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## Cedar Center proposal increases in size

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**SOUTH EUCLID** — Cedar Center redevelopment plans are moving ahead, in a good way.

Preliminary, first-phase site plans submitted by the Coral Co., the local developer of what will be called Cedar Center North on Warrensville

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## CEDAR

From A1

Center and Cedar roads, show the company is planning to build about 8,000 square feet more of retail and restaurant space than plans showed in August.

New plans call for 34,580 square feet of retail and restaurant space to be developed in the first of four building phases at the site.

Community Services Director Keith Benjamin said the increased space is good news for the development, coming in the face of "a very challenging fiscal time."

Peter Rubin, president of the Coral Co., which was the developer of the south side of Cedar Center in University Heights, said the market for tenants has been positive.

"The leasing of the space is going well, despite the tough economy," Rubin said. "It's a testament to the demographic of the area."

Leasing began a year ago and the positive response from future tenants led to the increased space being built

during phase one. Rubin said phase one will entail construction from the northwest corner of Warrensville Center and Cedar roads, where the Starbucks coffee shop building is located, west to approximately the second traffic light in front of Cedar Center.

The new plans also show 16-foot-wide "greenways" will be installed in front of, and connecting, each building. The greenways will each include a wide walkway.

A substantial public green space will also be included adjacent to the western entrance, set back from Cedar Road.

Rubin said the green space is a necessary piece to the puzzle, in that its urban openness creates a destination.

"I was just doing some research and when those buildings (the old Cedar Center) were being built in 1957 or '58, the buses that went up Cedar Road didn't go beyond Warrensville Center Road.

"They would just turn around and go back because there was nothing else there. More public space is needed there."

Finally, three of the first-

phase buildings will be constructed closer to Cedar Road than originally planned in order to create more of a street connection and presence.

The complete plans can be found on the South Euclid Web site, [cityofsoutheuclid.com](http://cityofsoutheuclid.com).

There are some hurdles that must be overcome before on-site work can begin, but Rubin said he is hopeful construction can begin in October on what he termed a \$25 million project.

Those hurdles include the EPA issuing "no further action" and "covenant not to sue" letters to the city.

A "no further action" letter states the property has been cleaned as effectively as possible of contaminants, and a "covenant not to sue" letter lets it be known the city is no longer liable for environmental clean-ups.

Benjamin said the letters could come in May or June.

The city received \$1.8 million in county "brownfield" redevelopment money as a loan, 40 percent of which is forgivable, to clean up the property.

Monday, City Council

passed legislation that continues the sale of notes, begun in 2007, related to the city's acquisition and preparation of the Cedar Center North property. The city, which paid about \$17 million for the site, will sell the property to Coral.

The sale comes in four phases, with the city hoping the economy will pick up and make succeeding phases more valuable. Meanwhile, Coral is doing the project in phases as a means of reducing its cash outlay at any one time.

Council learned this week the project's bonds were given the highest credit rating possible by Moody's Investor's Service, which should help improve sales.

The project is also contingent on tax increment financing, in which the expected tax increases from a project are used to pay, in advance, for the project's construction.

The Cleveland Heights-University Heights School District, in which Cedar Center is located, must approve such financing before it goes forward. The final plans are due in February 2012.