

Elevation Development shopping center latest in Longwood development surge

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This rendering shows the proposed multi-tenant buildings planned in Shoppes at Longwood, a shopping center being developed by Elevation Development on S.R. 434. (Metro Architecture Partnership Inc.)

A new shopping center announced by **Elevation Development** is the latest in a wave of new development projects to hit the sleepy Seminole County city of Longwood.

The Orlando-based development firm has submitted plans for a 59,743-squarefoot shopping center, Shoppes at Longwood, on S.R. 434, about 1,000 feet east of Ronald Reagan Boulevard. The center would be anchored by a 20,000-square-foot Planet Fitness, according to the leasing broker.

Elevation principal Owais Khanani said he submitted a site plan to the city and had a pre-application meeting with Longwood officials. It will be Elevation's first project in the city.

"It's a great in-fill site," Khanani told **GrowthSpotter**. "The demographics are great, and the traffic counts are high. That's primarily the reason we came here."



The company, through affiliate Shoppes at Longwood LLC, also filed an application with the St. Johns River Water Management District to construct a stormwater management system on the 10-acre site, which stretches south from the state highway to East Main Avenue.

The site plan in the stormwater application show a large fitness center in the middle of the development surrounded on three sides by five retail buildings. Parking is on the south side of the center along East Main Avenue. The center will be developed in one phase, according to the site plan.

Earlier this year Elevation signed a lease agreement with Planet Fitness for a 20,000-square-foot space in the **Shoppes at Citrus Ridge** mixed-use development on U.S. 27 in Polk County.

"There are any number of tenants that are looking at the (Longwood) site as well," Khanani said.

Equity Investment Services' retail team of Nick Barbato and Eric Portnoy are leading the pre-construction lease-up for the project. **Mitch Collins** of Orlando is the civil engineer. **Archenics** and landscape architect **Magley Design** round out the development team.

Longwood economic development manager **Tom Krueger** told GrowthSpotter the shopping center, with its promise of retail and restaurants, will be a significant step in the city's aspirations to be more than a bedroom community for Orlando. Krueger said "50 or 60" townhomes are going in across S.R. 434 from Shoppes at Longwood, and developers are looking at several other parcels on the north side of the highway. An apartment complex is also located to the north.

On the south side of the center, a long-established residential neighborhood promises to provide plenty of eager customers for the new retail and restaurant offerings at the Shoppes at Longwood, Krueger predicted.

"There's going to be some walkability to that community just to the south of it," Krueger said. "And the fact that you're very close with the townhomes and apartments to the north, on the other side of the highway, we feel will make this a retail district."

Khanani said he hopes to break ground in the fourth quarter of this year. Elevation has yet to close on the six parcels that will form the shopping center site, according to Seminole County land records. The company does have purchase agreements with some of the land owners, according to records submitted to the water management district.

The shopping center is the latest and largest of a string of new developments coming to the central Seminole County city. **Publix Super Markets is planning a smaller-format, delivery-focused store** on property owned by the New Assembly of God church at 675 Longwood Hills Road.

And an LA Fitness gym is heading to the former Albertsons location at the southwest corner of U.S. 17-92 and S.R. 434.

Krueger described permitting activity at city hall as so "crazy" that Longwood had to hire an additional clerk.

"We're already seeing activity by developers and money people across the city," he said. "We always felt like when you plant your flag in the ground, others will follow and that appears to be happening."

Elevation Development is wrapping up construction on its **Parkview retail project on Kissimmee's W192 corridor** as it preps the new retail developments at Citrus Ridge and Longwood.

The company also has several residential projects in the pipeline, including a **luxury urban brownstone development** in downtown Orlando's North Quarter.

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