



## Sharondale residents warming to plan

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**By Bob Sandrick**  
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Residents in the Sharondale Drive area seemed enthused Monday about a developer's plan to buy and include their properties in a new retail-office-housing development.

However, some wondered whether the developer the Coral Co. of University Heights is offering enough money for their homes.

Coral hopes to purchase 65 homes on Sharondale, West Sharondale and Jaclyn drives and Bainbridge Road. It's also eyeing commercial land on SOM Center and Solon roads.

On Monday night, immediately before a City Council meeting, about 50 residents met with Solon officials to discuss the plan and express their concerns.

"I think this is the best thing that has come to the city in ages," said Dale Siwinski of Bainbridge Road after the meeting. "The whole area around SOM Center, Bainbridge and Solon roads is decrepit.

"Bringing in a program like Legacy Village or Crocker Park or even on a smaller scale like (First & Main in) Hudson will do wonders to make the city move forward for the next 50 years," Siwinski said.

Siwinski said the city has failed at past retail redevelopment efforts. He called the CVS Pharmacy building at SOM-Aurora Road "atrocious" and noted that a plan to move the SOM-Bainbridge fire station to make room for new retail fell apart.

"This is really exciting," Siwinski said. "It will take leadership from the city to see it come to fruition."

Ed Zahoransky of Bainbridge Road said he's 37 and has lived in Solon for 36 years.

"I love it," Zahoransky said of Coral's plan. "I was just at Legacy Village for a nice dinner Saturday night. We walked around and they had a band playing in the middle of Legacy Village. It was beautiful. I would love something like that here.

"Right now my backyard is basically Marc's (Deeper Discount Store and Sears Grand)," Zahoransky said. "That's an eyesore to me."

Zahoransky said some residents don't believe Coral has offered enough money for their properties. He said some don't want to relocate.

Don Harrison said he and his family have lived on West Sharondale for about eight years. He said Coral hasn't made him an offer yet. He's keeping an open mind.

"I love my street," Harrison said. "I love my community and my city. I have a daughter who goes to high school here and I would like her to finish high school here.

"But I also have to look at it from a business standpoint and think about the future development of Solon," Harrison said. "I don't want Solon to look like (it does) in 30 years or even 10 years."

Linda Reed of Sharondale said she's leaning toward taking Coral's offer.

"If we do nothing, we'll be tremendously affected because they'll build the development around us," Reed said.

Reed said trees will come down to make way for the development. Homeowners left behind will face more noise, traffic and lights.

"Even if it didn't diminish the values of our homes, it would certainly make our neighborhood not as desirable," Reed said.

Pat Carlton of Sharondale said everyone might win if Coral's plan went forward.

"I would win because I live in Solon and have a nice property and a nice home," Carlton said. "If they offer a decent price, I can move into a newer and bigger home."

Dale Gilbert of Jaclyn said he was surprised and shocked when he learned that Coral wanted to buy his property.

"I can see Solon needs new development but there are a lot of variables," Gilbert said. "I just hope neighbors remain neighbors and don't start (sniping) at each other."

Gilbert said he's concerned about increased traffic the development would bring. He said gridlock conditions already exist at certain times of day.

Also, the Sharondale area has had flooding problems. Gilbert hopes Coral will address them.

Councilman Ed Kraus said residents at the meeting were also concerned about how Coral would buffer its development from houses that remain.

"People want to know what would happen if some homeowners don't want to move and some do," Kraus said. "Could Coral build just part of the development?"

Kraus said residents wondered if Coral might acquire West Sharondale but not Sharondale. If so, might one or two West Sharondale residents, wanting to stay in the neighborhood, move into Sharondale homes?

If there enough housing in Solon to absorb Sharondale residents?

"People all agreed that we need redevelopment of our aging shopping centers," Kraus said.

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