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Marin grocery outfit coming to S.F.

Woodlands Market to serve Rincon Hill area

By J.K. Dineen

The rapidly growing Transbay and Rincon Hill neighborhoods in San Francisco are getting their first grocery store.

Woodlands Market, which has three stores in Marin County, said Monday that it will open an 11,000-square-foot store at Lumina, a 656-unit condominium complex at Main and Folsom streets. The market, which focuses on organic and locally produced goods, hopes to open



Michael Macor / The Chronicle 2000

Woodlands Market, with three stores in Marin County, including this one in Kentfield, hopes to open in S.F. in 2017.

early next year.

The deluxe high-rises sprouting up on Rincon Hill

and down the hill around the Transbay Transit Center are a long way from Wood-

lands Market's stores in suburban Kentfield, Tiburon and Ross. But the demographics are similar, said Don Santa, founder and CEO.

Lumina and other developments in the area — like the Infinity, One Rincon Hill and the Millennium Tower — have attracted a steady flow of empty-nesters downsizing from larger homes in Marin, the East Bay and the South Bay.

For the Santa family, who immigrated to San Francisco from Italy in the early 20th century, the new store will be a homecoming of sorts. Before moving to Marin in the 1960s, the Santa family

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opened the Hyde Street Market at Hyde and California streets on Nob Hill. That store, which opened in 1910, closed in the mid-1970s.

"That store got the family through two world wars, a depression and everything else," Santa said.

In 1986, Don Santa resurrected the family business, opening the first Woodlands Market in Kentfield. Santa said his group was keeping an eye out for opportunities in San Francisco when the broker for Tishman

Speyer, the Lumina developer, called.

"We started talking, and it seemed like a perfect fit for both parties," Santa said. "That area is underserved and in dire need of having a high-quality grocery operation. I think there is a lot of pent-up demand."

Lumina, which opened in 2015, has sold 400 of its 656 residences. About 150 units are occupied, and Tishman Speyer sold out and fully occupied by mid-2017.

Originally, the retail space at Folsom and Main streets was going to be called Market on Main, a venture that was

going to be operated by the same group that opened Market on Market, the former furniture mart building that is home to Twitter. But Market on Market shifted its focus from full-service grocer to food hall concept, and decided to not to go forward with the project.

Retail West broker Sami Zeger, who represented both sides in the Lumina deal, said the Woodlands Market could be well positioned to serve thousands of residents in the area. Plans for Rincon Hill and Transbay don't call for any retail spaces large

enough to accommodate a traditional grocery chain like a Whole Foods or Safeway. In addition, parking restrictions make it unlikely that those stores would locate in the area, Zeger said.

"Woodlands not only showed flexibility in dealing with a smaller urban format but actually embraced it as a creative challenge," she said.

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