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Sammamish finally proceeds with major housing, commercial project

May 20, 2024 at 6:41 pm



1 of 4 | Community members attend a groundbreaking ceremony for Sammamish Town Center near Lower Sammamish Commons in Sammamish on Saturday. (Ivy Ceballos / The Seattle Times)

By

[Heidi Groover](#)

Seattle Times business reporter

After years of opposition and delay, new housing is coming to Sammamish.

An expansive project, known as Sammamish Town Center, is set to bring hundreds of new apartments and town homes to one of the region's

wealthiest cities, where the vast majority of homes are single-family and many residents [lament potential changes](#) to their community's small-town feel.

The project has been in the works since at least 2008, with city plans describing a “wedding cake approach” of taller buildings in the center of the development and smaller buildings on the edges.

While several apartment and retail buildings are already finished in the area [near](#) 228th Avenue Southeast and Southeast Fourth Street, the larger plan for additional housing and retail space in the Town Center stalled for years amid concerns from local politicians and residents.

Former City Councils adopted development moratoriums and traffic regulations, drawing legal challenges. In recent years, a state board repeatedly found the city out of compliance with the Growth Management Act, which requires cities to plan for growth.

But more recently, [significant turnover](#) on the town's City Council has ushered in a more development-friendly City Hall.



Samamish Mayor Kali Clark speaks during a groundbreaking ceremony for Sammamish Town Center near Lower Sammamish Commons in Sammamish on Saturday. (Ivy Ceballo / The Seattle Times)

Mayor Kali Clark said in an interview Friday that recent elections show Sammamish residents are more open to growth at the Town Center site.

“Things have changed here and I think we’re building excitement,” said Clark, who was elected to the City Council in 2021 and became mayor the following summer.

Councilmember Kent Treen, the sole council member to vote against a development agreement for the Town Center project in December 2022, did not return requests for comment.

In a [voters’ guide statement](#) last fall, Treen wrote that he has “consistently voted to protect our community from haphazard development which would fundamentally alter life in Sammamish.”

The first phase of construction, commemorated with a groundbreaking ceremony Saturday, will add 38 town homes. Future phases are expected to add 48 more town homes, roughly 600 new apartments and a total of about 100,000 square feet of commercial space in coming years.



CEO of Innovation Matthew Samwick speaks during a groundbreaking ceremony for Sammamish Town Center near Lower Sammamish Commons in Sammamish on Saturday. (Ivy Ceballo / The Seattle Times)

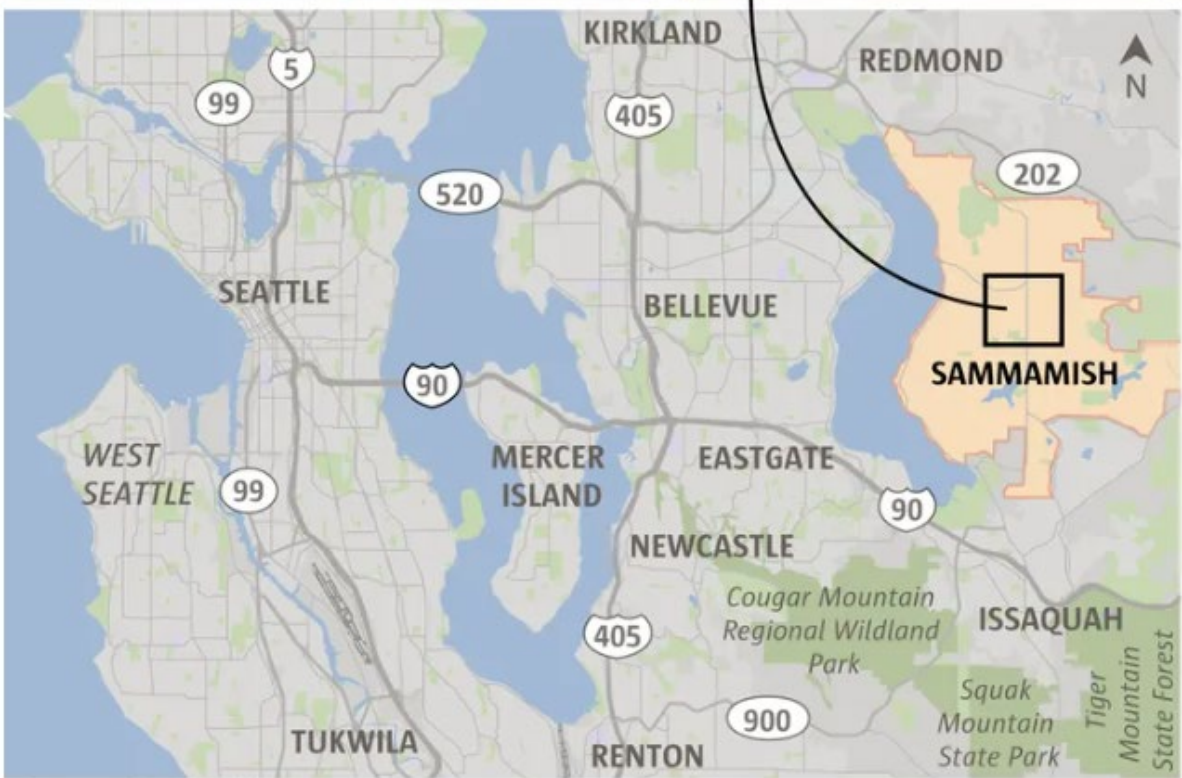
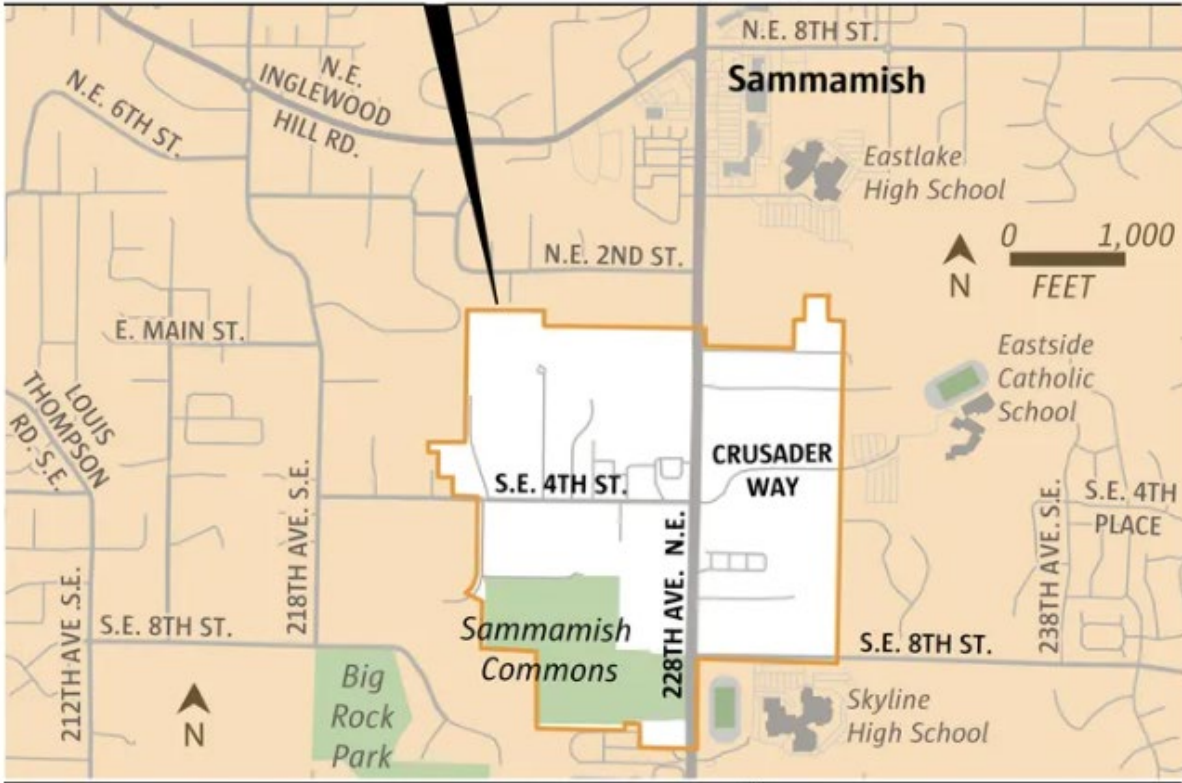
The town homes and apartments will be predominantly market-rate, with some affordable units.

Six town homes and at least 77 apartments will be affordable to people making 80% of area median income, or about [\\$71,000](#) for a single person in King County. Discussions between the city and developer about how many apartments will be affordable are ongoing.

While the developer has not yet determined exact costs, town home prices are likely to “start somewhere just above \$1 million apiece,” said Matthew Samwick, CEO of the project developer, Innovation Realty Partners. That cost is still decidedly high-end but below the [\\$1.6 million](#) median price of a single-family home in the Sammamish area last month.

To keep up with growth in the coming two decades, Sammamish needs to add 2,100 new homes between 2019 and 2044, all of them affordable to people earning 80% of area median income or less, according to King County estimates.

Town Center project



Sources: Esri, STCA

MARK NOWLIN / THE SEATTLE TIMES

“We’re really trying to find that balance of ... yes, we have to take on growth and we would rather concentrate it than spreading it out and having to take down way more trees and way more land by putting [in] single-family homes,” Clark said.

As construction begins on the first group of town homes, the permitting process is still underway for some of the apartments and retail space. The development comes as high interest rates and construction costs are slowing the commercial real estate market.

But if the full vision comes to pass — with town homes coming online in 2026 and hundreds of apartments finished in the following years — the development will mark a notable shift for a town that is, like many others in the region, today dominated by single-family homes and winding cul-de-sacs.

The region’s population has boomed in recent decades, leading local leaders and planners to warn against sprawl, said Samwick, the developer. “It is just not possible anymore to balance the interests by creating another suburb, and once that decision has been made to not grow outward, but upward; the smaller cities have to catch up.”

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Source: <https://www.seattletimes.com/business/real-estate/sammamish-finally-proceeds-with-major-housing-commercial-project/>

Construction starting on hundreds of homes, retail in downtown Sammamish

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Around 300 units of multifamily housing will be built over retail in the first phase of the Sammamish Town Center development. Townhouses also are planned for the first phase. After years of land assemblage and entitlement work, construction will kick off with a groundbreaking on Saturday.

COURTESY OF INNOVATION REALTY PARTNERS



By [Marc Stiles](#) – Senior Reporter, Puget Sound Business Journal

May 16, 2024 **Updated** May 18, 2024 9:33am PDT

A long-held knock against the young city of Sammamish is it lacks a downtown.

There was no there there, and until last decade when the Metropolitan Market-anchored Village at Sammamish Town Center opened, residents typically had to drive to shop and dine. Some mid-rise apartment buildings also were built.

Another developer, Innovation Realty Partners, is starting construction on the first phase of a larger project that will have up to 1,500 homes and retail.

IRP and the city are hosting a groundbreaking at 10 a.m. Saturday, for the first phase of its portion of Town Center. It will have 86 townhomes, around 300 multifamily units, including senior housing, plus 82,000 square feet for restaurants, a pub and retail shops.

IRP says Sammamish Town Center will have "an abundance of open spaces with urban plazas, gardens and a trail system for walking and biking for ease of access to the surrounding neighborhoods."

Company founder and CEO Matthew Samwick, who started assembling over 90 contiguous acres for the project nine years ago, said he hopes to create the energy of University Village.

"We are doing this organically, which is very hard," he said. "It's critical to make sure that the ground floor and the street commercial activity wins the day."

Sammamish can't be beat in terms of market strength. The city contains two of the Puget Sound region's five wealthiest ZIP codes, with median household incomes of around \$230,000. This is according to the latest Business Journal research, which will publish in Friday's print edition and online.

Construction will start with 38 townhomes by Terrene Homes of Bellevue.

Construction will start shortly, said Samwick, who expects around nine months of road and other infrastructure, followed by 12 to 18 months of townhome construction.

"The entire real estate community is hopeful that interest rates and costs come down to make the product more affordable and easier to deliver," Samwick said.

The developer of the second batch of townhomes hasn't yet been selected, according to Samwick, who said the two phases could be built concurrently.

Pillar Properties and sibling company Merrill Gardens [will develop the multifamily and senior housing](#). "That would likely start sometime in 2026 and take 18 to months to 24 months to complete," Samwick said.

The first phase's approximately 16 acres constitute 18% of IRP's Sammamish Town Center holdings. The city designated approximately 240 acres for its town center plan, with an IRP affiliate owning 70% of the developable acres yet to be built within the plan area.

Pillar and Merrill Gardens' parent company R.D. Merrill [has invested](#) in IRP's Sammamish Town Center, [as has Benaroya Co.](#)

Benaroya has been repaid, Samwick said, and IRP and Merrill capital continue to carry the project. "There's been no external debt on this. ... The vertical construction will obviously be financed with debt, and (Terrene is) working hard to get that done. We'll take it on a subdivision-by-subdivision basis going forward."

Editor's note: *This story has been updated to note other Town Center projects have been developed.*

Source: <https://www.bizjournals.com/seattle/news/2024/05/16/downtown-sammamish-construction-start-town-center.html>



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Innovation Realty Partners, Sammamish Community Members to Celebrate Groundbreaking of New Town Center

May 17, 2024

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Rendering by Urbal Architecture

By [Kate Snyder](#)

After years of planning, the first phase of the Sammamish Town Center development is preparing to get off the ground. Members of the community and development team will celebrate the milestone during a groundbreaking event on Saturday, May 18, that will mark the beginning of construction for what officials plan to be a new downtown for a city that has gone without one since its inception more than two decades ago.

“The goal is to bring out of the ground the city’s town center,” said Matthew Samwick, CEO of Innovation Realty Partners, the developer behind a portion of the land dedicated to the project. “The City of Sammamish is the newest city in western Washington. It was incorporated in 1999, so this is its one and only shot at creating a vibrant heart of the city, a downtown that it’s never had, a main street it’s never had. The goal is to bring all kinds of housing choices that don’t exist in the city together with goods and services... so [residents] don’t have to do the daily errands of life outside of the city.”

Samwick further pointed out that a real downtown could help turn Sammamish into a more pedestrian-oriented city than it is now.

The first phase of the project includes the construction of Brownstones West, a two-story residential complex located west of Metropolitan Market at the corner of 222nd PL SE and SE 4th Street. Brownstones West consists of 38 townhomes on five acres, with 21 units planned to front a park-like setting in the city. Also on that site is planned regional stormwater infrastructure. Another planned subdivision is Brownstones East, consisting of 48 townhomes. Phase one will also include the first part of a mixed-use area comprising 300 apartments and 82,000 square feet of commercial space, which



Rendering by Urbal Architecture

will be followed by the construction of 294 additional apartments and more commercial space totaling 18,000 square feet. Open space and other public amenities will also be incorporated into phase one. Samwick said it's unclear at the moment exactly how many phases the project will consist of all together.

Town centers can inject needed economic boosts to cities that have them, Samwick said. By providing space for public services and businesses as well as residential areas and transportation options, the district can grow into a suburban-urban area that brings growth and activity that benefits the city overall.

"We've reached an inflection point in the United States where the suburbs can no longer grow outward and they have to grow upward," he said. "This is a blending, bringing the best minds and people and services together to create a vibrant urban area in what is up to now been a suburban area."

In 2019, Innovation Realty Partners and Pillar Properties announced the formation of a joint venture partnership to develop, manage and operate phase one of the Sammamish Town Center.

Innovation Realty Partners, LLC and its affiliated companies were formed in 2010 to undertake complex real estate projects, including the Sammamish Town Center, according to the firm's website. In the past several years, Innovation Realty Partners has become the largest private property owner within the Sammamish Town Center district, aggregating close to 90 acres. The firm plans to develop future phases of the town center in accordance with the city's adopted plan and as the market demands.

Source: <https://news.theregistryps.com/innovation-realty-partners-sammamish-community-members-to-celebrate-groundbreaking-of-new-town-center/>



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FEATURED

Next Phase of Sammamish Town Center Project Underway



L-R: Sarah Perry, King County Council; Sid Gupta, Sammamish City Council; Roisin O'Farrell, Sammamish City Council; Dow Constantine, King County Executive; Kali Clark, Mayor of Sammamish; Matt Samwick, CEO of Innovation Realty Partners; Amy Lam, Sammamish City Council; Karen Howe, Sammamish Deputy Mayor; Pam Stuart, Sammamish City Council; and Congresswoman Kim Schrier.

Photo by Saskia Potter

The next phase of the center will include 86 townhomes, of which six will be designated as affordable housing. The core mixed-use area will feature roughly 300 multifamily units, including 77 affordable units and a senior living

community, as well commercial retail space for restaurants, a pub, and other retail locations.

“The Town Center will provide more restaurants, shops, commercial spaces, and gathering places to serve Sammamish residents. It will make our city more walkable, connect trails and promote transit usage. In addition, affordable units, homes for first-time buyers, and downsizing options are vital components of a well-rounded, intergenerational community,” said Sammamish Mayor Kali Clark in a press statement. “Places that unite communities are more important now than ever before.”

In 2015, Innovation Realty Partners, on behalf of STCA, started the multiyear process of assembling 90-plus acres for development. The planning, designing, and creation of the Sammamish Town Center is taking place in multiple phases over a period of several years.

Source: https://www.425magazine.com/culture/sammamish-town-center-project-groundbreaking/article_12615766-16c7-11ef-8d92-6f2e3e247267.html

[Seattle & Northwest](#) + [Seattle](#) | May 17, 2024



By: Jasmine Kilman

Next Phase of Sammamish Town Center Breaks Ground

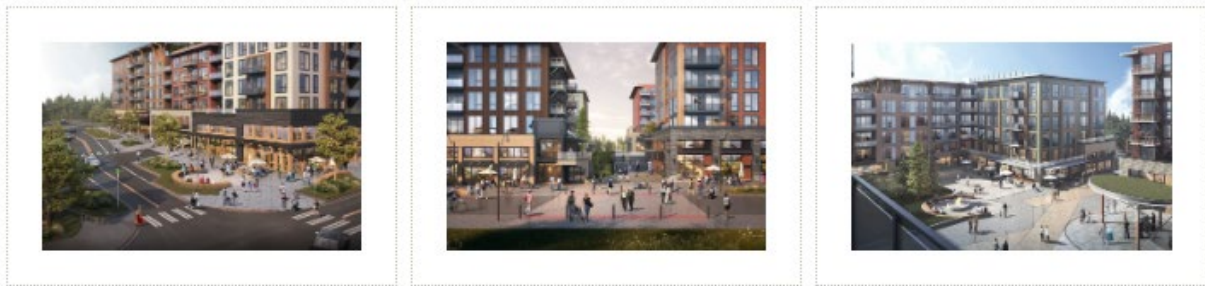
The City of Sammamish and [Innovation Realty Partners, LLC](#) are poised to break ground on a long-awaited project.

A groundbreaking ceremony to mark the start of a new phase of the [Sammamish Town Center Project](#) will be hosted on Saturday. The development will feature 86 townhomes, around 300 multifamily units, including senior housing, as well as 82,000 square feet for

restaurants, a pub and retail shops.

“The Town Center will provide more restaurants, shops, commercial spaces and gathering places to serve Sammamish residents. It will make our city more walkable, connect trails and promote transit usage,” said Kali Clark, Mayor of the City of Sammamish. “In addition, affordable units, homes for first-time buyers, and downsizing options are vital components of a well-rounded, intergenerational community.

in 2015, Innovation Realty Partners, LLC on behalf of STCA, LLC began a multi-year process of assembling 90+ contiguous acres within the City’s Town Center Zoning Designation. Planning, designing and creating the Sammamish Town Center is taking place in multiple phases over a period of years.



Source: <https://www.connectcre.com/stories/next-phase-of-sammamish-town-center-breaks-ground/>



May 17, 2024

Shovels poised at Sammamish Town Center

By [BRIAN MILLER](#)
Real Estate Editor

A ceremonial groundbreaking ceremony will be held tomorrow at Sammamish Town Center, to mark a new phase of construction there from developers STCA LLC and Innovation Realty Partners. There's no sign yet of a construction loan.

Expected to attend on Saturday are Matt Samwick from Innovation Realty Partners, Mayor Kali Clark, Congresswoman Kim Schrier and King County Executive Dow Constantine.

Sammamish Town Center spans nearly 90 acres (including ample green space). It has multiple components, both built and planned. More than a few different developers are active there.

For STCA and Innovation, Shook Kelley Architects of North Carolina is collaborating with local firm Urbal Architecture on the heart of its project, at [22315 S.E. Fourth St.](#) That amounts to around 17 acres.

City approval came in March for the three midrise buildings of Phase I, which are to have about 300 apartments — 77 of them being affordable — and some 82,000 square feet of retail/commercial space. (Merrill Gardens is also planning a senior community there, but evidently on a separate timeline.)

Also launching soon, to the west, are the developers' 86 townhouse units, dubbed Brownstones East and West. Terrene Homes is also working on those, which are intended for the sales market. Six will be affordable; prices haven't yet been set.

Parking for all of the above will total about 1,085 stalls for residents and shoppers. The midrise buildings will have underground parking; townhouses will have garages.

The STCA team also includes Pillar Properties and Benaroya Co., development partners; Berger Partnership, landscape architect; Core Design, civil engineer and surveyor; Transpo Group, traffic consultant; AESI, geotechnical engineer; Wetland Resources, SEPA consultant; EastHUB, arts and culture advisor; Sound Earth, environmental consultant; and Shoffner Consulting, arborist.

Phase II, to the east, should add another 294 units with 18,000 square feet of retail/commercial space. There's no declared schedule for that.



Rendering by Urbal Architecture [\[enlarge\]](#)

The heart of the development will be midrise and mixed-use, with lots of shops.

Other developers active at Sammamish Town Center include Aegis Living, SeaLevel Properties and MainStreet Property Group

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Long-Planned Town Center Project Moves Forward in Seattle's Sammamish Suburb

Construction of Mixed-Use Development With Hundreds of Homes, Retail Expected To Start Soon in City Near Lake Sammamish



Sammamish and Innovation Realty Partners LLC are preparing to start construction on a major expansion of the city's downtown Town Center. (Urbal Architecture)

By [Randy Drummer](#)
CoStar News

May 22, 2024 | 5:06 P.M.

New housing and commercial development aimed to expand the suburb of Sammamish's downtown is poised to start construction after years of delays related to concerns about the young city's rapid population growth.

A team of developers led by Bellevue-based Innovation Realty Partners expects to add hundreds of townhomes and apartments — along with restaurants, stores and other commercial development — in a major expansion of the city's [Sammamish Town Center](#).

The project was stalled for several years amid concerns from local politicians and residents that building hundreds of apartments and townhomes would worsen traffic and strain other infrastructure in the woodland city bordered by Lake Sammamish.

Innovation Realty, based in Bellevue, began assembling 90 acres in the area in 2015 for the project planned near 228th Avenue Southeast and Southeast Fourth Street, founder and CEO Matthew Samwick said in an interview.

Changes to the Sammamish City Council and city staff over the past two years have made the city more receptive to balanced housing and commercial development, Samwick said.

"Because of the size and importance of this development, the city had to get resources in place, and the result of that was for us to work collaboratively around a round table instead of as adversaries," Samwick said. "The essence of this project is to create not just a commercial downtown, but a living room — a multi-use district with thriving housing choices, open space and events that can be promoted to the whole region."

Fast Population Growth

Sammamish, about 22 miles east of Seattle, has nearly doubled in population to about 67,000 since it incorporated in 1999. It now ranks among King County's youngest and wealthiest cities, with a median income of just under \$196,000, according to census data.

Other developers have built several apartment and retail buildings in the area over the past decade, including a small center anchored by a Metropolitan Market grocery store that opened in 2017 and The Sky, a 159-unit apartment complex that opened the following year.

The project being developed by Innovation Realty and its partners that include Seattle-based Piller Properties and R.D. Merrill Co., operator of the family-owned Merrill Gardens senior housing chain, would by far be the largest on record in the Town Center district.

Samwick and elected officials that included Mayor Kali Clark, King County Executive Dow Constantine and U.S. Rep. Kim Schrier, a Democrat from Sammamish, held a ceremonial groundbreaking for the project last weekend.

"Places that unite communities are more important now than ever before," Clark said in a statement. "The Town Center will provide more restaurants, shops, commercial spaces and gathering places to serve Sammamish residents. It will make our city more walkable, connect trails and promote transit usage."

The first phase of construction, expected to start shortly, includes a two-story, 38-unit townhouse project on 5 acres called Brownstones West, with 21 of the units planned to front a park-like setting in the city. Another subdivision called Brownstones East is planned to add 48 townhouses.

Innovation Realty is also planning about 82,000 square feet for restaurants, a pub and other retail businesses. Other future projects include a senior housing complex, while construction of roughly 300 apartments, including 77 units designated as affordable for households earning 80% or less of the area median income, are planned to be developed by Piller Properties and Merrill.

Those projects will likely start construction in 2026, Samwick said.

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<https://sammamishindependent.com/2024/06/sammamish-town-center-breaks-ground-after-years-of-delay/>



Several elected officials participated in the groundbreaking of the Sammamish Town Center on May 18, including County Councilmember Sarah Perry (left), King County Executive Dow Constantine (fourth from left), Mayor Kali Clark (fifth from left), and U.S. Rep. Kim Schrier (right). (photo by Richa Thakur)

JUNE 19, 2024

Sammamish Town Center breaks ground after years of delay

RICHA THAKUR CITY HALL, TOP STORY

Since 2008, there has been an adopted city plan to develop the central core of Sammamish into a town center with retail, housing, and public transit, but it never came to fruition due to political opposition and legal disputes, leaving empty fields of prime real estate adjacent to city hall.

On May 18, city officials, community members, and the developer of the project finally gathered for a groundbreaking ceremony to mark the beginning of construction for the Sammamish Town Center.

“The vision for this town center is an example of how cities can create great places, walkable communities with housing, retail, dining and parks,” said King County Executive Dow Constantine at the groundbreaking event.

The projects being planned are located in the southwest quadrant of 228th Avenue SE and SE 4th Street, across from Metropolitan Market. The first phase includes 38 townhomes in a development called Brownstones West, which will be completed in the next 18 to 24 months. A second phase, subject to regulatory approval, will add 48 more townhomes, possibly built concurrently with phase one.

The construction for the core mixed use space is expected to commence in 2026 and will take 18 to 24 months to complete. In addition to 82,000 square feet of commercial space for restaurants and retail, this phase will include 300 multifamily residences.

Between the townhomes and the multifamily residences, approximately 20% of the units will be reserved for affordable housing for residents at 80% AMI (Area Median Income) or less. That is equivalent to 80 units.

Local leaders, including Constantine, U.S. Rep. Kim Schrier, and Mayor Kali Clark, were on hand to shovel dirt at the groundbreaking. They also highlighted the upcoming affordable housing units in their speeches.

“The development of the town center is a fantastic opportunity for our community to grow in a sustainable way,” said Clark. “It allows us to concentrate our growth and provide much needed diverse, affordable housing choices.”

“I want to thank Sammamish and thank our developers for helping solve the tremendous challenge we have in housing in our region,” Constantine said.

Traffic congestion, infrastructure capacity, and environmental sustainability remain areas of concern for some residents. From 2019 to 2022, an anti-development council majority blocked the town center development and fought a lawsuit against the state to keep it from starting. But after a series of council member resignations in 2022, the council became more friendly to development and affordable housing.

Several residents showed up to the groundbreaking event to express their support.

“Housing is not just a local concern, rather a nationwide problem,” said Kamlesh Nanda, a resident who is in his early 50s. “We must make room for more reasonably priced homes to share our great schools and amenities and reduce environmental impacts by reducing the urban sprawl.”

Matthew Samwick, the CEO of Innovation Realty Partners, celebrated the milestone after spending years acquiring the land and working through the permitting process for the town center project.

“This is really an exciting day for us, but most of all, it is a day of gratitude,” said Samwick.

Disclosure: Innovation Realty Partners is a sponsor of the Sammamish Independent.