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Retail complex approved next to Jefferson Mall

Zoning change OK'd by council

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By Kylene Lloyd, The Courier-Journal

A shopping complex with about 450,000 square feet of space is planned on this 27-acre site on Outer Loop just east of Jefferson Mall. Developers plan to build the complex in stages.

The Louisville Metro Council has voted to rezone 27 acres on the north side of Outer Loop immediately east of Jefferson Mall, clearing the way for construction of a large shopping complex.

Jefferson Development Group, headed by Kevin Cogan, is planning the as-yet-unnamed project with about 450,000 square feet of space at 5101 Outer Loop. That's about half the space in Jefferson Mall.

The council unanimously approved a change from single-family residential to commercial zoning requested by Cogan's company earlier this month. The Louisville Metro Planning Commission had earlier endorsed the rezoning.

Glenn Price Jr., Jefferson Development's attorney, said the site plan is subject to change as tenants are signed. He said no leases have been signed.

The site plan filed with the commission shows eight clusters of buildings. The largest structures are two two-story department stores, one with 137,000 square feet of space and the other with 72,575 square feet. The plan also shows a two-story sporting-goods store with about 72,000 square feet and a 28,000-square-foot bookstore.

Spread across the tract are one other "retail anchor" with 20,900 square feet of space, seven restaurants, a cafe and about 25 other stores, according to the plan.

The plan shows nearly 1,700 parking spaces, including at least 600 in a three-level garage.

Price said the shopping complex will be built in phases and that before each phase begins, detailed plans for each must be reviewed by the Planning Commission staff.

Rob Webber, Jefferson Development's president, said in an interview that the company expects to spend \$50 million to \$60 million on the shopping center.

The best case, he said, would be to develop the project in just two phases. But he said the schedule will depend on when tenants are signed.

There are subdivisions north and east of the location, but there was no major opposition from neighbors about the rezoning or plans for the development.

Price said Jefferson Development representatives met several times with neighbors and made extensive concessions to reduce any negative aspects of the project.

They included having only low-rise buildings, providing extensive buffering and setbacks along property lines, and building a berm up to 8 feet high next to some of the homes.

The main access to the site will be off Outer Loop, opposite Robbs Lane, where there is an existing traffic light. Jefferson Development has agreed to provide turn lanes off Outer Loop and to improve Buena Vista Court near the tract, which is owned by another Cogan company, Dixie Blue Dog LLC.

Jefferson Mall, which dates to the 1970s and is owned by a Tennessee chain, has about 125 stores and more than 900,000 square feet of space.

Nevertheless, Price said Jefferson Development believes that "explosive growth" has created a market for more commercial outlets.

He cited a recent economic-development and marketing study done for Louisville metro government that indicated a need in south-central Jefferson County for additional retail businesses.

"This is a regional marketplace," Price said, with several major new roads feeding into Outer Loop, including the nearby extension of Hurstbourne Parkway.

The 27-acre tract is mostly field, with one farm home that eventually will be torn down, Price said.

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By Steve Durbin, The Courier-Journal