

## **Kroger to close St. Clair Shores store, build new one few blocks away**

By Mitch Hotts, The Macomb Daily

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Kroger plans to close its grocery store in northern St. Clair Shores and open a new Kroger Marketplace just a few blocks away in Roseville, according to company and city officials.

The Cincinnati-based retail grocer will invest \$15.6 million to demolish a long-closed Kmart store on 13 Mile Road east of Little Mack Avenue and replace it with a 100,000-square-foot store and gas station.

Construction is expected to begin in the fall of 2015 with a spring 2016 opening planned, city records show.

“We’re very happy with that area, Roseville and St. Clair Shores, and this new project gives us an opportunity to create a wonderful new shopping experience to our customers,” said Kroger spokesman Dale Hollandsworth.

The Roseville City Council recently approved a commercial rehabilitation tax exemption for the project, which will freeze the grocer’s property taxes collected for 10 years. The site currently generates about \$40,000 annually, officials said. School taxes will not be impacted by the move.

The commercial rehabilitation district was initially created in 2012 when Emagine Theatre came close to buying the Kmart property for development of a large new entertainment center. Emagine later pulled out of the deal.

Roseville is already home to two Kroger stores on Gratiot Avenue -- one near Frazho Road and one on the southwest corner of 13 Mile Road.

Hollandsworth could not comment on the rationale for closing the St. Clair Shores store on Harper near 13 Mile Road, but said most of those employees would be relocated to the new store. Kroger officials feel it makes more sense to tear down the Kmart site than to try to retrofit the building.

Kroger has 92 Marketplaces around the country. A Marketplace store has products and services traditional Kroger stores do not, such as jewelry, clothing, furniture and toys, along with in-store banking, a coffee bar, and drive-through pharmacy service.

“Building from the ground up, in terms of the store layout and traffic flow, is better than trying to force something into an existing space,” Hollandsworth said.

The Kroger project is the latest in a string of new shopping and commercial developments in northern

Roseville. Macomb Mall is in the process of a massive overhaul, while other new businesses have opened on Gratiot Avenue in recent months including an LA Fitness, 7-Eleven, Leo's Coney Island and National Coney Island. Kroger is also building a new fuel center on Gratiot north of Common Road for its Gratiot/13 Mile Road store.

“Things are looking up for Roseville,” said Mayor John Chirkun.

Jason Friedmann, the city's community and economics development director, said easy access to Interstate 94 is a key factor in the Gratiot and 13 Mile Road developments. He said city officials were thrilled to find a quality use for the space where the 39-year-old Kmart building is located. The property has been vacant since 2003.

“This store will be in direct competition with Meijer across the street, so that could mean lower prices and better values for our residents shopping for groceries,” Friedmann said.

City records show Kroger expects 90 jobs will be retained and 60 added in the move, while the construction will create 50 jobs.

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