

\$30 million Kroger Marketplace

Final plans under way for 113,000 square foot store, additional outparcels

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The Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce has announced that the primary tenant of a proposed shopping center at the corner of the Oak Ridge Turnpike and Illinois Avenue is a 133,000-square foot Kroger Marketplace.

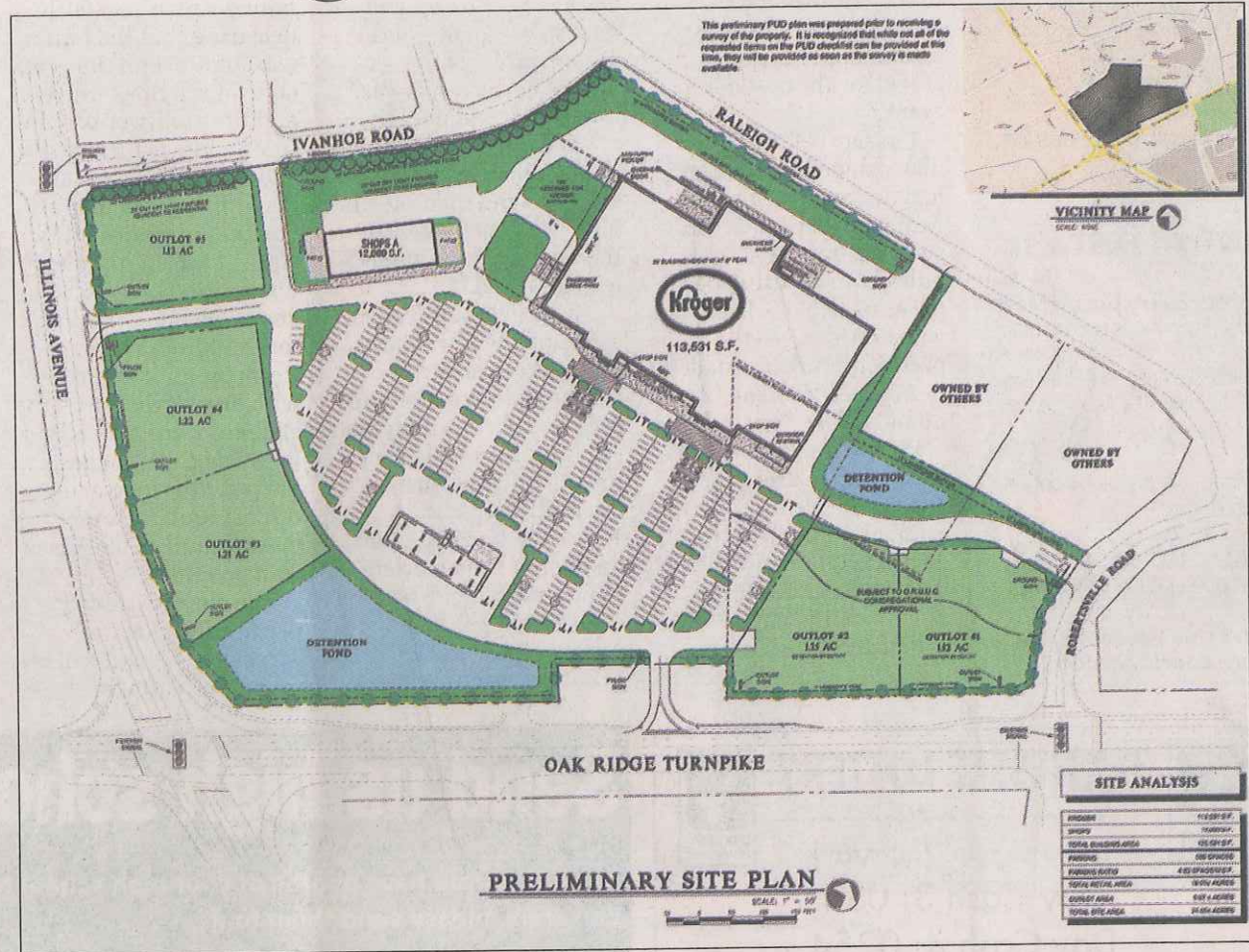
Barring unforeseen circumstances, the city of Oak Ridge has been advised this development — which will have an estimated cost of \$30 million — will be self-funded with no public support anticipated.

“Final plans are under way for the construction of a new Kroger Oak Ridge Marketplace store,” stated a Thursday morning Chamber release that added the new store “will provide Oak Ridge with a unique and interactive shopping experience ... designed to be a convenient and inviting addition to the community.”

Kroger customers will be able to “dine in” or “take out” prepared meals from an in-store, café-style Bistro or order fresh sushi from professional chefs at the sushi bar. The Oak Ridge store will also feature a larger health-and-beauty section, broader selections of perishable and grocery items, as well as full-service meat and seafood departments.

“Kroger’s Marketplace will also offer products not typical of a traditional Kroger,” the release stated, “including jewelry, bed-and-bath items, decorative goods, office and school supplies, furniture, toys and seasonal items. Traditional Kroger services and amenities such as in-store banking, Starbucks Coffee, a drive-thru pharmacy and a Fuel Center will also be available.”

Todd Perkins, co-manager of Oak Ridge’s current



This is a preliminary site plan for a new \$30 million Kroger Oak Ridge Marketplace project being developed on the corner of the Oak Ridge Turnpike and Illinois Avenue. Final construction plans are under way for the 113,000-square foot store — which is expected to attract an additional four to five outparcel tenants, as well.

Kroger, which is located at 380 S. Illinois Ave., said his store currently employs about 139 people. The new location, officials estimate, could bring 250 “new” jobs to the East Tennessee region.

“It’s a great idea,” said Perkins, who added that cur-

rent Kroger employees are “excited” about the new store being constructed. To put the new Kroger Marketplace’s size in perspective, it is expected to be

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Irene White.
Ron is survived by his brother, Raymond White; two daughters, Sabrina (Mike) Hawkins of Iron Station, N.C., and Natalie Massey of Saint Louis, Mo.; dear grandfather of

Beheler; beloved uncle, great-grandfather, and friend.
There will be no service. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the American Lung Association.

Since 1980, the ORUUC has been a beacon of tolerance and liberal religion at Stoplight No. 11, at the corner of the Oak Ridge Turnpike and Robertsville Road. But now the congregation has a big decision to make: whether or not to sell its building and property to the Blanchard and Calhoun Commercial De-

veloped in 1980, ORUUC was active in racial desegregation in Oak Ridge. The congregation continues to work for civil rights through its current advocacy for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender rights. In addition to the congregation's longstanding cooperation with other Oak Ridge congregations in such in-

tors of Unitarian Universalism are this nation's Puritan founders, whose efforts to affirm freedom of religion included "The Cambridge Platform," written in 1648, which laid out the democratic principles of congregational self-governance that ORUUC still follows today, in 2012.

KROGER:

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46 percent larger than Oak Ridge's existing Kroger and will be only slightly smaller than the 117,000-square foot Kroger Marketplace located at The Shops of Cedar Bluff in West Knoxville. "In addition to the Kroger Oak Ridge Marketplace, the store will contain approximately 12,000 square feet of small shop space," Thursday's release stated. And the site will allow four to five outparcels. "Outparcel tenants have not yet been identified," the release noted. "Specif-

ic outparcel space depends upon whether the Oak Ridge Unitarian Universalist Church congregation chooses to sell their current building and property." The church is located adjacent to the property already under contract. The development area encompasses about 22 acres of land and impacts about 57 homeowners whose houses have been placed under contract by Blanchard & Calhoun Commercial officials working with Betsy Coleman Realty. Those two entities have been working with the homeowners located on the future shopping center site since March. The next step in bring-

ing the new store to The Energy City will be bringing the site plan and proposal to the Oak Ridge Municipal Planning Commission for rezoning consideration by close of business Monday, Sept. 10. City officials anticipate the Planning Commission will consider the proposal at its Sept. 27 meeting and, if approved, the commissioners' recommendation will be sent to Oak Ridge City Council. Contacted by The Oak Ridger on Thursday, Council member Charlie Hensley, who is also a member of the Planning Commission, said: "The Planning Commission needs to recommend the rezoning."

He said the rezoning of the site would require two readings from Council for the resolution. Hensley also said the Planning Commission — by its meeting — should also have recommendations from City Engineer Steve Byrd regarding traffic-related issues and other zoning issues. "This is good for the city," said Hensley. And you certainly aren't likely to get an argument on that from local Chamber of Commerce President Parker Hardy. "The Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce began conversations with Blanchard & Calhoun about this project in November 2011," Hardy said.

"Though the firm conducted an extensive search, other properties were either deemed unsuitable for the center or were unavailable." Oak Ridge City Manager Mark Watson added that the proposed Kroger Marketplace "is the kind of project our citizens and those in surrounding areas have been waiting for. This project demonstrates Oak Ridge is a desirable market to be in and identifies Oak Ridge as having strong investment potential. "People like stores and buildings that are new, and the size of this project developed with Kroger will plant an image of a vibrant, economically

strong community — spurring further projects and future growth in Oak Ridge. "As far as what will happen with the current Kroger site on South Illinois Avenue, our understanding is that Kroger will be aggressively marketing that location to other retailers for sublease." Glynn Jenkins, director of communications and public relations for Kroger's Atlanta Division, said the new Oak Ridge store is tentatively expected to open in the spring of 2014. *Beverly Majors can be contacted at (865) 220-5514.*