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Page: 1

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NORTH HOUSTON / Mall evolves into open-air shopping area / Residents anticipating Northline Commons completion

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Staff

Renovations are well under way for Northline Commons, formerly Northline Mall, as phase one of the project nears completion.

The mall, north of Loop 610 at Interstate 45, is being converted into an open-air shopping center.

Rebecca Reyna, executive director of Greater Northside Management District, grew up near Northline Mall.

Reyna said she remains active in the community and is excited about the redevelopment.

"For someone who has lived here to see the evolvement of Northline and being able to shop in the neighborhood is a wonderful example of redevelopment," she said.

The retail center remains open for shoppers, but will be completely transformed into the Northline Commons center by the first quarter of 2009.

The mall sits in the middle of an 80-acre tract and new buildings are being constructed around its perimeter. Existing tenants and new tenants are moving into the spaces as they are completed.

"There are about four to six anchor stores like Conn's, Marshalls, Ross and Palais Royal," said Rebecca Victor, mall general manager. "The smaller stores are going to be grouped closer to the old mall."

Palais Royal had its grand opening July 26.

Most tenants to remain

Houston Community College was one of the first tenants to let the owners know they wanted to remain at that location, Victor said. HCC bought 14 acres on the northeast corner, near Lylerly and Fulton.

"The mall will be demolished with the exception of where HCC is now," said Victor. "They will finish the 2007-2008 school year where it is now."

Magic Johnson Theater closed May 1, and the owners are not building a new theater, Victor said. Picadilly's restaurant closed at the end of last year.

But IHOP, Pappas, KFC and Pizza Hut are still tenants.

"Sonic was destroyed by a fire, but they are planning to rebuild," Victor said.

Other tenants include Ci Ci's Pizza, Melrose and two banks, Washington Mutual and Capital One. The Worksource Northline wanted to stay in the community, so they signed a lease to come back, Victor said.

Phase one will be complete once construction is finished and the original mall is demolished and replaced by a parking area.

"Demolition of the mall should start within the next 60 days," Victor said.

Northline Commons will have the same retail footage as the old mall, Victor said.

"The mall was just under 500,000 square feet and the new property itself will have a total of 470,000 feet scattered around the property," said Victor. "It's called a campus style."

Victor said they are in discussion with Wal-Mart and several national retailers interested in leasing the parcel of land that faces Fulton.

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