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Mall developers stake out turf

Fairview and Allen are the hot spots in race to build big projects

12:00 AM CDT on Friday, September 16, 2005

By **STEVE BROWN** / The Dallas Morning News

Developers are buying almost 400 acres on U.S. Highway 75 in Fairview and Allen for a regional shopping center.

Dallas-based MGHerring Group's property is south of State Highway 121.

Mall developer General Growth Properties also is planning a big center near that intersection. And the projects are likely to cause a race between the two major mall builders to see who can get started first.

MGHerring has a big head start with its Village at Fairview development. It plans to break ground next year on the 1 million-square-foot shopping center, which will have at least three major department stores.

Dillard's and Foley's have agreed to put stores in the project, at the northeast corner of U.S. 75 and Stacy Road.

And the developers are negotiating with J.C. Penney, said company president M.G. "Buddy" Herring.

"We are going to do some apartments and office space above the retail, so it will really be a mixed-use project," Mr. Herring said Thursday. "We'll also have a

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number of restaurants and a theater."

Like MGHerring Group's new Uptown Village at Cedar Hill and Simon Property Group's Firewheel Center in Garland, the Fairview project will be the latest thing in regional shopping centers – basically a mall without a mall.

"It's built around a village green and a park with a cinema that creates a congregating point for the whole community," said executive vice president Gar Herring. "We still believe in the mall – we just opened one in California.

"But a lifestyle center is a place people like to go and spend their leisure time," he said.

The first phase will open in 2008.

Along with the Fairview development, MGHerring will build a 200-acre open-air shopping center on the south side of Stacy Road in Allen.

That project, the Village at Allen, will be designed for big-box merchants.

"We plan to have all this tied together architecturally," Buddy Herring said.

City officials in Fairview, a fast-growing Collin County town between Allen and McKinney, welcome the development.

"It's inevitable that we have the growth. We just want to make sure it's the kind we want," said Fairview City Manager John Godwin. "The information we have gotten from the MGHerring Group is this project is the kind we want."

Likewise, economic development officials in Allen are eager for retail construction in the city.

"It shows how hot this area is for retail that we have this level of activity up here," said Charisse Canfield, executive director of the Allen Economic Development Corp. "We are waiting to see what happens with it all."

Allen already has one major shopping center at Stacy and U.S. 75 – the Allen Premium Outlets, which is expanding.

In December, Chicago-based General Growth said that it will build a 250-acre open-air shopping center called Allentowne near the southwest corner of U.S. 75 and State Highway 121. Parts of that project are scheduled to open in 2007.

General Growth and MGHerring are both nationwide



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shopping center developers.

MGHerring has built 21 regional retail centers with almost 23 million square feet. Its latest major projects include the Eastern Shore Centre near Mobile, Ala.; the Imperial Valley Mall in El Centro, Calif.; and the Village at Riverwatch in Augusta, Ga.

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