

After nearly six years of planning, the long-awaited West Emporia Travel Plaza has officially broken ground just south of U.S. Highway 50 between Graphic Arts and Overlander Road. The \$50 million project, led by Brownstone 3 COO Darrin Dodge, marks a major milestone following years of pandemic-related setbacks. Initial construction will focus on a One9 fuel station, a brand under the Pilot Flying J umbrella, with completion expected by mid-spring 2026. The larger development plan includes a hotel, food court, sit-down restaurant, and potentially an upscale RV park. City Manager Trey Cocking emphasized the plaza's value in bringing another nationally recognized brand to Emporia, reflecting growing regional investment and optimism for new travel and hospitality amenities in the area.



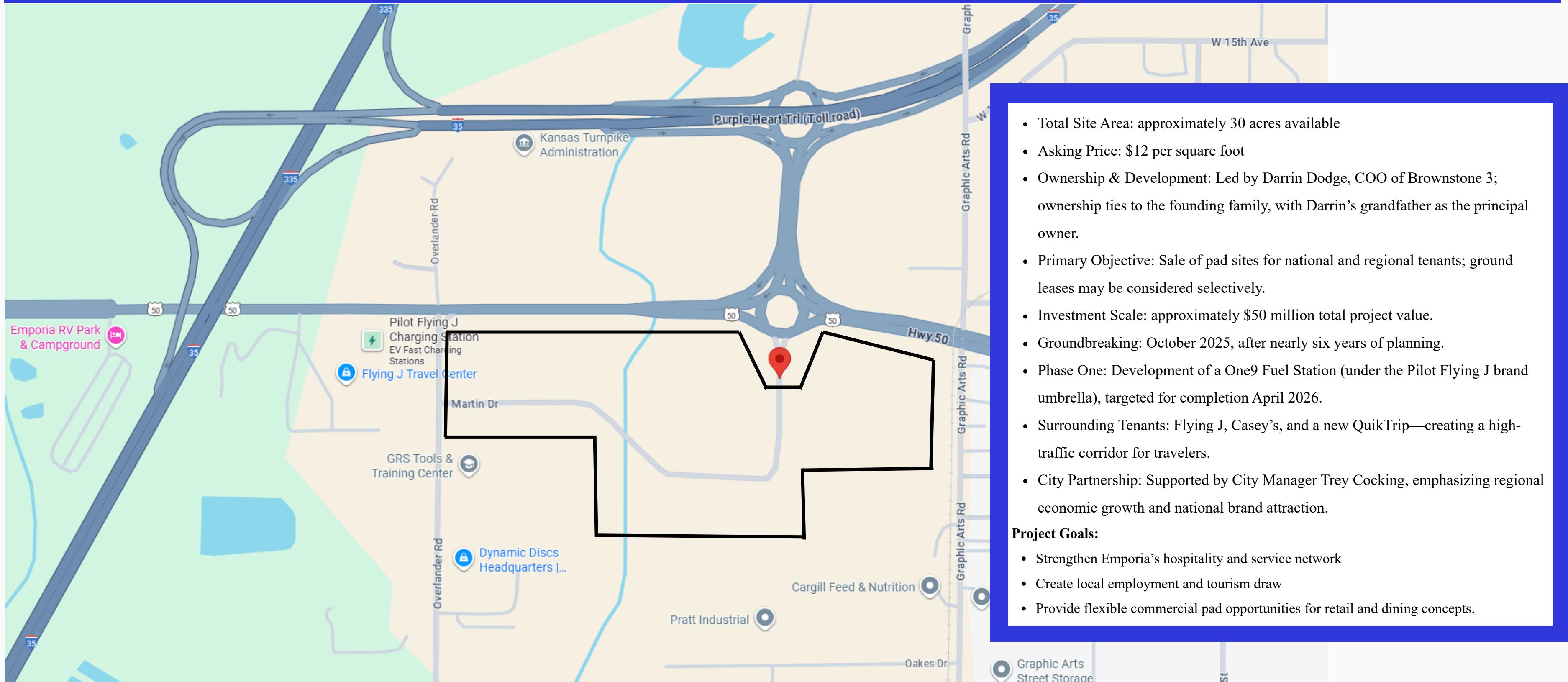
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About Emporia, Kansas

- Located in east-central Kansas, roughly halfway between **Topeka** and **Wichita** along **Interstate 35** and **U.S. Highway 50**.
- Known as the "**Front Porch of the Flint Hills**", offering access to scenic prairies and major transit routes.
- Population: approximately **24,000 residents**.
- Home to **Emporia State University** and a strong mix of **education, manufacturing, and service industries**.
- Serves as a **regional hub for travelers** due to its central location and multiple highway connections.
- Local economy benefits from **transportation, retail, and hospitality sectors**, with increasing focus on **commercial growth and tourism**.



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