

What's that on Ann Arbor's Broadway Street? Retail strip getting makeover

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A new concrete pad for bike hoops is poured as the Broadway Retail Center on Broadway Street in Ann Arbor undergoes renovations on Oct. 9, 2023. (Ryan Stanton | MLive.com)Ryan Stanton | The Ann Arbor News

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ANN ARBOR, MI — A 1970s-era retail strip in Ann Arbor's Lower Town area is getting a makeover.

Morningside Group, the developer of the Beekman on Broadway Apartments on Broadway Street, purchased the Broadway Retail Center across the street from the complex for \$1.85 million in July and is now giving it a facelift.

"We're making an investment in the property to upgrade its profile and take care of long-deferred maintenance," Morningside's Ron Mucha said of the exterior renovations underway.



The Broadway Retail Center on Broadway Street in Ann Arbor undergoing renovations on Oct. 9, 2023. (Ryan Stanton | MLive.com)Ryan Stanton | The Ann Arbor News

The five businesses there include the Plate restaurant, a liquor store, Broadway Cafe, Cottage Inn Pizza and Foods of India.

Plate and the Broadway Cafe have committed to staying, while Foods of India is being replaced with a new Indian restaurant and Morningside is still in discussions with the other two tenants, Mucha said. The makeover is coming with a significant increase in rents for tenants compared to the fairly low rents they've been paying, but it was time for an upgrade, he said.

The Broadway Retail Center on Broadway Street in Ann Arbor undergoing renovations on Oct. 9, 2023. (Ryan Stanton | MLive.com)Ryan Stanton | The Ann Arbor News
With all the new development along Broadway Street, including Morningside's apartment complex and other activity now happening, the retail center has a real opportunity to be successful into the future, Mucha said.

"This has all the hallmarks of the elusive 15-minute neighborhood where you have the opportunity to walk to amenities," he said.

The renovations being done are exterior only and include improvements in aesthetics, durability and signage, replacing fabric awnings with LED-illuminated signs on both sides that

will give the somewhat hidden retail center a stronger presence along the Plymouth Road side, Mucha said. There's value in it for tenants choosing to stay and be part of it, he said, noting Plate also is getting a new outdoor seating area and bike hoops are being added for the convenience of cyclists.

Morningside's construction office building next to the retail strip also is listed as available for lease now.

Meanwhile, Plate is expanding with its Orange Market about to open across the street in one of the Beekman on Broadway buildings. Mucha now estimates the building could receive approval for occupancy in late October or early November. Months of move-in delays have caused many of the apartment tenants to drop their leases and find housing elsewhere.

"We're doing everything we can," Mucha said of finishing the building, noting they're putting on some finishing touches and doing final testing of systems now.



The Beekman on Broadway Apartments as seen from the Broadway Retail Center on Broadway Street in Ann Arbor on Oct. 9, 2023. (Ryan Stanton | MLive.com)Ryan Stanton | The Ann Arbor News