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Cornelius News

2020 Vision: Cornelius is changing fast

By [Newsroom](#) · August 29, 2017 · [Post a comment](#)

By Dave Vieser. During the next three or four years, major transportation projects as well as significant new buildings will have a profound effect on how we live, work and get where we're going. One of the most significant new projects is at the corner of Main Street and Catawba Avenue where a dilapidated 80-year-old building will be demolished to make way for a mixed-use project.

Developer Legacy Pointe Properties, which purchased the site for \$447,500, would not comment.

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But sources said the town will work a land swap with Legacy to include a parking deck in the project which is adjacent to the Veterans Monument at Rotary Plaza. Parking is considered crucial to the new Arts Center which will be built just around the corner by the Police Department.

Legacy Pointe's project will represent millions of dollars of new investment downtown, not to mention the Arts Center.

Downtown will certainly be coming of age in 2020. Cornelius voters approved a bond package in 2013 to include downtown redevelopment of which the new Cornelius Arts Center and arts district are a part.

"Ever since that was announced, interest in downtown and Old Town Cornelius has been increasing. Multiple transportation projects are being discussed and planned to support growth as well," said Mayor Pro Tem Woody Washam.

There will be a big new Mama's Pizza building, a luxury condominium project on West Catawba Avenue not far from the new Hello Sailor restaurant and a new three-story office building on the corner of Bethel Church Road and Jetton Road Extension.

In all, projects comprising over 150,000 square feet will either break ground or be open for business during the next year, according to Wayne Herron, planning director. All told, it represents 71 acres.

In addition to I-77 toll lanes, transportation projects will proceed at a fever pitch.

Phase II widening of West Catawba Avenue from Jetton Road to Sam Furr Road gets under way next year with property acquisition. The new roadway will have four lanes, but still to be determined is what the town will do with the utility lines which run along the road. Burying them is costly.

Decisions must also be made about left turns, although the DOT has already agreed that the Jetton and Westmoreland intersections will remain as standard intersections with left turns allowed. The Sam Furr Road intersection will be addressed when the state widens Hwy. 73.



Hickory Street extension

On the east side of town, a new traffic circle may be installed on Main Street as part of a realignment project near the YMCA entrance.

Officials are still weighing the advantages of a traffic signal vs. a roundabout, but change is sure to come, sooner than later, thanks to “bonus allocation” funding via the I-77 toll deal.

Farther south, Granite Contracting has started to clear land for the extension of Hickory Street from Main into Antiquity. The \$800,000 project should be done this fall.

And work will begin soon on turn lanes at Bailey Road and Hwy. 115, and a connector off Hwy. 21 south of Catawba Avenue which, in conjunction with added side roads, will help east-west traffic.

Also, look for improvements to the “bookend” intersections of Catawba with Hwy. 21 and Torrence Chapel, although the precise timetable and design is not yet firm.

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