

DOWNTOWN UPDATE

Creative Village construction countdown

THE LATEST ON DOWNTOWN ORLANDO'S \$1B TECH MECCA IN THE MAKING

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Calling Creative Village a large development is an understatement. The planned \$1 billion, 68-acre mixed-use, transit-oriented project will transform the former Amway Arena site in downtown Orlando into a tech mecca for businesses, colleges and residents within the historic Parramore neighborhood.

Craig Ustler, president and owner of Orlando-based Ustler Development Inc., is heading up the project, Creative Village Development LLC. Here, he discusses the next steps, how it will help businesses and residents and some of the project's challenges:

What's a typical day like when working on Creative Village? We spend time on Creative Village every day. Brooke Myers is a partner in our local development entity and the project manager. She manages the day-to-day development activities involved with master development. Every day we coordinate various aspects of the project that are typical of large-scale, urban infill real estate projects. We manage our relationships and responsibilities with the city of Orlando, the University of Central Florida, Valencia College, Lynx and various stakeholders. We also administer the overall development program and pursuit of vertical development opportunities. For a project of this size, there are a lot of meetings.

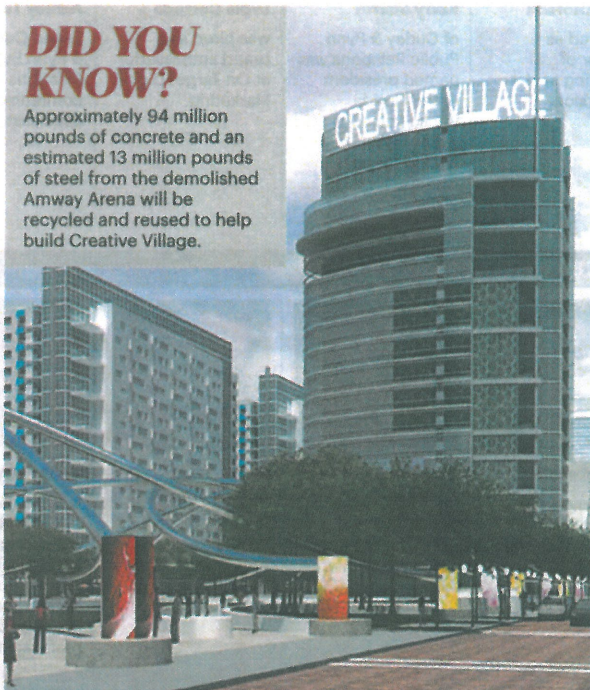
What steps have been taken so far to make Creative Village a reality? We have been working on master development for about four years. We have secured various grants, including a large Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery grant to fund infrastructure work. Construction of the infrastructure and expansion of the Lymmo bus system will begin in January 2015. In total, we have sourced about \$15 million-\$20 million worth of grants and funding sources to move the project forward and provide necessary infrastructure and related upfront development. We have



PHOTO OF CRAIG USTLER BY JIM CARCHIDI; RENDERING OF CREATIVE VILLAGE COURTESY OF BAKER BARRIOS

DID YOU KNOW?

Approximately 94 million pounds of concrete and an estimated 13 million pounds of steel from the demolished Amway Arena will be recycled and reused to help build Creative Village.



▶ WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOU

WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOU:

- ▶ The 68-acre Creative Village project involves multiple business and education partnerships.
- ▶ It will transform a section of Parramore into a digital media tech hub with a large area for office space.
- ▶ It will create 6,500 temporary construction jobs and more than 8,000 permanent jobs.

received a commitment from UCF, in partnership with Valencia College, for a major downtown campus at Creative Village with at least 10,000 students. We have finalized the necessary zoning, entitlements and development rights, including adoption of a detailed planned developer zoning ordinance that governs the long-term development and build-out of Creative Village.

What are the next steps for Creative Village? In 2015, three major initiatives will be underway:

- ▶ Construction and delivery of the infrastructure and Lymmo bus system
- ▶ Definition of the UCF/Valencia plan and development program, including a campus master plan for the academic space and identification of the colleges and programs that will be located

downtown

▶ Specific pre-development work for the first phase of commercial development, which is expected to include office, apartment and retail space

What's the overall timeline for upcoming steps? In 2016 we will continue the pre-development process and we should have buildings under construction in 2016 and 2017, with completion set for 2017 or 2018. Creative Village is multiphase project that will run over 15 to 20 years.

What economic impact will Creative Village generate for Orlando? Our preliminary job study done several years ago indicated Creative Village would create about 8,000 direct and indirect jobs. This did not take into account several notable

▶ CLOSER LOOK

CREATIVE VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT LLC

Description: 68-acre urban infill project that will promote higher education and attract high-tech and creative companies

President: Craig Ustler

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developments that have occurred in the last few years, including the significant commitment by UCF and Valencia and the new K-8 public school west of our project. The total vertical commercial development program is conservatively valued at more than \$1 billion. The academic buildings likely will be another several hundred million dollars.

What challenges have you faced in managing Creative Village? This is a long-term project driven by a shared vision between the city of Orlando and our development team, which also is shared by UCF and Valencia now. It takes years of pre-development work just to get started, and then takes many more years to implement the total plan.

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It is sometimes a challenge to keep pushing ahead at the early stages of a project like this, because things don't move as fast as you'd like. There are always macroeconomic challenges we can't control. The apartment market is strong and can support new development, but the office market and retail market are not where we'd like them to be.

Has the development hit any delays?

It has taken longer to implement certain things, such as construction of the Lymmo bus system expansion. It simply took more time than anticipated to coordinate all of the project partners and agencies, and we wanted to make sure we ended up with the right result. However, in a broad sense, we are in the fourth year of a five-year pre-development period based on our overall schedule, so we are about where we thought we'd be.

How will Creative Village help nearby businesses and neighborhoods? We will bring educational opportunities and community services to the neighborhood, as well as commercial, retail, restaurant and professional services. The commitment of UCF and



RENDERING OF AERIAL VIEW OF CREATIVE VILLAGE COURTESY OF BAKER BARRIOS

Valencia College is a game changer. The public space at Creative Village is significant, and there's a major urban park as a centerpiece, along with several other parks. The project will improve transit significantly, including expansion of the Lymmo system to the west side, connections to SunRail and better options for biking, walking and exercising.

Who will live in Creative Village? A

diverse population – anyone attracted to a live, learn, work and play lifestyle will be attracted to Creative Village. The target market is often incorrectly identified simply as students and millennials. While this demographic is part of the mix, the residential population of successful urban mixed-use projects ends up being diverse – folks of different ages, income levels, lifestyles, education levels and nationalities.

▶ BY THE NUMBERS

Stats on Creative Village:

\$1 billion

Cost of development

68 acres

Size of Creative Village

1.2 million

Square feet of office/creative space

500,000-plus

Square feet of education space

150,000

Square feet of retail/commercial space

1,500

Residential units

225

Hotel rooms

SOURCE: CREATIVE VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT LLC