a median to be constructed in Six Forks Road to help pedestrians cross safely. Traffic signals will be set to give walkers more time to cross.

The North Hills of the future will have plenty of folks crossing the street once The Cardinal retirement community is built. Kane said the senior development was an important aspect of the development's plan to attract people from all walks of life.

He envisions The Cardinal as a place where "children and grandchildren would want to come visit, because there's lots of stuff to do."

Despite the economy's problems, Kane said sales for The Cardinal have been better than expected. He hopes that by the time The Cardinal opens, probably in late 2010, that the housing market will have recovered. Often, people who move into retirement communities need to sell their home first, a daunting prospect at the moment.

Or, as Kane put it: "Right now, everyone is being taxed by the economy in one way or another."

matt.ehlers@newsobserver.com
or 919-829-4889