

# University Park Alliance marks site for future first project

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Published: January 11, 2012 - 12:00 AM



Tim Doran, president and owner of Doran Signs in Chagrin Falls, installs a new "coming soon" sign for the first University Park Alliance project at the old Fred Martin Chevrolet dealership on Tuesday in Akron. (Ed Suba Jr./Akron Beacon Journal)

The University Park Alliance is now the official owner of the former Fred Martin Chevrolet auto dealership land on East Market and Forge streets.

The UPA, a nonprofit group working on the redevelopment of 50 city blocks around the University of Akron and surrounding downtown areas, last spring showed off what it called a “Master Plan” put together with the university, business partners and city and county government. The plan divided the area into four districts of downtown along three major roads — Market, Exchange and Main streets.

The first focus of the plan is the former car dealership in what UPA is calling the “Crossroads District.” The Crossroads District is the shortest path between the University of Akron and Summa Health System and is in an area known as the “biomedical corridor.” The master plan has targeted this area to be built around technology and innovation.

The former dealership buildings were demolished in preparation for purchase by the UPA. Final plans for the property have not been made, but officials said the idea is for mixed use — a combination of office space, neighborhood retail outlets and housing. It could be a site for a food market.

The UPA closed on the property last week and wanted to put up a sign showing the property as a future development for the UPA, officials said.

The purchase was the first for UPA, which is 10 years old but in 2010 merged with another organization to become a community development corporation. The merger allows the organization to buy and develop land, going beyond its previous role as a facilitator of projects.

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