

# Restaurants, retail coming to new center on Vanderbilt Beach Road

**Q:** What is being built on that strip of vacant land just east of Island Walk and west of Tuffy (Tire and Auto Service Center) on Vanderbilt Beach Road? After laying quiet for many years, there is now a lot of movement on that parcel of land.

— **John W. Zasoba, North Naples**

**A:** What you see being built is merely the beginning of what is planned by this time next year for Vanderbilt Commons, a new commercial development with restaurant, retail and medical space.

A proposed retail center fronting Vanderbilt Beach Road just west of the shopping center on Collier Boulevard anchored by Winn-Dixie, Vanderbilt Commons will include more than 30 units, said George Vukobratovich, president/broker of Welsh Companies Florida. Welsh, a Naples-based commercial real estate firm, will own and operate the new retail center, Vukobratovich said.

“This is a big project,” he said. “We’re invested in this, our company, our investors. We are going to own it and operate it.”



Vanderbilt Commons retail center will be built fronting Vanderbilt Beach Road just west of Collier Boulevard. Midgard Self Storage's three-story warehouse is under construction at the rear of the property. (Photo: Tim Aten/Naples Daily News)

The first phase — a nearly 35,000-square-foot, one-story strip center — is targeted for completion in the first quarter of 2017. The second phase — a nearly 37,000-square-foot strip center that practically mirrors the first — is scheduled for completion in the third quarter of next year.

“We want Phase 2 to come on line maybe a year from now, maybe sooner if we can do it,” Vukobratovich said.

Midgard Self Storage, under construction on more than 2 acres on the northwest corner of Vanderbilt Commons, will be a 95,550-square-foot, three-story, climate-controlled miniwarehouse.



A conceptual sketch of Midgard Self Storage, the first business under construction in Vanderbilt Commons, a commercial project on Vanderbilt Beach Road west of Collier Boulevard. (Photo: Patrick M. Pillot Architect Inc.)

“That was the first stage of selling a piece of that property, but it’s not anything to do with the retail that’s going across the front,” Vukobratovich said.

The two strip centers, in line on 6.5 acres along Vanderbilt Beach Road, will have about 16 units of varying sizes. The intention is to open three restaurants in each building, but no more,” Vukobratovich said.

“We are going to be part of trying to do a good mix of local tenants and also national tenants,” he said. “That creates a synergy that makes a center work.”

The only tenant specifically named so far is CPR Cell Phone Repair Naples, a company that repairs cellphones, computers and other electronic devices. Another CPR location operates on Radio Road in East Naples.

“That’s a very needed service out there,” Vukobratovich said.

Although none of the restaurants were named, the endcap on the eastern edge of the second phase is planned for a drive-thru window.

“We don’t have that signed yet, but that’s there,” Vukobratovich said.

Other businesses expected to sign on include a pet store, nail salon, hair salon and a cellphone provider. The project has medical zoning, as well, Vukobratovich said.

“We anticipate some medical services,” he said.



Architectural renderings show the first retail center proposed for Vanderbilt Commons, a retail center coming to Vanderbilt Beach Road west of Collier Boulevard. (Photo: Don Stevenson Design)

The exterior of the strip center is planned to have an Old Florida look, with shell rock stone on the face of part of the buildings.

“We are going to do some things we know fit our environment, our community,” Vukobratovich said. “This site is really going to serve the local community.”

Because Vanderbilt Beach Road doesn’t have an Interstate 75 interchange, as do neighboring Pine Ridge and Immokalee roads, it lacks the businesses necessary to serve residents in that fast-growing area. Vanderbilt Commons is one of the first commercial centers designed to serve local residents driving west from Golden Gate Estates, Vukobratovich said.

“The amount of rooftops coming out there will blow your mind. It’s unbelievable,” he said.

Immediately to the east of the self-storage business will be a water retention area. To the east of the pond are two lots, each more than 1 acre, for future development. This northeast corner is directly behind the second strip center.

Vanderbilt Commons will occupy more than 14 acres bordered to the east by Mission Hills shopping center, to the west by The Falls of Portofino townhomes, and to the north by preserve area for the Black Bear Ridge subdivision. At one time planned to be the Carolina Commons condominium complex, the project’s scope changed over time from a residential neighborhood to a mixed-use project to a solely commercial development.