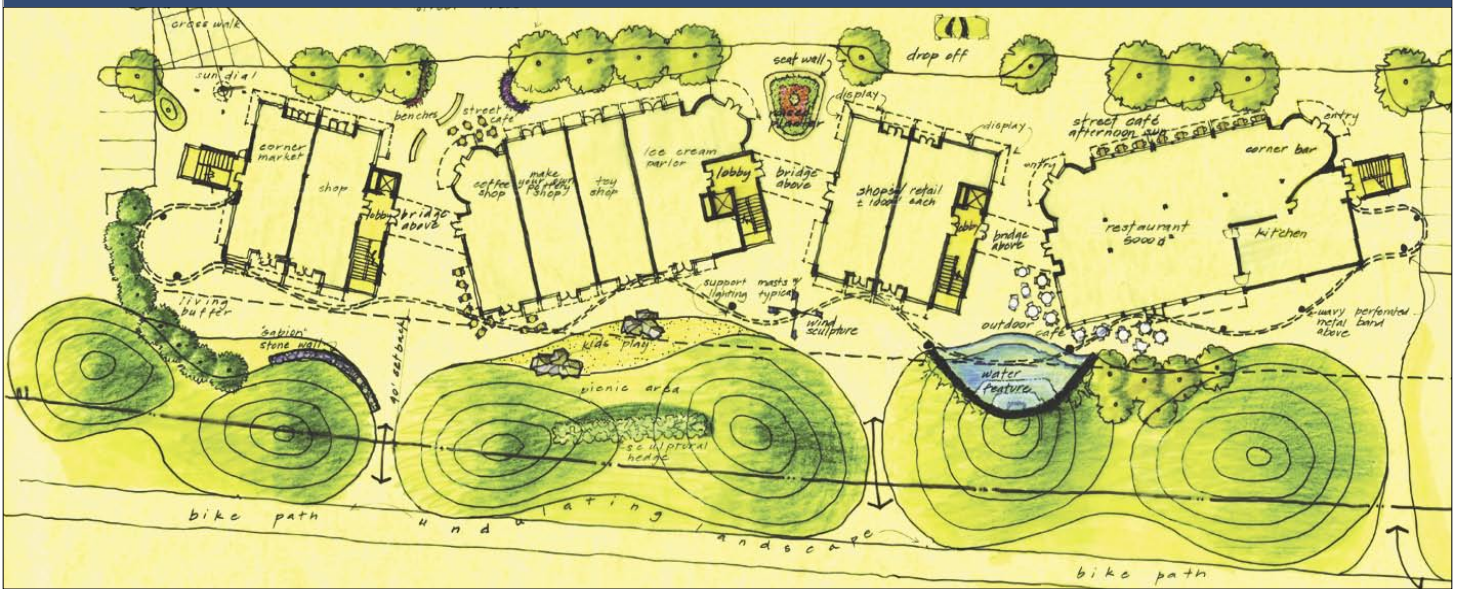


# Business

Web site of the Rock River Valley — Rockford, Ill.

Rockford Register Star [rrstar.com](http://rrstar.com)

Thursday, May 12, 2005



## Business: Growth & Development

# A Perryville Place touted as solution to big-box sprawl



*Ashlesha Nigam, president of Summit Real Estate Developments Inc., stands Tuesday on the construction site of A Perryville Place in Rockford.*

ROCKFORD -- When Ashlesha Nigam returned to Rockford after nearly a decade living on the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, she felt that life here had become “fragmented” because of the sprawling way land had been developed.

Fresh from several years of experience in the housing market near Boulder, Colo., Nigam felt that Rockford deserved development different from big-box stores -- a theme that dominates the landscape of East Street Street and other Rock River Valley thoroughfares.

So she and her family sought a project with integrity, something “that was going to make a statement in a very tasteful and beautiful way.”

They wanted something that could help start a regional movement focused on smarter development that not only connects with natural and community features but also includes multiple uses and a pedestrian element.

They came up with A Perryville Place.

Rockford-based Summit Real Estate Developments Inc. -- owned and operated by the Nigam family -- is building the 4.2-acre, 75,000-square-foot commercial complex taking shape at 6957 Olde Creek Road along the west side of Perryville Road near Spring Creek Road. It’s expected to be completed this fall.

“Rockford is in a time right now that things are changing rapidly. And I believe it is important with the new development that is occurring, that the standards are raised when it comes to development,” said the 30-something Nigam, who is president of Summit. “I really feel that the people of Rockford deserve to have higher-quality development and more mixed-use.”

Nigam declined to disclose financial details of the project or the number of tenants that have entered into

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lease agreements. She did say interest in the space has been heavy.

Unlike many neighboring developments, A Perryville Place is a mixed-use project that will include “higher-end” restaurants, retail and office space on four floors.

The first floor will be dedicated to restaurants and retail, while the upper floors will be home to professional offices, such as medical and financial companies.

Nigam envisions the complex as a place where people work, dine and shop. She hopes the mixed uses will draw people to the development, including residents of nearby subdivisions.

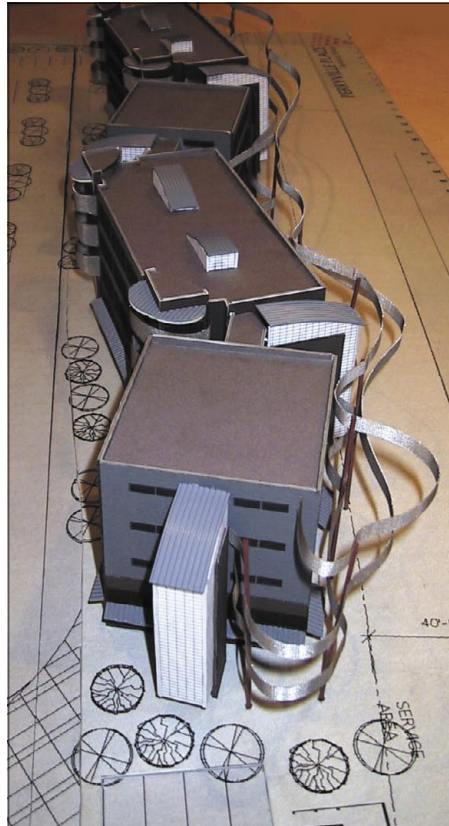
The building design includes a curvy element with reflective-glass walkways connecting the top three floors, and metal bands encircling the building to give a sense of movement.

Landscaping will include hills blocking the traffic from Perryville Road and allow for connections to a nearby bike path. A parking lot will have 300 spaces.

Architects on the project are Boulder-based Barrett Studio and Hagny Architects in Rockford. New York-based architect and feng shui master Alex Stark also worked on the design.

Nigam said the design theme is meant to “flow” and connect with community features.

“We took the hills and we took the river, and we took all of those things, and the fact that I am a woman. One of our themes is ‘everything comes from women,’ so we came up with the idea of the curves,” she said. “That’s why the



## Smart growth defined

A Perryville Place has elements that are similar to this development strategy trend. Smart growth usually has the following characteristics:

1. More concentrated or higher-density commercial and residential development.
2. Mixed uses, such as retail and residential, in one building.
3. Reduced automobile travel and an emphasis on alternative forms of transportation.
4. Redevelopment of buildings.
5. Limited expansion outside of existing boundaries.

Sources: Register Star research and the Rock River Valley Green Communities project

building is (curvy). That’s why we have the bands, the sculptural art, the design out in front of the building. That’s why the hills are (shaped the way they are). So that is how we came up with our theme.”

David Hagny, president of Hagny Architects, said that the design also allows for transparency and a large amount of light throughout the complex. He said projects with creative design help provide an identity for a community.

“In the Nigam’s case, they wanted to have some impact on the community,” he said. “They wanted to make a difference. They wanted to give back to the community.”

Glen Turpoff, executive director of the Northern Illinois Building Contractors Association, said the project carries features typically associated with more metropolitan areas.

He said the complex design includes elements of buildings in those areas that look to create a “living environment” for multiple purposes during the workday.

Turpoff said that while Summit Real Estate Developments is taking a financial chance by attempting an unproven design theme for this area, he still called A Perryville Place “a pioneering project” that could prompt other developers to think differently.

“I think it is going to be successful,” he said. “I think it is going to be a precursor to other novel and interesting approaches to development.”

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