

# Home Goods Coming to City Centre Development, Advance Auto Parts Returning

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Continued interest in Fairview Heights as a location for prosperous commercial trade was the subject of a pair of announcements made last week, one being the pending arrival of a Home Goods store in the new City Centre development and the other concerning the return of Advance Auto Parts to the community after about five years since it closed one of its businesses here.

The confirmation of Home Goods as a tenant in the City Centre development was related to the Fairview Heights City Council by City Administrator Jim Snider on Tuesday, February 4. He explained that the city's director of economic development, Mike Malloy, had learned the same day that the deal to bring Home Goods to this site had been finalized.

City Centre is located east of Illinois Route 159 and north of Lincoln Trail on the property that was formerly and most recently the location of a K-Mart store, Crown Optical and some other small shops. Office Max has been relocated from the south end of that center to the north end next to the Petco store which was the only part of the strip of businesses that remains unchanged since the structure which at one time held K-Mart and the other stores there was demolished last year.

Snider said Malloy had learned the new Home Goods store plans to open by the fall of this year and provide jobs for 70 employees. It will be located next to the Fresh Thyme Farmers Market which should be opening sometime during

the forthcoming summer. Also being located in this same center is Sports Authority, being moved from its former site on Ludwig Drive in Fairview Heights.

Home Goods is part of the TJX Companies business which also has Marshall's and TJ Maxx stores in Fairview Heights. TJX was founded in 1919 as the New England Trading Company in Boston, Massachusetts and opened its first retail store in 1929.

During the 1950s one of the flagship discount stores of the company, Zayre's, opened at several locations in the United States. Home Goods was developed in 1992 and offers items in a variety of departments including bedding, bath, dining, kitchen essentials, seasonal décor, garden and floral, rugs, furniture, lighting and much more.

The closest Home Goods stores to Fairview Heights are all in the west outer regions of the St. Louis area, the most accessible from here being at the Kirkwood Commons center which is located at Big Bend Road and South Kirkwood Road (also known as Lindbergh Boulevard) only a handful of minutes from Interstate 44.

Other Home Goods stores are located on Manchester Road in Ballwin and in the O'Fallon/St. Peters, Missouri area.

Mark Hinrichs, representing the general contractor for the City Centre project, Impact Strategies of Fairview Heights/St. Louis, spoke to the city's economic development commission on Tuesday, January 28, about what was going on there. Along with stating

he believed Office Max would be opening at its new location about a week ago, he said this would be followed by the demolition of the former Office Max structure.

Sports Authority, Hinrichs also mentioned, anticipates moving out of its Ludwig Drive building and into City Centre sometime in April if all goes as planned. He added that the bad winter weather has made completing some of the work on the project very difficult including trying put in foundations and utilities connections where needed.

After Hinrichs additionally mentioned the Home Goods agreement being wrapped up at that time, Malloy noted that there is a possibility the remaining open store location at City Centre could be occupied by a retail business that would, like Sports Authority, move a store currently operating in Fairview Heights to this new site.

Malloy said he learned from Kimco, the Ohio-based ownership group developing City Centre, that they are negotiating with a retailer about the relocation of an existing local store to about 85,000 square feet of space at that site. Those negotiations, Malloy added, were about 70 per cent complete as of the January 28 EDC meeting where he explained this situation.

Malloy additionally offered some best case scenario specific dates concerning the other City Centre stores, stating Sports Authority is shooting for a March 28 opening in its new space and Fresh Thyme is looking at opening between late June and late August.

EDC member Don Barkley

asked Malloy if the strong possibility of the final and currently unrevealed tenant for City Centre moving from another site in Fairview Heights "is going to leave us with another empty building somewhere?"

"Potentially," Malloy answered. "That's what happens when you develop a good site (like City Centre)."

Malloy further said there was also already a prospect being talked to by the appropriate parties for filling the retail space at the Ludwig Drive site which will be vacated when Sports Authority moves but he was quick to add, "It's not going to happen this year simply because these companies don't move that fast."

Advance Auto Parts will be soon opening a store in the structure formerly used as a site for, at different times, a Mexican and a Chinese restaurant, in the Plaza St. Clair Center which is just west of the Schnucks store property on Lincoln Highway. The game plan for his Advance Auto Parts store is to open in a space of 6200 square feet, sometime within the next three months with 35 employees.

The space being occupied by Advance Auto Parts is the high visibility "end cap" of Plaza St. Clair fronting on Lincoln Highway just west of the Scott Credit Union building.

"Mike has done a great job working with Pace Properties to make this happen," Snider said in his report to the City Council last week. Advance Auto Parts at one time had a store on North Illinois Street well south of Ashland Avenue but quietly closed it and left Fairview Heights until this time when it is coming back.