

Turf Paradise Marketplace to have big Wal-Mart, Sam's Club

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Turf Paradise Marketplace, a retail shopping center planned near the racetrack of that name in north Phoenix, will include a Wal-Mart Supercenter, a Sam's Club and a mix of other retailers and restaurants.

Track owner Jerry Simms said a 200,000-square-foot Wal-Mart Supercenter and a 138,000-square-foot Sam's Club with a gas station will open in January. There also will be a shopping center that will include restaurants and "national tenants," which would open in 18 to 24 months.

Simms said he is working with tenants for the retail center but said that without signed leases he would not specify stores. He said the project has been in the works for three of the six years he has owned the 50-year-old racetrack at 1501 W. Bell Road.

"It's going to be an upscale-looking project," Simms said. The 80-acre property between 15th and 19th avenues south of Bell Road has long had commercial zoning yet remained vacant.

"It's a good idea what's going on there; Turf Paradise is going to put some needed money into the area," said Jena Ingram-Argiro, a Phoenix resident and member of the Deer Valley Village Planning Committee.

"It will serve new housing in the area, it's right there on a bus stop, and I hope it revitalizes that corner."

Wal-Mart will almost double the size of the Third Avenue and Bell Road store when it moves to the new location. Sam's Club is moving from its site at Interstate 17 and Bell Road. The relocation will leave the two current big-box stores vacant.

"Both sites are currently being marketed. We're pretty confident there will be tenants that will want to take over those spaces," said Delia Garcia, a Wal-Mart representative.

Wal-Mart bought the land for the two new stores at Turf Paradise and broke ground recently.

Garcia said the new Wal-Mart will look different from the store at Third and Bell.

"We don't build the blue-and-gray boxes anymore," she said. "Just as you see different types of housing, nothing is the same. That goes for commercial, too."

Simms said he believes the development will revitalize the area, citing recent improvements such as moving the Checker Auto to a new building on the site and upgrading the McDonald's at 19th Avenue and Bell Road.