



## Orlando Sentinel

<http://www.orlandosentinel.com/business/orl-sodo2106feb21,0,6946721.story?coll=orl-business-headlines>

# Condos, retail proposed for south of downtown

Jack Snyder  
Sentinel Staff Writer

February 21, 2006

Downtown Orlando's explosive growth is spilling beyond the city center with a large, urban infill development proposed for Orange Avenue south of Orlando Regional Medical Center.

The live-and-work development would be called SoDo, for "south of downtown" -- a takeoff on New York's SoHo district, a part of Manhattan south of Houston Street.

Planned for about 20 acres between Grant and Crystal Lake streets, the \$100 million project would include 300 condominiums and more than 300,000 square feet of retail space, including some nationally known anchor tenants, plus restaurants and an undetermined amount of office space.

The joint-venture partners, North American Properties Inc. and Kimco Developers Inc., have filed tentative plans with the city.

Dean J. Grandin, Orlando's planning-and-development director, said the city's growth-management plan has been amended to accommodate the development, though specific details will be scrutinized by city planners next month.

Concerns, Grandin said, include traffic and the project's effect on a residential area just north of the development, which is on the west side of Orange just north of Michigan Street.

"Traffic is always the constraining factor," he said.

Conceptual drawings of the project show an entrance off Orange Avenue with shops, second-floor office space and condos. A major retail area at the west end would include land once used by the now-defunct Orlando Drive-In Theater.

Grandin's initial impression of the project is favorable.

"My first thought was we would like this downtown," he said, rather than a mile and a half south of the city center. "But downtown real-estate prices probably would make that difficult. It is close to downtown."



The chief planner said the clustering of such major urban projects around the edge of the city's core could eventually redefine "downtown Orlando."

"It may come to be viewed as hospital to hospital," he said, referring to Florida Hospital's main campus on North Orange near the Winter Park line, and Orlando Regional Medical Center on South Orange near the proposed SoDo site.

Tonya Creekmore, North American Properties' vice president of leasing, said construction could start later this year, depending on city approvals. The development would be done in a single phase because research indicates there's strong demand for the space, she said.

Creekmore wouldn't discuss possible retailers, except to say they would be "nationally recognized names."

The property as it exists now includes a large retail building with an office-furniture store and a paint-ball supplies store. Three out parcels on Orange Avenue include a closed chicken restaurant, an operating Pollo Tropical Chicken on the Grill outlet, and a Taco Bell that closed recently because of a fire.

Privately held North American Properties, based in Cincinnati, develops retail space, apartments, offices and mixed-use projects. This would be its second local venture: It also developed the 500,000-square-foot MarketPlace at Seminole Towne Center in Sanford.

Kimco Developers is a wholly owned subsidiary of Kimco Realty Corp., a publicly traded real-estate investment trust based in New Hyde, N.Y. Kimco owns the nation's largest portfolio of neighborhood and community shopping centers, with interests in more than 1,000 properties totaling about 132 million square feet.

Florida is one of its major markets.

*Jack Snyder can be reached at 407-420-5094 or [jsnyder@orlandosentinel.com](mailto:jsnyder@orlandosentinel.com).*

*Copyright © 2006, [Orlando Sentinel](#) | [Get home delivery - up to 50% off](#)*