



An artist's rendering depicts Twickenham Square, a \$100 million commercial development in downtown Huntsville.

Rendering courtesy of Bristol Development Group

THE GATEWAY TO DOWNTOWN HUNTSVILLE

Twickenham Square

BY KIMBERLY BALLARD

Huntsville is not a city that backs down from a complex challenge. When Huntsville Mayor Tommy Battle called five diverse commercial developers to the table, all independently seeking building opportunities in downtown Huntsville, and asked them to forge professional partnerships that would spearhead an unprecedented building project for the state of Alabama, all it took was a little moving and shaking.

The result is Twickenham Square, a \$100 million commercial development located on nearly three acres at the high-profile corner of Gallatin Street and St. Clair Avenue, adjacent to Huntsville Hospital.

"Twickenham Square began for us two years ago while looking for a location to build a new bank," says Gerry Shannon, a principal at Triad Properties, one of the

developers involved in the project. "We were asked to meet with Mayor Battle, who revealed a plan to develop that area for retail shopping, restaurants, a Publix, a hotel, luxury apartments, and a Class A medical office tower, all connected by a state-of-the-art parking deck."

Opening in phases starting in late 2013 – with expected completion by late fall 2014 – Twickenham Square will feature an airy

streetscape with pedestrian-only traffic and restaurants with plenty of open-air seating.

"It is hailed to be Huntsville's most exciting urban mixed-use project and economic development jewel," says Shannon. "We certainly believe that Twickenham Square is a game-changer for the city of Huntsville, and it is being touted as the new 'gateway' to downtown."

Along with a proposed Harvard Street extension, at the city core's westernmost end, Twickenham Square will change the skyline over downtown Huntsville.

"It has taken over a year and a half to coordinate, and it has been a challenge bringing so many people together," says Mayor Battle. "We brought in attorneys to draw up the proper agreements and bankers who worked out the financing. We are now on the fast track to transforming about three blocks of land bordering Big Spring Park into a place where we can literally live up to our city theme – a smart place to live, work and play."

W.H. Councill Parking Deck

The ground began to move in late 2012 when the City of Huntsville began constructing the \$10 million four-level W.H. Councill Parking Deck, comprising 951 parking spaces.

"We were the first in and will be the first out," says Jeff Easter, head of the General Services Department of the City of Huntsville. "The deck has several unique aspects. The first floor is very high, giving it an open-air feel. The post-tensioned cast-in-place concrete construction is very modern, with 100 percent LED lighting that saves energy costs."

Most parking decks are pre-cast and assembled in place. They cause an automobile to dip when it hits the joints. The new deck will be a smooth ride from top to bottom.

"It is also an attractive addition to the downtown skyline and touches every other aspect of the development, giving access to shoppers, residents, workers and visitors to downtown," he says.

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Gerry Shannon,
principal at Triad Properties

Driven to improve health



Huntsville Hospital Health System's Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) is very flexible. Sometimes it's a free clinic for flu shots, while other times it's a place for cholesterol and bone density screenings or one-on-one medical counseling. The MMU can even become the headquarters for a disaster response team, should the need arise. Wherever it goes, the MMU is a valuable resource for our health care team as we reach out to a community in need.

To learn more about the services offered at Huntsville Hospital, visit our website at huntsvillehospital.org/services.



Gerry Shannon & William Stroud with Triad Properties, Mayor Tommy Battle and Tom Hunt with PHD Hotels made the announcement in July 2012 that Homewood Suites by Hilton will join the Twickenham Square redevelopment project.

Photo by Bob Gathany



Publix at Twickenham Square

Dudley Parker, principal at PGM Properties, says over a year ago, his group had identified downtown as needing a Publix grocery store.

“We went to Bristol Development and asked, ‘How can we help?’ We partnered with them to bring a 33,500-square-foot Publix to the deal, complete with pharmacy, deli and a bakery. Twenty-four thousand square feet of commercial and retail shops are a selling point for a chain like Publix. We are glad to be there and proud and happy to be working with the Housing Authority and the City of Huntsville to

target people downtown and bring them a much needed service.”

Twickenham Place

Triad Properties is developing the five-story, 110,000-square-foot medical office building called Twickenham Place. Designed by Chapman Sisson Architects with Robins & Morton and Fite Building Company handling the construction, which began in January 2013, a bank and retail shops will grace the first floor, which will be structurally smaller than the floors above to accommodate a covered breezeway and drive-thrus. The building will connect to Huntsville Hospital via an air-conditioned

skyway bridge, providing pedestrian access to and from the hospital. The parking deck will connect on the top four levels with an elevator in the lobby.

Huntsville Hospital is moving its clinical lab to this location, and a large doctors’ group will occupy the fifth floor. The hospital will maintain 250 parking spaces in the deck.

“On any given day, 20,000 people come in and out of Huntsville Hospital. Forty percent of them are from outside Madison County,” Shannon says. “Now people can visit a patient in the hospital, walk across the bridge where there is a Publix, a variety of restaurants and plenty of shopping. If they are visiting someone in the hospital from out of town, there is a Homewood Suites hotel within walking distance.”

Homewood Suites at Twickenham Square

“We develop and manage hotels – that is what we do for a living, so bringing an upscale Hilton product like Homewood Suites to a unique development like Twickenham Square is very exciting,” says Hunt. “Homewood Suites is an extended day hotel with kitchens in every room. Rates include a hot meal Monday through Thursday, and a free breakfast every day, but having a Publix and restaurants within walking distance provides a great dynamic.”

The Shops at Twickenham Square

According to Sam Yeager, co-founder and principal at Bristol Development Group, there will be 7,000 square feet of retail space. "The upscale Shops at Twickenham Square anchored by the big Publix will appeal to people who live in the historic district and Twickenham itself. We are extremely excited to be a part of this venture and believe it will also bring a level of convenience for the thousands of employees who work downtown."

Wesley Crunkleton, CPM and a qualifying broker at Crunkleton & Associates, is providing leasing services for Twickenham Square. "It is truly the first major urban development in downtown Huntsville. We have limited retail space available, and the interest level has been tremendous during the pre-leasing stage. We are currently talking to some great new restaurant concepts I know Huntsville will enjoy."

The Artisan at Twickenham Square

Bristol is also developing the Artisan at Twickenham Square, which will be 246 one- and two-bedroom luxury apartments that feature granite countertops, stainless steel appliances and a private courtyard with a pool. The Artisan will begin leasing in late 2013. Leases will run \$1,000 to \$1,800 a month. ■



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