

commercial real es

hot property



Provided by the Beard Group

MARKETPLACE & MAIN 701 Mainstreet, Hopkins

Type: Condominiums, townhouses, retail

Units: 64

Average price: \$275,000

Developer: The Beard Group

Details: A downtown Hopkins mixed-use condominium project that languished because of slackening demand for suburban units has been resurrected by the Beard Group, which this month won approval from the city for its revamped version of an idea originally floated by the Cornerstone Group.

Called Marketplace & Main, Beard's plans call for 64 housing units and first-floor retail at a site that formerly housed the Hopkins Honda used-car sales lot and auto-body shop. Beard, which has a long history of successful redevelopment projects in Hopkins and calls the first-ring suburb its home, downsized the size and price range of the units in response to changing market conditions for suburban condos, said Ron Mehl, a development principal with the firm.

"We've looked at the price points, and we're making changes in the levels of finish that come as part of the standard package versus what will be counted as extras," he said. "For instance, granite countertops and hardwood floors were included in the base price before. We're try-

ing to make these units more affordable for us to build and make them more attractive for first-time home buyers."

Marketplace & Main consists of three pieces: a 44-unit condominium building with 5,500 square feet of first-floor retail on the northeast corner of Mainstreet and 7th Avenue N. and two townhouse clusters — one of six units on the same block as the condo building and another of seven units fronting the north side of Mainstreet between 7th and 6th Avenues N. The units will be 750 to 1,800 square feet, with an average price of \$275,000, which was around the starting price under the former plan.

One reason the Cornerstone/Beard proposal got all but unanimous backing from the city was the opportunity to eliminate an "inconsistent use" from Mainstreet: the automotive-based business there, said Jim Kerrigan, the city's community development director.

"The desire is to take and redevelop this site so that it better fits with the image of downtown," he said. "What we want to do is bring in more businesses and residential into the downtown area, and removing some of the uses that are inconsistent is important."

DON JACOBSON

Southwest metro

• The active southwest metro office market continues to heat up. A new tower is planned by United Properties.

By SUSAN FEYDER
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United Properties recently became the latest developer to announce plans for a multi-tenant office building in the Twin Cities market.

The Bloomington-based developer will begin work this summer on an 11-story building in the Normandale Lake Office Park in Bloomington near Interstate Hwy. 494 and Hwy. 100. Benfield Group, a British reinsurance broker that has offices in Bloomington, has signed a letter of intent to lease about 285,000 square feet in the tower. The building, on a six-acre site that United Properties acquired last year, is expected to be complete early in 2009.

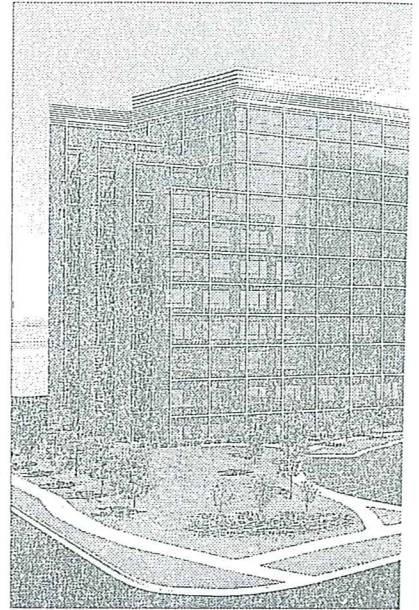
The southwest suburban office market finished 2006 with the lowest vacancy rate in the Twin Cities area and has been the first to see a rebound in new office developments.

Duke Realty Corp. began construction last spring on the 10-story Norman Pointe II project in Bloomington. Liberty Property Trust and CSM Corp. also have announced plans for office projects in the southwest market.

ING expands in St. Cloud

Kraus-Anderson began construction last week on a 75,000-square-foot St. Cloud office for ING Direct USA.

The four-story building is part of the Centre Square III project in downtown St. Cloud.



ING Direct will be the sole tenant, using the facility to expand its call center, deposit operations, loan operations and administration areas. The new building will be adjacent to another ING facility that houses about 400 employees.

The building is a Job Opportunity Building Zones (JOBZ) project. The JOBZ program is intended to stimulate economic development outside the Twin Cities area by providing local and state tax exemptions to new and expanding businesses.

NAI Welsh represented ING Direct in lease negotiations for the building, which is expected to be available for occupancy in the first quarter of 2008.

More deals for Colliers

The Minneapolis-St. Paul office of Colliers Turley Martin Tucker recently represented the St. Paul Port Authority in the sale of the Gallery Professional Building to California-based Triple Net Properties.