

# SPOTLIGHT ON: SPRINGFIELD



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Downtown Springfield sees flurry of activity

BY JOHN BUSH  
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A flurry of new commercial and residential activity is contributing to the revitalization of downtown Springfield. From new businesses and housing to additional parking options, here are the latest updates being made in the city core.

**PARKING GARAGE/RETAIL CENTER**  
A new parking garage completed in the spring was a project 10 years in the making, and city officials hope it will be a catalyst for continued growth in the area.

The complex comes with 305 parking spaces, an outdoor seating area and 3,000 square feet of retail space available for multiple tenants. It provides much-needed parking for existing downtown businesses, and could serve as a selling point as the city looks to attract additional tenants to downtown.

“Our hope is to have a restaurant or entertainment-type use in those spaces – something that contributes to the vitality of that corridor, not only in the day, but for nighttime activity as well,” said Tom Franzen, assistant city manager and economic development director.

The hope is to have tenants in place by the first quarter of 2021. The city also is improving existing surface lots.



Tom Franzen



Bryan Heck

“As your downtown starts to grow, parking becomes a key component of that success,” City Manager Bryan Heck said.

### NEW BUSINESSES

Despite Covid-19, a handful of new businesses opened in downtown in the last few months.

COhatch, a shared work, social and family space that offers services, activities and amenities, recently launched “The Market.” The facility boasts several bars and restaurants which are now open.

Another new eatery that recently opened downtown is Fratelli’s – an Italian restaurant across from the parking garage.

Other businesses to open recently include Frame Haven, an art and framing store; Cyclotherapy, a bicycle shop; and an interactive T-shirt-making business founded by Tracey Tackett. This business is an extension of Tackett’s popular paint bar, called Sip & Dipy.



CITY OF SPRINGFIELD

A new parking garage has first-floor retail/restaurant space and outdoor seating.

### NEW HOUSING OPTIONS

New residential activity is picking up steam in downtown Springfield.

Local developer Charles Simms Development is constructing 34 townhomes in the city core. Simms has completed the first building – a six-unit complex that already has four occupants – and has begun construction on a second building.

The project will total six buildings when completed.

Another company that is contributing to residential development in downtown Springfield is the Turner Foundation, which owns the vacant Wren Building. It’s been awarded about \$4 million in historic tax credits to transform the building into market-rate apartments.

Read more from this story, as well as our entire series of Springfield development news online at [DaytonBusinessJournal.com](http://DaytonBusinessJournal.com)

## REDEVELOPMENT

# Springfield community hub charts its next growth opportunity

BY JACOB FISHER  
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Matt Davis

Opening a coworking business at the onset of a global pandemic might sound crazy to some. But for Matt Davis, it was a natural progression for the continued growth of his Columbus startup company – and it paid off big time.

“With the pandemic, we were a little uncertain,” the founder and CEO of COhatch said. “But at the end of the day, we wanted to create something that was truly sustainable for the city.”

COhatch, which bills itself as a coworking, meeting and lifestyle company, expanded to the former Myer’s Market building at 101 S. Fountain Ave. Dubbed “The Market,” the facility also offers private office and event spaces;

### NOTABLE VENDORS AT THE MARKET INCLUDE:

- ▶ **The Painted Pepper**, which focuses on southwestern cuisine.
- ▶ **Fresh Abilities**, a quick-service eatery with locally sourced products.
- ▶ **Iron Works**, a food concept with a focus on waffles and a cafe and espresso bar.
- ▶ **Crust & Company**, an artisan bread and pizza restaurant.
- ▶ **North High Brewing**, a Columbus brewery.
- ▶ **101 Market Bar**, a cocktail bar with live entertainment.

public access to a shared commercial kitchen; and a year-round market with local produce, food and drinks.

The unique concept gained traction rapidly in Springfield. All 19 office suites sold out quickly, and the customer base features a myriad of business segments and industry types.

“We saw a lot of diverse use for the city,” Davis said. “A lot of people really



SHANNON W. WILLIAMS

A bar inside Springfield The Market.

wanted to be a part of something new.”

Like most area companies, challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic forced some timelines to change. The interior food market, initially slated to open in April, was delayed by two months.

“The first two months of sales, they probably did almost twice as much as they thought they would do,” he said.

“We’re looking at adding one other concept expansion in the next couple months,” Davis said. “And with out-

door seating being huge these days, we’re going to be expanding the alleyway out toward the Heritage Center.”

Construction on the outdoor patio will likely begin this winter, with an opening next spring.

In response to a global uptick in online ordering, Davis said he plans to launch a COhatch Market app at the end of September. The app will include vendor menus and allow patrons to either pay in advance for pickup orders, or enter a table number or parking number for dine-in and vehicle delivery orders.

Rolling out the app should help accelerate an impending update to the virtual market, which is being expanded to include farmers, ranches, hand-crafted goods, business services and startup companies.

The expanded virtual market is expected to launch within the next couple months, Davis said.

“The goal is to support everything local; kind of the opposite of Amazon,” he said.



## SPOTLIGHT ON: SPRINGFIELD

### HOUSING



COURTESY OF SHANNON MEADOWS

One housing project underway in Springfield is the Bridgewater development, led by Ryan Homes.

## RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE MARKET GROWS WITH NEW HOUSING PROJECTS

BY ELIZABETH KYLE  
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The housing market in Springfield is gaining traction with new projects and initiatives underway. The city of Springfield is taking steps to improve the area's housing stock with a number of investments, including its comprehensive housing study titled "Housing in the Champion City: Comprehensive Housing Analysis." Led by Greater Ohio Policy Center, the study debuted last September and takes a closer look at the city's housing landscape.

A housing consortium team was formed as well — comprised of local professionals active in the city and county sectors and executives involved with local foundations, banks, private industries and nonprofits.

From there, new housing projects have begun, including the Bridgewater development by Ryan Homes. This is the first new home subdivision project the city has seen in 20 years and is located on the east side of the city on South Tuttle Road.

The project has moved forward with construction, with 37 homes being completed in phase one. All of them have been sold with an average price of \$220,000,

which is a huge jump in market value for the area, said Shannon Meadows, Springfield's community development director.

Another development underway is Center Street Townes, led by Charles Simms Development. The 34-townhome project is in phase one of construction, and four homes have already been sold. Prices began at \$219,900.

Simms is working with the city to obtain building permits to begin construction of a third building before the end of 2020.

When finished, the total complex will include six buildings.

In addition to these projects, a second study was conducted by Urban Fast Forward. The study analyzes redevelopment opportunities in Springfield's south side.

The study area is 98 square acres within the city, bounded by Pleasant Street to the north, Perrin Avenue to the south, South Limestone Street to the west and Center Street to the east. The area features 24 city blocks and includes much of the South Fountain Historic District.

### DEVELOPMENT

## Former Springfield Kroger store, surrounding area set for 'holistic' redevelopment

BY JOHN BUSH  
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The recent closure of a Kroger store in Springfield left a void in the community, but plans already are in place to transform the building and surrounding area into a new development with fresh food options, housing and public event space.

On March 2, the Kroger Co. shuttered its location at 1822 S. Limestone St. The decision drew backlash from the Springfield community, including Mayor Warren Copeland.

The closure resulted in 69 people losing their jobs, and left local residents with one less option for their grocery needs. However, the backlash prompted Kroger to donate the building and associated equipment to the community, as well as land and non-proprietary contents of the facility without restrictions on future use.

When it became clear there was no way to salvage the store, Springfield City Manager Bryan Heck said they immediately sprang into action.

"We quickly shifted gears, with the focus being on setting a path forward for redevelopment for that site and the building itself," Heck said.

Springfield officials spent the last few months holding public forums and establishing working groups to determine what should be done with the site. The city presented these ideas to local developer Larry Dillin, president and CEO of Dillin LLC. Dillin said he was interested in the project from the start.

"When the announcement was made by Kroger, we reached out to the city to see if we could help," Dillin said. "We recognized there was a food desert, and wanted to know if there was something we could do. We have embraced Springfield as a community. I simply offered to help with the real estate solution."

Dillin compiled these ideas into what is now referred to as the "Springfield 4 Corners" plan. It takes a holistic approach to redeveloping the former Kroger and entire surrounding area.

Initial plans call for part of the Kroger building to be anchored by another grocery store that sells fresh and healthy food options.



DILLIN LLC

### The Exchange Room at the Market

senior living and other residential facilities. This would be complemented by event space that is also planned for the project.

"It would be a public space where people could gather," said Tom Franzen, Springfield assistant city manager and director of economic development. "We're looking at an indoor-outdoor concept that would add energy to the area. We could have food trucks come in, and make it an active space to host events."

Along with the former Kroger store, the city has acquired another building nearby that it plans to demolish to make way for the outdoor area and new housing.

Though the project is in the early stages, Dillin has signed a letter of intent to proceed with the development and create a business plan for the site.

Immediate next steps will be to craft the next level of detail for both the interior and exterior of the Kroger building to be anchored by another grocery store that sells fresh and healthy food options.

Dillin and city officials envision filling the remaining space with a food hall concept that would include co-working options for local entrepreneurs.

Another part of the 4 Corners plan is the construction of new housing, which could include condos, town homes,

senior living and other residential facilities. This would be complemented by event space that is also planned for the project.

"It would be a public space where people could gather," said Tom Franzen, Springfield assistant city manager and director of economic development. "We're looking at an indoor-outdoor concept that would add energy to the area. We could have food trucks come in and host events."

### STARTUPS

## Springfield startup scene grows with pitch competition

BY ELIZABETH KYLE  
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The startup ecosystem in one Dayton-area city is heating up, with growing small businesses and pitch competition.

Springfield's startup scene is making waves in the region with a number of new developments. Leading the momentum is the Springfield Small Business Development Center, an organization that works to build a thriving local economy built by small businesses.

The organization has taken on Covid-19 pandemic relief efforts, pivoting to help businesses apply for financial aid from the federal government. That's been about 90% of its focus for March and April.

"This was important work," said Rob Alexander, executive director. "We saw ourselves in a unique opportunity to help with the greatest need."

The organization is also coming back even busier than ever. Its volume has

picked up and its budget has almost doubled compared to years past. Alexander said this increase in demand is due to both high unemployment rates, but also businesses looking for additional support to navigate the pandemic.

Another initiative in the works is the Springfield Hustles competition, set to come back for its second year. The competition takes inspiration from the hit television show "Shark Tank," featuring local business pitches in front of a panel of judges.

The group kicked off its application period Sept. 2. Finalists are set to be announced Oct. 9, followed by a final virtual pitch event Nov. 11. Alexander said there event will be presented live as live TV experience on its Facebook and YouTube pages.

This year's prize package has also grown and now features a \$25,000 cash prize package.

"I expect us to have even more interest this year, since people didn't really know



Rourke Thompson

"Springfield is a great place to do business. It's big enough to meet all of our needs. It's a great place for any business to really take off."

ROBERT ALEXANDER,  
executive director

about last year," Alexander said.

Last year's winner was PIPE AG, a technology startup providing turn-key solutions to agricultural customers.

Since winning the competition, the startup has expanded its customer base and office space.

The company has moved into the Cohabit building in downtown Springfield, operating out of a 170-square-foot office space.

"Our season isn't even done yet and we've already tripled what we did last year (in revenue)," said Owner Rourke Thompson.

PIPE AG collaborates with customers by providing an iPad with cellular connection and software to create a cloud based app showing all equipment on a farm. The app allows farmers access to

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THE CHAMBER



## SPOTLIGHT ON: SPRINGFIELD

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Springfield chamber leaders talk downtown's growth, continued investments

BY HANNAH POTURALSKI  
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We may be in the middle of a global pandemic, but that isn't slowing momentum in one Greater Dayton region.

Springfield, the county seat of Clark County, is more than a decade into its implementation of its 2009 Greater Springfield Moving Forward plan, and the work continues. "It's a time of momentum for us," said Mike McDorman, president and CEO of the Chamber of Greater Springfield. "That momentum continues even during the pandemic."

The last decade has recorded an influx of \$500,000 million in investment and 5,000 new jobs, McDorman said. Many of which have come into Springfield's downtown and industrial and tech park areas.

"The downtown is coming back in a big way," McDorman said, and with it the need for more residential, retail and other services.

More first-floor retail and restaurant users are also expected to come into a newly completed parking garage structure in downtown. Around the corner, over 30 town homes are coming online



Mike McDorman says a heavy focus has been spent on

#### FOUR KEY AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT:

- Job creation
- Downtown
- Gateways and corridors
- Parks and green space.

In phases. This summer, COatch opened in the historic Meyer's Market building, bringing with it half a dozen restaurant operators, outdoor seating, coworking and office spaces, event space and year-round food market.

More first-floor retail and restaurant users are also expected to come into a newly completed parking garage structure in downtown. Around the corner, over 30 town homes are coming online



The Heritage Center in downtown Springfield.



Christopher Schutte

trend isn't slowing down, with economic development tools in place such as SpringfieldForward, an organization formed to provide financial support for downtown revitalization efforts.

"It's a downtown catalytic fund to attract developers," McDorman said. "Jobs have brought housing opportunities."

The city and county have also taken advantage of all the recreational uses and attractions along Mad River, Snyder Park

and Buck Creek State Park. That will continue to drive new small businesses, such as Cyclotherapy bicycle shop that opened downtown.

Tourism is a \$440 million industry for Clark County, officials said.

"We have a great location being in the middle of Columbus and Dayton along Interstate 70," McDorman said. "We're the 12th largest city in state of Ohio, and now we're creating opportunities for people to come visit and work."

As for the Springfield chamber itself, Schutte said new members continue to sign up weekly. The chamber has seen high demand for its weekly roundtable discussions, via Zoom, with the latest resources and information on Covid-19, and support of members' challenges and wins.

### EDUCATION

## As campuses reopen, two Springfield institutions grapple with the same question

BY JACOB FISHER  
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One prides itself on educational affordability and flexibility. For the other, it's all about offering a fully integrated residential experience.

At first glance, Springfield's two largest higher education institutions couldn't appear more different. But as Clark State Community College and Wittenberg University begin their fall terms amid a global pandemic, both are grappling with the same conundrum: how to keep the gears moving without jeopardizing the safety of campus-goers.

The challenge for a lot of leaders right now is to make sure that you're fulfilling your mission while still prioritizing the things that matter most," Jo Alice Blodgett, president of Clark State, said. "And obviously, the priority is the safety and health of employees and students."



Meyers Hall on the Wittenberg University campus in Springfield.

Around 70% of Clark State's classes are being held online this fall — nearly double the rate before the pandemic. The remaining 30% are either hybrid or in-person.

Wittenberg resumed in-person classes Aug. 17, though it is maintaining its online learning capabilities as it will finish the semester online after Nov. 24.

"We're looking at a couple of curriculum expansion possibilities, and some of those would add remote courses that we would bring to our campus from other campuses," Michael Frandsen, president of Wittenberg, said. "We're also looking at some shared-service arrangements with another campus."

Most colleges and universities are figuring out how to operate with leaner budgets this fall. Though supplemental funding from the federal CARES Act helped offset pandemic-induced revenue shortfalls, many capital projects are on hold.

A planned renovation of Koch Hall at Wittenberg has been tabled until at least May 2021. Other capital investments that were previously on the drawing board are now unlikely to move forward until mid-

2022, Frandsen said.

Some of Clark State's priority projects — including updating the Applied Science Center, adding space to the Performing Arts Center and transforming an educational facility into a workforce development and training hub — are largely reliant on additional capital, Blodgett said.

But because Gov. Mike DeWine in June signed a \$1.2-billion re-appropriations bill that granted hundreds of millions of dollars for previously approved college and university construction projects, Clark State continues to renovate the second floor of Rhodes Hall and other small investments.

As well, Clark State is ramping up its academic and workforce development programming. The college is adding more than 20 new training programs through Ohio's TechEd initiative, as well as new two-year degree programs in health sciences and addiction studies.

### COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

## Plans to boost Clark County's strong tourism efforts

BY HANNAH POTURALSKI  
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A mixed-use development project in Clark County continues to press forward. The development of 14 acres of land near the entrance to the Clark County Fairgrounds is underway in partnership between Clark County, the Clark County Land Bank and local developer Dillin LLC.

Plans call for development of a hotel, restaurant and retail spaces, a new entrance and landscaping to the fairgrounds, a new fair office and retention pond in the area near Interstate 70 and Ohio 41.

The county is on a "good trajectory" to have all those end-uses realized, said Ethan Harris, community development director for Clark County and executive director of the Clark County Land Bank.

"The hotel and restaurants will be a symbiotic relationship," Harris said the hotel would be served



COURTESY OF LUKE STEDE

Springfield has positioned itself as a hub for unmanned aircraft.

by the year-round activity at the fairgrounds, as well as daily business and leisure travel along I-70. Not to mention nearby corporate activity from the Prime Ohio Land II Industrial Parks and Next-Edge Technology Park.

The county land bank is in a development agreement with Dillin to develop the land.

"Land predevelopment and leasing activity has launched on this new Gate-

#### VALUE PROPOSITION:

Why Speedway's existing footprint is important

Speedway LLC's longstanding ties to Clark County could signal optimism for its long-term presence in the region, despite an impending \$21 billion acquisition by Teas-based convenience store giant 7-Eleven Inc. "One of the things that builds a value proposition for a company and a brand is the community in which it's located," said Horton Hobbs of the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce. "I believe strongly that Speedway's value — has a lot to do with our community, the region and being in this location."

Speedway employs over 40,000 workers — including 3,000 locally. "7-Eleven spokesperson said there are no new details to share, though the company's CEO indicated Speedway's brand recognition and regional footprint helped motivate the blockbuster deal."

"Geographically, they (Speedway) fit really well from a complementary perspective," Joe DePinto, president and CEO of EBrown, told the Dallas Business Journal. "We really admire the brand and the business." "EBrown has held off on rebranding acquired stores with a strong regional presence."

way entry project to both Clark County and Greater Springfield," Dillin said on its website. "Opening of the first phase commercial uses is targeted for fall 2021."

No tenant announcements have been made yet. Harris said the county is now working to annex nine acres of the land into the city of Springfield for transferring to the land bank. The land bank would then prepare the land for a third-party buyer.

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