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Villagio construction may start next year

Mediterranean, mixed-use project planned

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Break out the chianti and get ready to add Cape Villagio to Cape Coral's vocabulary.

Following a style that is becoming the standard for downtown Cape Coral, developers Bob Peterson and Bob Snow plan to add a 12-story, Mediterranean-style residential, office, restaurant and retail complex to the city's skyline.

"The project started out as three acres and one building but expanded," Peterson said. "We own the land, so there is no land acquisition involved. This project will happen."

The project's desire to combine residential and commercial space assures the area won't face a workday crowd that leaves the area deserted after business hours.

The developers hope to break ground on the first phase of the possibly more than \$10-million project in late 2006. The developer hopes to have the concept in the city planning department for a Planned Development Project approval in six to eight weeks, Peterson said.

The boundary for Cape Villagio stretches east from Del Prado Boulevard with land between Southeast 46th Lane and 47th Street to 17th Place as the location for the building.

The architecture agrees with other planned projects for the redevelopment area with its decidedly Mediterranean flavor.

Owners Monika and Tom Tannenbaum call the Terraces Rosa Vista their version of a European village and plan it for Southeast 47th Terrace and Southeast Fifth Place. It will contain offices, restaurants and specialty shops in about 23,000 square feet of space.

All within the redevelopment area, the Terraces at Rosa Vista, Cape Villagio, and the proposed Piazza di Venezia at Cape Coral Parkway and Atlantic Court by their conceptual drawings could pass for whole blocks of postcard-ready European seaside towns, more Italian than Greek.

The Piazza developer proposes two towers, resembling the Tower of Pisa, a Rialto arch modeled on the one in Venice, and a 10-screen movie theater in a Roman-Coliseum-style building.

At last count, developer Tom Cirrincione had two properties to buy to complete the 15 acres he needs for his massive project.

No less imposing on six acres, Cape Villagio has its own Italian-inspired flair.

Two sections of the buildings are planned to rise 12 stories; the rest will remain midrise at five floors.

Plans call for the project's parking buildings to be surrounded by the buildings and their commercial condominiums.

On top of the parking areas, which plan to have have separate elevators and parking for commercial and residential use, the developers plan four areas with a pool, fitness center, meeting rooms and other amenities.



- Artist's rendering of Cape Villagio.
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Between the buildings the plans propose a fountain and a European-style plaza. Restaurants and perhaps coffee shops with outdoor seating could make for a pleasant area to spend time.

Proposed are 240 condominium residences with floor plans ranging from 1,200 to 4,000 square feet. Commercial and professional office space will be offered from 800 to 4,000 square feet.

New building codes adopted by the redevelopment agency in July decreased the amount of commercial space to balance the area with residential space.

The redevelopment board has continuously stated its goal to create a vibrant downtown where people could live, work, dine and play.

Under the new codes, if adopted by the City Council the number of allowed residences would increase from 2,027 to 11,126.

"The codes follow the city master plan," Annette M. Barbaccia, city Department of Community Planning manager, has said. "They are meant to give us an urban center."

City planners hope to bring the new rules to City Council for approval in October.

If City Council adopts the codes and the allowable residential space is increased, that amount of residential growth wouldn't fit on the land as single-, two- or even three-story buildings.

"The only way for building to go is up," said Don Holder, 59, Cape Coral resident.

Under the new codes the redevelopment area would be divided into three zoning districts with taller buildings allowed.

- Gateway: 12 stories
- Edge: six stories
- Core: six stories

The gateway zones would be at either end of the redevelopment area. It stretches from the Cape Coral Bridge along Cape Coral parkway a block past Tudor Drive. What is now mostly empty lot but is proposed to become Cape Villagio sits in this area.

In the center of the redevelopment area would be the core zone. It would stretch from Southeast 15th Avenue to Candia Street. Farther west the core would be bookended by another set of an edge and gateway zone.

More than six Cape Coral residents were spoken to Monday and none had an objection to the increase in building height.

"I'm for anything that means progress on the Cape," said Leo Viola, 58.

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