

Target coming to Marin City, groceries in tow

Opening set by next March at old Best Buy site

By Mark Prado, Marin Independent Journal

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A Target store is coming to Marin City and will offer something the community lacks: groceries and fresh food.

Target signed a lease this week to put a store in the Marin Gateway Shopping Center in the building previously occupied by Best Buy, said Terrence Tallen, a partner and principal with the Southern California-based Gerrity Group, which owns Gateway.

It will be the third Target store in Marin. Target plans to have the store open by March 1, 2017.

“This is on a fast track,” Tallen said.

Best Buy, which occupied the 48,500-square-foot building, left the shopping center in February 2014 when the company decided not to renew its contract.

“We think Target is the ideal tenant for that space,” said Tallen, adding that he has eyed Target for more than three years as a tenant. “Target will offer fresh and organic foods. Marin City definitely needs a grocery store.”

Tallen is hopeful Target will increase foot traffic at Gateway and attract other businesses, including Trader Joe’s.

The new store will be one of Target’s smaller “flexible format” customized stores that caters to the clientele of the area, Target officials said. Target stores — such as those in Novato and San Rafael — operate in larger spaces of at least 130,000 square feet.

“These smaller stores are tailored to the neighborhood’s needs,” said Kristy Welker, Target spokeswoman.

Among the goods and services the Marin City Target will offer beyond what it calls a “robust” selection of groceries: home goods; children’s apparel, toys and baby essentials; portable technology products and accessories; men’s and women’s clothing, including local sports team apparel; a variety of cosmetic, hair care and beauty brands; and cellphone services as part of Target Mobile.

The store will also offer pickup for items purchased via Target.com. The store will create more than 100 new jobs in Southern Marin, Tallen said.

“The Bay Area is a priority for Target, and the Marin City store will be the fourth flexible-format store to open in the Bay Area since 2015,” said Mark Schindele, senior vice president of properties for Target, in a statement. “We’re focused on serving the needs of our guests, and that means adding flexible format stores to populated city centers where they live and work, so we look forward to becoming part of Marin City.”

The other flexible format stores are in San Francisco’s Financial District, on Shattuck Avenue in Berkeley and another is set to open in Cupertino later this year.

Marin City community leader Felecia Gaston said Target will be well received.

“It will be a good thing for the community,” Gaston said. “They offer a variety of items at low prices, including food. It will be nice having one close to home. It’s what Marin City needs.”

There had been ongoing negotiations with Cinemark to bring a multiscreen theater to the Best Buy building. But Ross Dress For Less exercised an option to nix the deal specifically for an entertainment venue, saying it would have caused too much of an impact on parking at the center, Tallen said.

Matthew Holmes, principal with San Francisco-based Retail West Inc., who worked to bring in the theater, lamented that it did not happen.

“It would have had the first IMAX-capable theater in Marin, with state-of-the-art technology, the crème de la crème,” Holmes said. “It would have been a game changer. It would have brought in restaurants. It’s exactly what Marin City needs.”

When that deal collapsed, Target came into the picture, Tallen said. The county still must approve store signs, which is not expected to be an issue. Otherwise, Target is in the clear to move into the building.

Gateway still has empty buildings to fill. In January, The Dollar Tree closed. The store had an option to renew its lease, but the center’s management decided against having the store at Gateway.

With the arrival of Target, Tallen believes Gateway will become more desirable for other retailers.

“We have a number of interested tenants, including several restaurants,” he said.

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