

Montrose makeover: Developers clear way for residential boom at former Rosemont Country Club



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Anthony Lancianese, left, and Matt Schmahl of New Leaf Homes go over the plans of the home of their first home buyers, Judy and Richard Kotick, in the Retreat development inside a model home under construction Tuesday on the former Rosemont Country Club golf course in Fairlawn.. *Karen Schiely, Akron Beacon Journal*

Montrose will see a surge of new neighbors soon. A lot of new neighbors.

The retail, business, dining and entertainment district that grew from the crossroads where the city of Fairlawn meets Copley and Bath townships is getting a decidedly residential boost in perhaps the biggest transformation of the Montrose landscape since its building boom of the 1980s. And it's happening at the site of what was one of the community's oldest landmarks.

More than 380 new housing units will be constructed on the footprint of the former Rosemont Country Club, which closed at the start of 2020 in what would have been its 100th anniversary year.

Construction plans call for four housing developments and a mixed-use building that will combine retail and restaurants with apartments. Land already has been cleared for work to begin.

Of the 148.8 acres that were owned by the golf course, 62 acres have been set aside and "will be a permanent preserve" that can be used to restore trees and wildlife, Fairlawn Mayor William Roth said.

He said the city "was pleased by the quality of residences being built," calling the developments "a nice mix of different types."

The plans were unveiled in March 2021 during a public information meeting.

In addition to the homes, there also will be a walking trail from Bicentennial Park that will bisect Cleveland-Massillon Road and run through the development. This trail will be accessible to the community as well as those within the new residential areas.

"We are preserving a lot, permanently, which we are very happy with," Roth said.

Bob Konstand, the attorney for the developer, OCG Rosemont, previously said homebuyers will have flexibility to choose the options they want.

"The days of what we called spec homes, where you build 20 or 30 homes all at once and then put them all up for sale, those days are no longer with us," Konstand said. "Each of the builders in the community will do a couple model homes but they will need to take orders for homes to be built," allowing homeowners' input.



The entrance to the former Rosemont Country Club will serve as the entrance to the Reserve that will have 25 homes on the site of the former Rosemont Country Club golf course in Fairlawn. *Karen Schiely, Akron Beacon Journal*

Lance Osborne, president of Osborne Capital Group in Mentor, said the company started working on the acquisition of Rosemont in 2019 "with the goal of creating master plan residential neighborhoods that are walkable to dedicated greenspaces."

Each of the four residential developments will have their own homeowners' associations, Osborne said.

"Three of the communities will include maintenance-free living administered by professional HOA managers," Osborne said. "The development was conceived to have a variety of housing options for new Fairlawn residents, residents looking for a larger home and residents looking to downsize."

While market demand could change the scope of development, Osborne said "there is strong interest in the project right now."



The Reserve is planned here on the site of the former Rosemont Country Club golf course and it will have 25 new homes in Fairlawn. *Karen Schiely, Akron Beacon Journal*

The Crossings will consist of high-end townhouses and homes

One of the developments, The Crossings, will consist of attached townhomes constructed by Drees Homes, Konstand said. The Crossings will have an expected 98 homes, which will have a base price of \$314,000 to \$368,000.

The Crossings will be adjacent to a second development called The Reserve. This development will include 25 homes and will utilize the entrance to the former Rosemont clubhouse.

Osborne said in a recent interview that the clubhouse was in the process of being demolished, and the swimming pool would be filled in. Prices for The Reserve are expected to start at \$474,000, with typical prices ranging from \$519,000 to \$644,000.

"This will be the most expensive community in the project," Konstand said.

Osborne said he hoped to take designs for The Crossing and The Reserve to the city planning commission sometime this spring to start the approval process.



The future site of the Links housing development on the site of the former Rosemont Country Club golf course in Fairlawn. It will include two- and three-story town homes. This will have 179 housing units. These will be developed by Ryan Homes.
Karen Schiely, Akron Beacon Journal

179 homes near retail stretch that includes Giant Eagle, Sam's Club

The third development, The Links, will be near Giant Eagle and Sam's Club. The Links will include two- and three-story townhomes. The residences in this development will start in the upper \$200,000 range. Konstand said this will be the largest development, with 179 housing units. These will be developed by Ryan Homes.

"We are selling the lots to Ryan Homes, and they will build the homes," he said. "People will be able to choose from a variety of floor plans from two different attached housing projects."



The model home is under construction for the New Leaf Homes Retreat development on the site of the former Rosemont Country Club golf course in Fairlawn. *Karen Schiely, Akron Beacon Journal*

Single-story living The Retreat targeted to empty-nesters

The Retreat will be aimed at empty-nesters, Konstand said. This development will have a clubhouse.

Katie Lancianese of New Leaf Ventures, the developer and builder of The Retreat, said that all of the homes will be designed for single story living, but will have an option for an upstairs bonus space. Units also will feature no steps to get into the home or garage, improving accessibility. This development will include 83 housing units on about 24 to 25 acres, constructed over two phases. The starting cost will be around \$300,000, and the average cost is expected to be around \$450,000.

Lancianese said the first phase is approved and a model home is under construction.

"We plan to start homes for customers in February," she said. "We are rocking and rolling over there. We're selling relatively quickly."

Lancianese said New Leaf is seeking approval for phase two "sometime in the first quarter."

For details, visit www.newleafepcon.com online.

Mixed-use building will include apartments, commercial space

Another development, which will be just west of The Links, will be a mixed-use single building. The mixed-use building could potentially include apartments, restaurants and small businesses, as well as office space, according to information from a presentation made during a public information meeting in March.

Plans went before the city planning commission Jan. 13 but were tabled by the request of Osborne, said Bill Arnold, the city's building and zoning commissioner. There were concerns with the number and location of the parking spaces. No date has been set for the plans to come again before the planning commission.

Konstand said that OCG developed Heritage Woods in neighboring Copley, and "he did a very successful mixed-use development with that."

Walking trail will be open to the community

An additional feature of the development will be a community walking trail starting at Bicentennial Park on Smith Road that will wind through the development, Roth said. It will cross beneath heavily traveled Cleveland-Massillon Road using a former golf-cart tunnel that was reconstructed in a road-widening project.

The new construction comes as property owners throughout Fairlawn tackle upgrades to existing residential properties.



Construction is underway on the New Leaf Homes development project called the Retreat on the site of the former Rosemont Country Club golf course in Fairlawn.
Karen Schiely, Akron Beacon Journal

The city has had "a fair amount of home remodels going on," Roth said.

"We've had a steady amount of applications in the city" for residential building permits, Roth said.

According to the U.S. Census, 69.2% of homes in Fairlawn were owner occupied between 2015 and 2019, with the median value of homes at \$171,700. There were 3,258 households in that time period, with an average of 2.19 people per household. 84.9% of the people in Fairlawn had lived in that same house for at least a year.

A boon for residents in Fairlawn, which has translated in higher home values, is FairlawnGIG, the city's municipal broadband utility. Because of this service, Roth said that home values were an average of 78% higher. This service will be available in the new developments.



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Cleveland-Massillon Road improvements should help with traffic

The recent widening of Cleveland-Massillon Road, which included constructing a roundabout at Rothrock Road, should help to absorb any concerns about an increase in traffic related to the new developments, Roth said.

The project, which cost about \$13 million, including a local share of \$2.8 million, updated the road from West Market Street to Rothrock Road. It was completed in November.

The roundabout, especially, has improved traffic flow and air quality, Roth said.

"It's eliminated the T-bone accidents, which can be fatal," Roth said. "It's worked quite well. [The Ohio Department of Transportation] is a big proponent of roundabouts, and they increased their level of funding because of the roundabout component in the Cleveland-Massillon Road widening."

Roth said he felt the new residential plans were "balanced, and not overdeveloped."

"As a whole, the Rosemont development is a big plus for the city," Roth said. "It will have a longtime impact. We would have loved to have seen Rosemont stay as a country club forever, but that was not meant to be. I think this is the best thing that could have happened, given the situation."

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