

COSTCO TO JOIN WESTFIELD SHOPPING CENTERS



The Westfield Group and Costco Wholesale Corporation announced a multiple site agreement for the addition of Costco stores at Westfield centers in three U.S. markets: Los Angeles, California; Sarasota, Florida and Wheaton, Maryland.

In Los Angeles, an approximately 146,000 square foot Costco is to anchor the proposed "Village at Westfield Topanga," sited between Westfield's existing Topanga and Promenade centers. The Village will encompass nearly one million square feet of new retail, dining, hotel and office area along with community and cultural uses, courtyards and gathering spaces. The inclusion of Costco will allow for a particularly seamless integration with Westfield Topanga, whose own recent \$350 million redevelopment and expansion featured the addition of Target and Neiman Marcus along with 300,000 square feet of new shops, restaurants and upscale dining terrace.

"I congratulate Westfield and Costco for this announcement and for their immediate and long-term investment in Los Angeles," said Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa. "This project will create thousands of new jobs and will generate significant new tax revenues that will contribute to the economic growth and vitality of the region."

Says Los Angeles City Councilmember Dennis Zine, who represents Woodland Hills and much of the West San Fernando Valley, "As the Councilman for the district, my obligation is to provide economic vitality, and in that endeavor, I will continue to promote opportunities for job creation and a robust economy for residents in my district. There is no doubt that this announcement signifies a vote of confidence in the Valley, our people, our economy and our future."

History

Opened July 10, 1964, Topanga Plaza was California's first enclosed shopping mall.^[citation needed] It was originally anchored by The Broadway, May Company and Montgomery Ward. Nordstrom was added in 1983.

In 1992 May Centers, Inc., the original developer, was renamed CenterMark Properties and was sold by parent company May Department Stores in 1993 to a consortium led by Westfield Holdings, Ltd., a predecessor of Westfield Group.

The May Company location was renamed Robinsons-May in 1993 and completely renovated following the 1994 Northridge earthquake, The Broadway location was sold to Sears in 1996 after its acquisition by Federated Department Stores, and the Montgomery Ward closed in 1999 following the chain's bankruptcy. As previously mentioned, Robinsons-May was renamed Macy's in September 2006, and despite rumors to the contrary, the store will continue operating despite the close proximity of a second Macy's store at the Westfield Promenade up the street.

2006-2008 Expansion

The Westfield Group recently completed the first phase of an expansion project, which added over 100 stores, including a large two-story Target, and three-story Nordstrom department store. A newly designed, cafe-style dining terrace, family lounges, and an indoor carousel were also added to the existing mall. The former Montgomery Ward, which had been largely out of use for years, was demolished as part of this project.

Nordstrom was moved to a new building at the southeast corner of the parking lot, which faces Victory Boulevard and Owensmouth Avenue. Neiman Marcus opened in fall 2008 at the site of the former Nordstrom building, on the mall's west end. Three new parking structures have been erected to supplant the ground level parking lost when the mall's outer walls were expanded to accommodate the new stores, the largest of these being the five-levels, complete with an electronic parking space indicator system.

Future expansion

In July 2007 Westfield revealed partial plans to link Westfield Topanga with their other local indoor mall, the Westfield Promenade, which is less than two blocks away. In addition to the two major malls, Westfield owns a small, outdoor shopping center located almost exactly between the other two and on the same major boulevard as the others; the company's plans involve renovating the outdoor mall to refresh it and to make it a hub for people traveling between all three shopping locations.



Many different retail/office space configurations are being considered, some of which could take construction costs as high as \$750 million USD. On October 27th there is a public hearing before the Los Angeles City Planning Commission Original plans called for the work to be finished by early 2010, but much of that work is being delayed while planning revisions and budget issues are being handled. When the project is completed, the three mall complex will be the largest in California with a total of 3,800,000 square feet.