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Gardens on Havana blossom during economic winter

posted by: [Randy Barber](#) ■ 1 day ago

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AURORA - While we're in the middle of a pretty gloomy economic downturn, one neighborhood in Aurora is seeing an economic renewal during this unlikely time.

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A new shopping center is expected to open next week at the intersection of Havana Street and Mississippi Avenue in Aurora. The Gardens on Havana replaced the rundown Buckingham Square Mall, which had been left nearly vacant.

The City of Aurora and developer Miller Weingarten started work on the project back in 2003, long before the economic crisis. While there has been some trouble filling all of the storefronts and plans for multi-family residential units have been put on hold-the project's first new store, a Kohl's, will open next week.

"It's very exciting. There are a lot of projects that are being challenged because of the economy," said Chad Argentar, the City of Aurora's Economic Development Specialist.

This type of development would be welcome anywhere right now, but especially on a street that has become synonymous with decay. Years before the recession, Aurora's Havana corridor was already in a downturn.

Where many saw vacant buildings and rising crime, Miller Weingarten saw an opportunity.

"When you look at this intersection of 120,000 cars a day, there are a lot of people coming to this intersection. Before they were driving through it, not to it. Now they've got a reason to stop," explained Greg Moran, Miller Weingarten's Vice President of New Development.

He says they couldn't have predicted that the center would open during the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, but they're coping.

"It is frustrating, with the economy. You'd like to have your project start and finish on plan and on budget and we're having to adjust to that," Moran said.

The Target in the area stayed open during the redevelopment, but the Gardens on Havana is brining several new stores, including Kohl's, which again opens next week. The rest, including a Dick's Sporting Goods, will open between now and the end of the summer.

"Every week that you drive by, you're going to see something new happening at the gardens here," said Argentar.

For more about the Gardens on Havana, [CLICK HERE](#).

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Gardens on Havana blossom during economic winter. 9NEWS at 5 a.m. 2/24/09

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I hope these stores that open in up in there have a good loss prevention strategy!

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