

November 5, 2018

Orlando Business Journal



ORLANDO BUSINESS JOURNAL

A White House replica. A Star Trek hotel. These were some failed project ideas near Disney

Mickey Mouse almost became neighbors with the White House.

At least, that's what one developer dreamed up in a pitch to acquire land on Daryl Carter's nearly 200 acres of property near Walt Disney World. Carter, a long-time land man with Orlando-based Maury L. Carter & Associates Inc., spent over a decade assembling the land near the intersection of Palm Parkway and Interstate 4, which in total will sell for a whopping \$131 million after Carter closes on his largest, and final, tract in first-quarter 2019.

Over the years, developers have fallen short on many development ideas for the land, considered one of the most valuable properties in Central Florida due to its location in the tourist corridor, which attracted a record 72 million visitors last year.

"Can you imagine the number of calls I've gotten over the years?" Carter said.

With the White House idea, the developer wanted to build a full-scale replica model because, the developer contended, not everyone can visit the White House. But the developer eventually failed to follow through.

Another idea that eventually failed was a Star Trek hotel shaped like the Enterprise spacecraft featured in the popular TV series. The doors of the hotel even would have moved and make the "swoosh" sound similar to the show.

That idea may have been ahead of its time — Burbank, Calif.-based Walt Disney Co. (NYSE: DIS) is currently building the much-anticipated Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge at Disney's Hollywood Studios, which will include a Star Wars-themed hotel.

In addition, another developer wanted to build a race track for exotic cars on Carter's property.

While those deals fizzled, the final tract of land under contract is roughly 76 acres and will become part of Chuck Whittall's \$1 billion O-Town project. Whittall, president of Unicorp National Developments Inc., plans to build a massive mixed-use development with apartments, shops, restaurants and more. He's even



JIM CARCHIDI

Daryl Carter, of of Orlando-based Maury L. Carter & Associates Inc.



increased the size of his project in recent weeks, buying up several non-Carter-owned land parcels to the west of the original project.

Other developers that successfully have acquired some of Carter's land for their developments include New York-based O'Connor Capital Partners, which bought 64 acres along the east side of Interstate 4 north of the Orlando Vineland Premium Outlets for nearly \$28 million in 2017. O'Connor Capital Partners currently is building the 400,000-square-foot Vineland Pointe shopping center. Additionally, Winter Park-based Epoch Residential closed on 10 acres in late August for a future 250-unit apartment project.

Jack Witthaus

Staff Writer

Orlando Business Journal

