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# First-of-its-kind EVEN hotel eyed in Alpharetta

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The Southeast's first EVEN hotel — a new brand that targets travelers who seek simple ways to stay well — could come to Alpharetta.

InterContinental Hotels Group Plc (NYSE: IHG), which has its Americas headquarters in Atlanta, is in discussions with Greenstone Properties Inc. for the roughly 200-room hotel at the Parkway 400 development.

It would be located on a 25-acre site on Kimball Bridge Road, near the intersection of Old Milton and Westside parkways and across from the Avalon mixed-use development. Greenstone acquired the property in 2006 and is currently seeking approval from the city of Alpharetta to include a hotel in its master plan.

If a deal gets done, the EVEN hotel could break ground this fall.

It's the second hotel proposal to pop up so far this year in Alpharetta, which is home to more than 600 tech companies.

Last month, Atlanta-based Stormont Hospitality Group LLC and North American Properties presented plans for the more than \$100 million Alpharetta Conference Center and Hotel Avalon. If approved, the 325-room hotel and 74,000-square-foot conference center would anchor the second phase of Avalon, a



J. WORRALL/IHG

Last year, IHG opened this EVEN hotel in Rockville, Md.

project that's drawn many upscale restaurants and shops.

IHG launched the EVEN brand in 2012. Today, two locations are open in the United States: in Rockville, Md., and Norwalk, Conn. Both were existing hotels that were remade as EVEN hotels. Three more hotels are in the pipeline for New York City.

The Alpharetta hotel could be one of the first ground-up EVEN hotels in the country, serving as a prototype for IHG as it rolls out the brand across the country.

EVEN hotels were designed for the frequent traveler who wants to be fit and feel good, but doesn't want to spend too much time or energy on busy trips. Its amenities promote healthy eating, exercise, productivity and restful sleep.

For example, hotel rooms can transform into fitness centers with items such as a coat rack that doubles as a pull-up bar. Natural food options, soothing decor and "best-in-class" gyms also are hallmarks of the design.

"I think it's very smart," said Paul Breslin, principal at Horwath HTL and executive in resident at Georgia State University's School of Hospitality. "Surprisingly, the young traveler seems to be very cognizant about health in traveling."

IHG, in an email to Atlanta Business Chronicle, said it could not confirm potential EVEN hotel sites at this time. It did offer the following statement:

"IHG is committed to growing the EVEN Hotels brand in the right markets where our target guests live and travel. We have an active existing development pipeline in the U.S., including three additional EVEN Hotels properties expected to open over the next year. And, our approach across our brands has always been to grow through strategic development at the right time, in the right markets and with the right owners."

Greenstone Properties also declined to comment on the project at this time.

There could be a need for new hospitality product in Alpharetta. Today, it's home to 23 hotels, but hasn't seen new hotel construction in several years.

Hotels in the Georgia 400 north submarket are seeing strong performance, according to new data from PKF Hospitality Research and STR Inc.

In 2015, hotel occupancy is forecast to reach 72.7 percent in the submarket, compared to 68.4 percent forecast for metro Atlanta in 2015.

"There seems to be a lot of demand underserved in the Georgia 400 corridor," Mark Woodworth, senior managing director of PKF, said in a February interview. "There's a pretty meaningful concentration of high-tech businesses. We know that historically those type of businesses tend to be good generator of hotel rooms, meeting and conference space."

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