

# NorthShore 770 plans construction start in 30-45 days

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**NORTHBROOK** — After more than two years of planning and public hearings, the developers of the North-Shore 770 project have the go-ahead to build one of the biggest projects in Northbrook history.

Michael Nortman of Crossroads Development Partners said May 15 that he expects construction to start on the 15.8-acre parcel at Dundee Road and Skokie Boulevard between mid-June and early July.

The 71,000-square-foot Mariano's Fresh Market that anchors the commercial portion of the project will open its doors by the fall of 2015, he said.

The total of about 102,000 square feet of commercial space also includes a Kriser's pet supply store, Fuddruggers, Chipotle, Panera Bread and Noodles & Company restaurants, a PNC Bank branch, a Sleepy's mattress store, and a relocated Zengeler Cleaners. The dry cleaner sold its Dundee Road frontage to add to the development parcel.

Dominating the north end of the property will be a luxury rental building of more than 511,000 square feet. Its eight- and nine-story towers are to enclose 148 one-bedroom apartments averaging 753 square feet and 199 two-bedroom units averaging 1,127 square feet. Apartment parking will be inside the building's lower two floors.

The building will house private amenities including a fitness center, theater and electronically-equipped business center. Outside will be a swimming pool.

At about 613,000 square feet, NorthShore770 will probably be the second-biggest integrated development in town, after Northbrook Court, the million-square-foot mall at 1500 Lake-Cook Road.

The Willow Festival shopping center, Willow and Waukegan roads, is about 406,000 square feet, and most, if not all, of the Skokie Boulevard office buildings are under 200,000 each.

Village trustees unanimously approved final plans for the project May 13, in an anti-climactic non-event that had been foreshadowed for months through various preliminary approval decisions.

They also approved a \$4.9 million note to the developers in tax increment financing money – from increased property taxes that will come in only as a result of the development – to pay infrastructure and other costs that theoretically would otherwise prevent the property from becoming profitable.

Here's how the TIF funds are split up: about \$2 million for traffic improvements; \$200,000 for an "entryway feature;" \$760,000 for relocating Zengeler Cleaners and \$1.9 million for site preparation for the retail portion of the land.

The TIF payments were approved earlier by local school districts and other involved taxing bodies.

Even now, after the formal approvals, however, there are a few more approvals yet to be made. The bank and bread store, which, unlike the other tenants, will own their own buildings, haven't finished their planning, Nortman said. Trustees had previously approved zoning variations for the buildings' drive-throughs and other zoning changes conceptually, and weren't worried May 13 about letting that go until later.

A few other items are also yet to be approved, including the Northbrook "entryway feature." The Northbrook Appearance and Planning commissions differed over its look, and more meetings will be scheduled to come to a conclusion.

The development agreement between the village, Crossroads and its partner, Morningside Group, requires a decision within 60 days.

Another incompletely-approved facet of the project is the placement of sidewalk bollards to prevent errant cars from injuring shoppers.

The doomed Center of Northshore, on basically the same property, also was approved, in 2008, despite missing facets of project paperwork. But that project never got a penny of the \$2.1 million in TIF money agreed upon because the developer did not live up to the agreement then in place, similar to the one Village Attorney Steve Elrod drafted this time.

"Among those conditions is that the developer acquires the property, that all of the construction loans be in place, and at least 75 percent of the retail space be pre-leased," Elrod said May 13.

Nortman said May 15 that all the financing is in place, and that all but 4,500 square feet of retail space is pre-leased.