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Developer to file plans to redevelop Hildebrand farm

Stephen Fenley hopes dialogue with neighbors will ease their acceptance of mixed-use project

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Business First Staff Writer

With his proposal for the redevelopment of the 36-acre Hildebrand farm at U.S. 42 and the Watterson Expressway, Stephen Fenley is trying to create "more of a signature front door" for the corridor. He's hopeful that area residents will find his coming project a welcome addition.

The developer, a partner with Fenley Real Estate, intends to file plans with the Louisville Metro Planning Commission for a project called The Midlands sometime after March 1.

Construction of the \$90 million development, which would include a six-story hotel, multiple styles of housing, office space, shops and restaurants, could start as early as next year and be completed by late 2009, Fenley said. Infrastructure work could begin later this year.

One of the project's more unusual features is a "roundabout," or traffic circle, at its planned main entrance off of Kentucky 22.

More than a dozen meetings held with residents

Conceptual planning for The Midlands has been under way since 2004, when a partnership that consists of Fenley, his brother, David Fenley, president and CEO of the real estate firm, and developer Jonathan Blue bought the Hildebrand farm property from owner Margaret Hildebrand for nearly \$5 million.

In the time since the purchase, the developers have held a series of meetings and discussions -- beyond those required during the design process -- with residents of the neighboring cities of Crossgate and Graymoor-Devondale to gauge their level of support for the project, address concerns and study suggestions for the transformation of the property.

Stephen Fenley also launched a Web site, www.midlandsproject.com, to keep neighbors and others who are interested apprised of the development.

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