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## NEWS

# Could The Square in Dublin become Central Bucks' new hot business, retail, dining spot?

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Could Dublin be the next destination town in Bucks County, wooing shoppers, diners and others to this tiny Central Bucks town for a night out or an afternoon of exploring?

With some \$25 million in planned redevelopment, and momentum thanks to the repurposing and restoration of an old pants factory and tech center, Dublin could soon be the place to be.

The Square, a building full of an eclectic mix of shops, restaurants and offices, is leading the way, but more is planned for the overall revitalization project that spans more than 17 acres along state Route 313 (North Main Street) and Elephant Road.

Outside of The Square, 78 townhomes are being built by Ryan Homes. Nearby Grandview Health is opening a medical outpatient building in the fall. Plans are being outlined to revitalize the old Dublin Diner.

In addition, what was once the old Dublin service station is now going to be a food and drink market featuring Neshaminy Creek Brewing Company, Nina's Waffles, Itri Wood Fired Pizza and Juicy's Burritos. It could be open by this time next year, said developer and former county commissioner Rob Loughery.

The revitalization of Dublin began with The Square project when what was once a two-story pants factory and Dublin Tech Center were turned into a modern commercial and community spot.

The previous Dublin Tech Center could be described as "dingy and dirty," according to Tim Rosanelli, owner of Maximum Impact Karate in The Square.

As a Dublin native, he believes the town was an underserved area for many years. Colleague Tina Siegfried of TMS Yoga agreed, and described the previous work space as a "dark,

unfriendly, uninviting building.”

“It’s been really positive and it’s exciting bringing an old building with new life....” said Loughery. “I think there’s been a really good, positive reaction from the community and the public at large.”

Many businesses in The Square did have a space in the previous Dublin Tech Center and went through the tough process of operating during construction. Siegfried taught classes through Rosanelli’s school for five years and then established her own studio, where she taught yoga while the building was undergoing renovations.

Alexis DeLuca, owner of The Novel Baker, recalls pushing refrigerators, ovens and freezers around paint buckets and construction in order to set up her retail space for the only cake boutique in town. “The whole project was like that. It just kept moving forward.”

Many of the existing business owners were not deterred by the construction phase, and were excited to be part of something new for Dublin.

“I’m so glad that people started to invest money in here and I’m so happy to be a part of the first part of it,” said DeLuca.

The Square opened in the fall of 2019, and was impacted by the pandemic in 2020, however, now the space is much more active.

The Square has an inviting and modern brick and black exterior with big windows for sunlight. Inside, on the ground floor, are colorfully decorated retail shops and restaurants such as The Boiler Room and Farm to Toast, both equipped with patio chairs and bright umbrellas. On the top floor are offices and health and wellness services.

**Need a new hot spot?:** The Boiler Room by Crossing Vineyards opens at The Square in Dublin

With pandemic restrictions lifted, First Fridays returned this summer, featuring food trucks, live music, and other activities. There will also be different retail events in the upcoming months, including a fall open house, Oktoberfest, and a holiday launch.

The building is 100% leased and a waitlist has been forming of those interested in space there.

**Help with lack of staff:** Bucks County to businesses: Tell us what your needs are amid staffing shortages

After Rosanelli's gym closed in Lambertville and he moved to Doylestown, his hometown came to mind. He began teaching karate in one of the churches in town, followed by the old tech center for five years, and now is one of the longest tenants at The Square.

"I wanted to continue my passion for teaching the martial arts," said Rosanelli. "There wasn't too much around and it looked like it was going to be an up-and-coming area, and that's when I started in Dublin."

Some business owners at The Square took an idea that was previously in the building and elevated it. They saw The Square as an opportunity to explore new ideas and passions.

Kim Flagello, owner of Manes on Main, took an old wig shop and transformed the space into a salon. Jessica Jackson owned The Craftery for six years in the Dublin Tech Center, and brought two new businesses upon the opening of The Square.

Jackson had several handmade markets in Bucks County and she reached out to all of her local makers about doing a handmade boutique to feature their creations. With that, she opened Makers.

It was her intention to only have one shop, but as things evolved and seeing the different needs of The Square, Jackson and her husband decided to open up Wheat & Vine Provisions, a specialty gourmet food store.

"That's been a passion of ours for a long time, and we saw the opportunity to do it in Dublin where our other store was so it just felt like the right fit and the right next move," said Jackson.

Jackson also helped Wildflower Valley owner Allie Foley earn a spot in the new shopping center. The apparel shop, along with beauty products and jewelry, started online and as pop-up markets. Now, it's the only women's boutique in town.

Given that there were hardly any markets and few restaurants in Dublin, the public has been eager for the project to be completed.

"Everyone that comes in and finds us, loves it because there is nothing in the area. It's kind of a little hidden gem at the moment where there's kind of something for everyone here. It's like a little local family, which is kind of nice," said Foley.

Rosanelli noted that his students' parents enjoy the extra services in the building, especially the new wine bar, The Boiler Room, and Farm to Toast. His students also love to go to The Novel Baker to satisfy a sweet craving.

“I think it’s kind of like a go-to place for anybody who wants to try something [and] have a really unique experience,” said Rosanelli.

### **More stores to visit and support:** 'One stop shop' to support local minority businesses opens in Willow Grove

The idea of the redevelopment came from a need to have activity and life in the town. Loughery said toward the end of his time as county commissioner, after hearing that the borough had plans to resurrect its downtown area, he was locked in.

“I thought this would be a great project to get involved with and try to make a difference in the community of Dublin...” said Loughery. “We worked very hard in alignment with the borough to develop a real plan that would work that would also match what their vision was for the community.”

One of Rosanelli’s friends called Dublin “quaint with a capital Q” upon visiting the town. Looking to the future, Rosanelli and others are seeing the vision come together.

“I think that it’s really starting to live up to that now ... I think we’re going to see in the next couple years its become kind of like one of the gems of Bucks County,” said Rosanelli.

Everyone can enjoy Dublin for a number of different reasons and this project is set to bring that into motion.

“I’m hoping that it continues to build on that — to offer services to the local community so that people don’t have to go to other towns,” said Siegfried. “A lot of the Dublin businesses are small business owners, and I think that’s fantastic because we’re all from the area trying to support each other.”

**What's coming down the pike?:** Hulmeville is celebrating its 150th anniversary. Here are ways to honor the town's history