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Fairview Heights Kmart, nearby stores to be razed

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By WILL BUSS — News-Democrat

One of the initial shopping centers built in Fairview Heights could be in line for a make over.

The shopping center where Kmart, Petco and Office Max currently reside may undergo redevelopment and some tenant changes next year. Dayton, Ohio-based Kimco Realty Corp., the owner of the shopping center at the northwest corner of Illinois 159 and U.S. Highway 50 in Fairview Heights, has announced plans to demolish the retail strip and begin construction of a new one by February or March.

The Fairview Heights City Council will first hear of the redevelopment plans when it meets Tuesday night. Both the City Planning Commission and Planning Committee have recommended that the plan be adopted. If plans are approved, construction would be next year and the new shopping center could open by spring 2014.

The plan calls for demolishing all of the retail space from the existing Office Max on the south end all the way north to the space next to Petco. The new shopping center would be renamed Fairview City Centre and have six new store spaces ranging in size from 13,000 square feet to 45,000 square feet.

Both Petco and Office Max would remain as tenants. Office Max would relocate to a northern store within the new shopping center. Current tenant King's Beauty/Solomon Trading plans to leave the shopping center and relocate to Market Plaza, also in Fairview Heights.

Last month, Kmart announced that it would not renew its lease and leave the shopping center by the end of the year after 14 years there.

Sporting goods retailer Sports Authority, which is currently operating in Fairview Heights Plaza has plans to relocate to the new shopping center. The remaining three spaces would be marketed.

Kimco Realty Corp. Vice President Dan Gibson could not be reached for comment Monday.

Fairview Heights Economic Development Director Mike Malloy said the project would update and revitalize an aging shopping center and could lead to further retail redevelopment in town to help existing businesses stay competitive.

"It's not only good news for aging shopping centers to get a totally new face lift, so to speak, but the surrounding shopping centers are certainly looking at this as a complement to their business, particularly on (Illinois) 159," Malloy said.

Malloy said a portion of the building was built in the late 1960s and pre-dates the St. Clair Square mall. The 113,127-square-foot store that for the meantime houses Kmart was initially built for Venture. Venture was a St. Louis-based retail chain that went out of business and left the shopping center in 1998.

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