

# The Palm Beach Post

## **From warehouses to restaurants: New West Palm district's transformation to begin this year**

Nora, West Palm Beach's newest district, is slated to become a major hub of new restaurants and bars.

That's the word from developers planning an end-of-year groundbreaking to create a hip district between North Dixie Highway and the Florida East Coast Railway tracks just north of downtown.

Nora is short for North Railroad Avenue, the district's western boundary which also will serve as its Main Street. The \$520 million project is the largest planned redevelopment in West Palm Beach since CityPlace, now known as The Square.

Nora's developers include West Palm Beach-based NDT Development and Miami's Place Projects, an early developer of Wynwood in Miami. An unnamed New York-based boutique hotelier also is a partner in Nora.

In a recent interview, NDT partner Ned Grace said about 10 restaurants will be featured in Nora's first phase. Look for a blend of both local and regional operators.



One of them will be Ben Lubin, owner of the [Blind Monk](#) wine bar and tapas restaurant in downtown West Palm Beach, Grace confirmed.

Lubin said he is planning a Mediterranean restaurant in Nora.

Grace called a strong food and beverage presence "the lifeblood of a great center." The idea, Grace said, is to create a dining destination that will attract both visitors and residents.



The ambitious venture to transform a run-down part of the city into a lively center of dining, living and working follows the city's explosive growth in demand for offices and residences.

The coronavirus pandemic dramatically accelerated what had already been a steady boom in corporate relocations and home sales to West Palm Beach, and Nora's development comes as thousands of condominiums and apartments are planned in West Palm Beach.

But even before the pandemic, NDT was making a big play for land north of downtown.

Since 2018, NDT quietly has amassed 72 parcels consisting of warehouses, boarded-up buildings and vacant land in this run-down section of the city. The western boundary runs along along North Railroad Avenue, from Seventh Street north to Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard.



Last year, Nora's developers confirmed plans to transform the warehouses along North Railroad Avenue into spaces filled unique or artsy businesses, bars, restaurants and office space as part of the project's first phase.

Work will begin on the project's infrastructure in late summer or the fall.

Then comes the fun part: redeveloping the warehouses between Seventh Street and 10th Street into restaurants and other businesses. This part of the project is slated to take place late in the year or early next year.

The creation of Nora's "Main Street" along North Railroad Avenue is slated to be completed by the first quarter of 2024.



## **Upcoming center for eating and dining in downtown West Palm Beach**

Grace recently elaborated on plans for this first phase of Nora.

He emphasized that the warehouses will have a heavy food-and-beverage emphasis.

In fact, about 75,000 square feet, or roughly half the planned space, will be devoted to restaurants, said Francis X. Scire Jr., Nora's head of leasing.

Scire is a veteran leasing expert who worked for major national companies, including O'Connor Capital Partners of Boston. He also previously leased the Royal Poinciana Plaza, filling the Palm Beach shopping center with a host of new tenants led by Sant Ambroeus, the renowned New York restaurant.

In addition to bars and restaurants, the space also will feature boutique fitness operators as well as a mini-department store or other shop. Other space will be set aside for "creative" office space. All these elements will add up to about 150,000 square feet.

There's more.

Also coming to Nora is an unnamed luxury boutique hotel, with construction slated to begin in 2023.

Eventually, Nora's developers plan to build apartments in portions of the project's center, north of 10th Street, and on the project's north boundary. Office towers also could be built along the district's northern Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard border.

## Development action moves north in West Palm Beach



During the past decade, much of the development action has taken place both in downtown West Palm Beach and south of downtown along South Flagler Drive and the Intracoastal Waterway.

For instance, the construction of the ultra-luxury Bristol condominium prompted development of three other condos along this stretch of road: La Clara, Forte and South Flagler House.

Downtown already is brimming with new apartment complexes, and more are on the way, including an entire city block of rental units at Fern Street.

But development also is shifting to the north side of the city with thousands of apartments or condominiums planned north of Palm Beach Lakes Boulevard

Just last week, New York-based Savanna Fund filed plans with the city to build two tall towers featuring more than 400 residences at 1919 N. Flagler Dr.



Next door, [Temple Israel](#) is negotiating to sell its land at 1901 N. Flagler Drive to an unnamed developer for another tower residence.

A couple of blocks south, Related Group of Miami wants to build a [Ritz-Carlton Residences condominium](#) tower at 1701 N. Flagler Drive. The tower would consist of 140 units.

Meanwhile, on the far northern edge of the city, the 22-story Alba Palm Beach will have 55 luxury condos and four townhomes at 4714 N. Flagler Drive.



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Rendering of Alba Palm Beach, a luxury condo planned for 4714 N. Flagler Dr. in West Palm Beach. *Adiante Communications*

These condominiums will be near the 400-unit, twin-tower Icon Marina Village apartments nearing completion at 4444 N. Flagler Drive. Frisbie Group of Palm Beach also is sketching plans for another giant apartment complex, more than 400 units at 5400 N. Flagler Drive.

Grace expects these new residences will create additional demand for businesses operating in Nora, which he said eventually could feature a grocery store, too.

[West Palm Beach's Nora to feature hip blend of restaurants and bars \(palmbeachpost.com\)](http://palmbeachpost.com)