

Foxcroft Towne Center a New Face for Martinsburg Mall

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For The State Journal

Martinsburg Mall may be gone, but a new shopping development is already filling the void.

"The mall has been re-branded and named **Foxcroft Towne Center**," said Eric Cornett, chief operating officer for **Paramount Development Corp.**

Martinsburg Mall was built in 1991 and Paramount, a real estate firm with an office in Beckley, has owned it for the past three years.

Cornett said increased vacancy inside Martinsburg Mall made it no longer economically viable to continue to operate it as an enclosed mall.

"We believe that closing the interior mall is a necessary step in order to revitalize the property and make it a viable part of the community going forward," Cornett said.

The large, enclosed mall faced competition from newly built stand-alone stores and strip malls. The Commons, just two miles away, had been causing large department stores to see a decline in sales.

Foxcroft Towne Center is a 600,000-square-foot regional center located on 76 acres. The decision to change the name to Foxcroft Towne Center was made last fall.

The project is being choreographed in phases.

Phase one included demolition of the **Sears** section and the creation of six new pad sites, four of which have already been developed. National retailers currently at the center are

Mattress Warehouse, Kay Jewelers, Great Clips and T-Mobile.

The center also already includes a mix of national restaurants, such as **Olive Garden, Chili's, Panera Bread, Wingstop and Five Guys Burgers.**

"We are now working on phase two, which is the area between **Walmart and JCPenney**," Cornett said.

The redevelopment of phase two was launched early in 2017 and involves the creation of new outside entry sections in the area between Walmart and JCPenney. Those spaces for lease range from 4,000 to 13,000 square feet. One store locating in the phase 2 area is **Party City**, a party supply store.

Cornett said Paramount is in the planning stages of phase three. He said **Hobby Lobby** has signed a lease to fill the area where JCPenney is located. The Martinsburg JCPenney store is one of 138 stores the national chain is closing.

"Since taking over ownership in Martinsburg Mall, Paramount has spent a lot of time and effort re-creating the mall through a process of fruition and re-development," said **Mark Baldwin**, Martinsburg city manager. "We are very pleased with Paramount's progress to date."

Baldwin said demolition, which began two years ago, continues as the development proceeds. A large percentage of the debris is being recycled.

He said changing the structure of the mall itself has allowed opportunities for Paramount to market additional out parcels.



Courtesy of Paramount Development Corp.

The former Martinsburg Mall has been re-branded as Foxcroft Towne Center, with development moving forward in phases. Some demolition already has taken place and several new stores have located in the new development.

"It's becoming a transition from a typical mall," Baldwin said. "Paramount is a good partner to work with."

The project will create a new tax base for the city of Martinsburg, which is located in Berkeley County. Berkeley County is West Virginia's sec-

ond-largest county and one of its fastest-growing, having jumped 37 percent in population between 2000 and 2010. Martinsburg also is the location of a **Procter & Gamble** distribution center under construction since September 2015 and expected to employ about 700 total people by fall 2019.