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TAMPA –

About a year ago, when Container Store first hatched plans to open a Tampa location, it was drawn to the intersection of Spruce Street and West Shore Boulevard because of the dynamic energy in the area.

Developers liked the idea of being close to International Plaza, West Shore Plaza, the West Shore Business District, Tampa International Airport and Raymond James Stadium.

"It was a natural for the Container Store," said Ron Weaver, who represents the project's developer.

As word spread that the 24,500-square-foot Container Store was coming to a new shopping plaza at the intersection, demand grew for retail usage there, Weaver said.

Several businesses, including a bank, signed on to move in nearby. Now Saber Corner LLC, which will own a nearly 7-acre parcel at the southwest corner of Spruce and West Shore, has filed a rezoning application for a second phase to its project.

"We've noticed that as the Container Store continued to gain traction, there has been a lot of additional retail interest," Weaver said.

The new phase includes 35,000 additional square feet for retail, restaurant and potential office use.

Overall the project is expected to include 77,500 square feet of retail, restaurant and potential office use. There will be at least five buildings, including Container Store, which is slated to open in the coming months.

The project's zoning already allows for Container Store, the bank and several other businesses. Details about the bank and other businesses have not yet been released.

The project's second phase requires a rezoning hearing before Tampa City Council. That hearing is tentatively set for Jan. 10.

A rendering of the proposed additions includes Olive Garden, Pei Wei and Longhorn Steakhouse.

"They are placeholders, but they are among candidates," Weaver said. "To be fair to them at this point, the application seeks general retail and general restaurant approval."

Construction already is under way for the project's first phase.

Rainbow Airport Parking stands on the new parcel being rezoned at the northwest corner of West Shore and Union Street. Once construction begins there, that business will no longer will be at the site, Weaver said.

Container Store offers 10,000 products — everything from food storage to file cabinets to luggage. It has several locations in Atlanta; its closest location to Tampa is in Hollywood, Fla.