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'O-Town West' project touts homes, shops, restaurants



A rendering shows plans for O-Town West, a project near Walt Disney World and outlet stores that could take a year to get approvals. (Unicorn National Developments)

BY MARY SHANKLIN STAFF WRITER

The developer behind the I-Drive 360 development known for the Coca-Cola Orlando Eye — as well as projects mixing residences and shops in Winter Park, Dr. Phillips, Lake Nona and Lake Mary — is meeting with architects this week on a project called O-Town West.

With an option on 82 acres at Daryl Carter and Palm parkways in the southwest Orlando area, near Walt Disney World and outlet stores, Unicorn National Developments Inc. President Chuck Whittall said Thursday the project could take a year to get approvals.

“We’re trying to create a whole place. We’re trying to create a complete sense of place with dining, entertainment, shopping and living,” Whittall said. The various aspects of the project would be branded with the O-Town West name.

With a history of launching projects with a signature feature, Whittall said O-Town West would include a boardwalk with shops and restaurants offering outdoor experiences and overlooking a body of water with “water shows” featuring jet fountains and lights



throughout the day. He likened the entertainment to a former Orlando attraction called Dancing Waters.

“The boardwalk will be very cool,” he said.

The O-Town Village part of the project would include jogging trails, a dog park, apartments and single-family houses starting in the \$500,000 range, he added. It would also be centered on a clear-lagoon style water body for residents’ use.

Whittall has been key in the redevelopment along U.S. Highway 17-92 north of Orlando bringing Trader Joe’s, residences and eateries to the long-ago tourist corridor. I-Drive360 has a combination of restaurants, retail and entertainment attractions, including the Eye, Madame Tussauds wax museum and Sea Life Aquarium Orlando.

Current projects include Lake Mary’s Griffin Farms at Midtown as well as adding more than 300 apartments, including some micro-units, to the Creative Village project on the west side of downtown Orlando. In addition to the Westside Shoppes near Windermere, Unicorp is also proceeding with a luxury-home development of 13 lots on 16 acres west of Hubbard Place and east of Lake Tibet-Butler in the southwest Orlando area.

One of his most ambitious plans has been converting a closed tennis community in Longboat Key into a Four Seasons-style resort, but officials there have balked at the project’s scale. Whittall said he has hopes of proceeding and launching early in 2020.

mshanklin@orlandosentinel.com

or 407-420-5538