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# A New Arbor Gate

**Public To Get First Look At Revamped Proposal**

**The Capital Times :: METRO :: C1**

**Tuesday, May 8, 2007**

**Mary Yeater Rathbun The Capital Times**

The public will get its first look Wednesday at a proposed \$41 million development to be built on the south side of the Beltline at Todd Drive.

A Potter Lawson architectural team led by director of design Doug Hursh will be making an informational presentation to the Madison Urban Design Commission on the proposal by the Mortenson Investment Group, or MIG, and the Baxter family, which owns Kayser Ford and Westwind Associates, a local development company.

Although Arbor Gate carries the same name as a previous \$40 million Baxter family proposal for the east side of Todd Drive, it is a far different project from that one, which was planned as a companion to MIG's proposed \$22 million project, Landmark Gate, for the west side of Todd Drive. Together the two were going to create a "gateway" into the Arbor Hills neighborhood, Hursh, who was heading design of both projects, said about a year ago.

Landmark Gate died last year after the state passed a law making it illegal for municipalities to use condemnation, or its power of eminent domain, to buy properties for private redevelopment unless the properties are blighted. The law defined blighted as dilapidated or inadequate for other reasons such as sanitation, crowding or safety.

MIG had been able to buy the Selective Video adult entertainment store and Grand China restaurant. But because it was unable to reach deals on the Open Pantry and Bridge Club sites, MIG had turned to the city to buy those two properties. Neither was blighted under the definition.

The new Arbor Gate proposal calls for two five-story buildings with an attached four-level parking structure rather than two three-story buildings with underground parking and a five-story hotel behind them, according to the architects' description. There is still a three-story building planned for the area behind the two buildings fronting the Beltline, but it is now a second-phase 30,000-square-foot office building with no identified start date, rather than a 135-room hotel.

All three of the first-phase buildings would be connected with skywalks at the second- and third-floor levels. The parking structure, with one level underground and three above ground, would have 477 parking stalls. The architects say that is big enough to accommodate the needs of both phases of the project. They propose building to that size now, rather than building smaller and expanding it when the second phase is built, for logistic and cost reasons. In addition to the parking structure spaces there will be 227 surface lot spaces in the new complex.

The first phase buildings would include 24,800 square feet of retail space on their ground floors and 134,200 square feet of office space above. Both buildings would face the Beltline between Todd Drive and Coho Street where Allen Kitchen & Bath and Verlo Mattress Company are currently located.

In February, the Madison Plan Commission cleared the way for the project by authorizing the relocation of Allen Kitchen & Bath and Verlo Mattress to a new building being built next to Sergenian's Floor coverings at 2805 W. Beltline Hwy. The building that used to house Midwest Billiards is being torn down to make way for the new 52,000-square-foot building that will be occupied by the bath and mattress stores. The billiards store has already relocated to the other side of the Beltline.

E-mail: [mrathbun@madison.com](mailto:mrathbun@madison.com)