

# City makes shopping center buy in revitalization efforts

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The city of Huber Heights has purchased the Marian Shopping Center for part of its revitalization efforts on Brandt Pike.

The city closed on the property at the end of March, purchasing it for \$2.8 million. The Sit, Stay, N' Play Dog Park, which is attached to the center but independently owned, was not part of the acquisition.

"The city's seen quite a bit of growth and development north of (Interstate) 70. There's not been that same kind of growth and development, and attention to growth and development, south of 70," said Bryan Chodkowski, assistant city manager.

The site's redevelopment falls under the Transformational Economic Development (TED) program. While the city does not have determined what it will do with the land specifically, it does not plan on creating another retail space and is looking to add value in more ways than monetary.

"By not returning retail to the site, we've now decreased inventory, making surrounding retail properties more valuable," Chodkowski said.

Instead, Huber Heights hopes to create a focal point for the city. The relatively new city doesn't have a traditional downtown or center anchor, according to Chodkowski.

Huber Heights, formerly known as Wayne Township, was incorporated in 1981.

"We really want this project and we believe this project, when it is complete, will help define what is that center of Huber Heights," Chodkowski said.

Additionally, the city hopes that by investing in Brandt Pike and showing its commitment to the area, other property and business owners there will reinvest as well.

City Manager Rob Schommer has been working on relocating businesses to other locations in the city. All the tenants who plan to relocate, with the exception of one, have found new locations and should vacate by the end of June, according to Chodkowski.

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, performed by Columbus-based GT Environmental, has already been completed. MAKsolve, based in Dayton, is performing the Phase II assessment.

According to Chodkowski, the cost of the project depends on what the studies show, but the city has budgeted \$2.8 million.

"It doesn't mean we're going to spend all that, but that's what we assembled at this point in time," Chodkowski said.

The city has a rough schedule in place and hopes to see new construction on the site happen next spring. The site should be ready to go by late 2020 or early 2021, according to Chodkowski. The emergence of Covid-19 has not affected the progress of the project.

The city wants to make the project a collaborative effort and involve organizations in the city and larger Miami Valley area. It is reaching out to organizations that provide opportunities to sustain or improve quality-of-life amenities for residents.



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The Marian shopping center in Huber Heights was recently purchased by the city.

"We're really looking forward to making this project stand out," Chodkowski said. "We really want this to be something special and that is something that the city manager and council have committed to."