

\$1.5M Kroger renovation is just the latest move in downtown Fairfield development



Business

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FAIRFIELD —

Fairfield's downtown area has seen significant investment in recent years, and Kroger will be injecting another \$1.5 million as it renovates the interior of its Village Green supermarket.

Most recently, the downtown area saw a new Aldi grocery store open in January. Last summer two new restaurants opened: Lindenwald Station Family Diner opened in Riegert Square, moving south from its namesake Hamilton neighborhood, and Om India opened in Village Green. The Fairfield Village Senior Apartments also opened last year.

"The downtown area is really central to our community," said Fairfield Development Services Director Greg Kathman. "People come here not only to shop, but they come to conduct at business government offices and come to play at the various parks and recreation facilities we have here. The health and vibrancy of our town center area is very important to our community."

And downtown can be a catalyst for other areas of the city, he said. "If one area is doing well that obviously benefits the other as well," Kathman said.

Kroger can start their renovations whenever they are ready, Kathman said. "They're approved, ready to go from our end," he said.

Kroger has been reinventing itself in recent years, adding many services — including curbside grocery pickup, its “Scan, Bag, Go” quick checkout service and limited home delivery — to make the shopping experience more convenient.

The supermarket chain has heavily invested in its grocery stores around the region in recent months and years. In November, the supermarket chain completed its year-long renovation at its Liberty Twp. store, emphasizing on fast and fresh foods, the **Journal-News** reported. That was one of 12 renovated stores last year around Greater Cincinnati. The chain also replaced two stores, including in West Chester Twp.

But the Fairfield renovations won’t be as extensive as most of the other projects, said Kroger spokeswoman Erin Rolfes. “A lot of it just seems like smaller upgrades to give it a nice facelift,” said Rolfes of the Fairfield renovations.

Renovations that customers will notice include new LED lights for the exterior sign, a new salad bar, new LED lights for the dairy department doors, a relocated dairy case, and an “Easy For You!” oven-ready seafood case, new tiles and added checkout lanes and new decor.

“Every year we take a look at the stores that we have, and kind of the last time we have touched them, and which stores need an upgrade and which stores need some extra love,” Rolfes said. “As our real estate team looks through the stores, and the cadence at which they have been renovated, this one seemed like it was a good candidate for that extra love.”

The Fairfield Kroger opened in Village Green in the summer of 2002 after being relocated from across Pleasant Avenue.

Rolfes said officials don’t yet know when the renovations could start, or how long they’d last. “We’re hoping to be as undistruptive as possible because we know how difficult it is to get around those folks who are upgrading the store while you’re shopping,” she said. “Hopefully we’ll be in and out quickly, and it will be a fresh, new look for the store.”