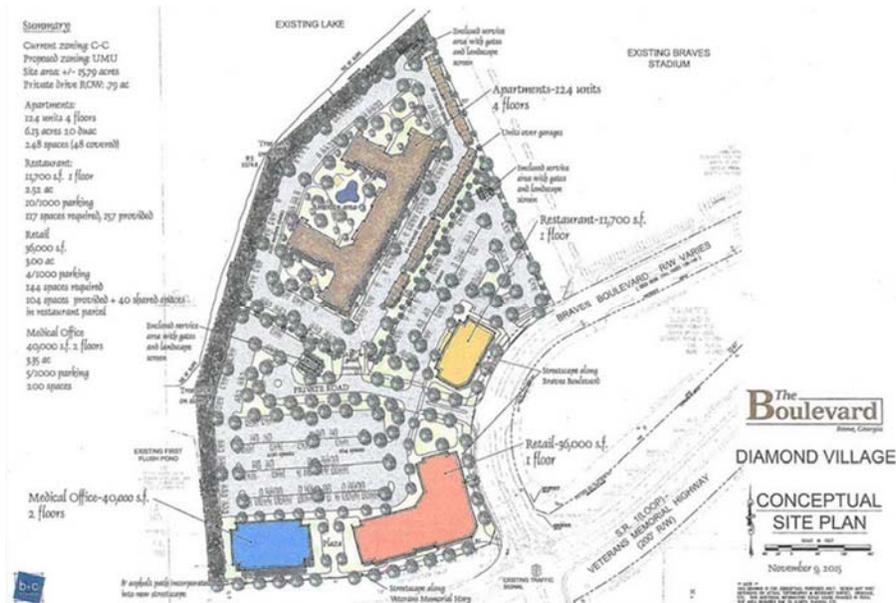


# Shops, apartments planned for tract next to Braves stadium

Doug Walker – Nov. 17, 2015



Ten years and one month after purchasing property next to State Mutual Stadium, Doc Kibler and his Northwest Georgia LLC are moving to build apartments, offices and a small shopping center on the tract.

Kibler has filed a request to rezone [15.79 acres](#) of the 21-acre tract he owns on the northwest side of Braves Boulevard.

He's asking for Urban Mixed Use zoning in place of Community Commercial.

If approved, plans call for 124 apartments on about six acres and fill the rest with an 11,700-square-foot restaurant, 36,000 square feet of retail space and a 40,000-square-foot medical office building.

The Rome-Floyd County Planning Commission will review the rezoning request at its Dec. 3 meeting.

Wright Ledbetter of Ledbetter Properties said Monday that the apartment complex proposed for the stadium location is the same one that Charles Williams REIC and he had wanted to put on a 9.16-acre tract off Riverside Parkway.

The apartments, and a restaurant on an adjacent parcel, would have been the first activity on Ledbetter's proposed CityCenter development. The 80-plus-acre parcel split by Burwell Creek is owned by the city of Rome, but under option to the company.

"We were not able to make the economics work to make this multi-family project feasible on the city property, so we believe we have found what is the next best site," Ledbetter said.

Charles Williams Jr. said some minor changes have been made to plans for the RiverPoint apartments, based on site characteristics.

The upscale apartments are being designed with an English Tudor look and would lease for an average in excess of \$900 a month.

"Our lender, our market analysts and our appraisal team feel like this is a great alternate site," Williams said.

Kibler said his proposed development is not much different from a plan his group put forward six years ago, except for the residential component. He said the timing is better now than in 2009 and the apartments will work well with the retail node.

He also sees the next-door State Mutual Stadium — with big crowds and lights on for almost 70 nights a year — as a positive amenity for the residential development.

"I don't see that as a negative, it gives you the opportunity for some entertainment without having to get in your car and go anywhere for it," Kibler said.

The layout of the apartments also would allow many of the residents to have a view of the Oostanaula River. The common-area amenities, a swimming pool, patio and barbecue area, will be tucked inside the wings of the building.

"And this site is already tied into the trail system," Williams said. "With the other site, we were going to be challenged to make that happen."

Ledbetter said the recent campaign to oust incumbents from the Rome City Commission for supporting the Riverside Parkway property had nothing to do with the decision to relocate the development.

"At the end of the day, the decision was driven by economics," Williams added.

Both said the Riverside Parkway site across from Ridge Ferry Park is going to be expensive to build on. In addition to the Burwell Creek wetlands, the property also contains a long-buried city dump.

"It's got so many problems," Ledbetter said. "But we continue to hope we can find the right balance of end-users and our costs to have some feasible redevelopment that will be an economic generator for our community."