

LAND AND SPACE

A former supermarket near Milwaukee's Northridge Mall that's now a storage center would be expanded under proposal.

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A former supermarket near Milwaukee's vacant Northridge Mall that now serves as a private storage center would be expanded under a new \$3 million proposal.

The former Pick 'n Save, 8120 W. Brown Deer Road, closed in 2014.

Menard Inc., which operates a neighboring home improvement store at 8110 W. Brown Deer Road, in 2017 obtained city Board of Zoning Appeals approval to convert the former supermarket into a self-storage center.

That facility has operated successfully. And Eau Claire-based Menard now wants to add 246 outdoor storage units.

That's according to the proposal filed with the zoning board.

Menard is planning to make that investment in part because of problems with people parking illegally and dumping trash in the 3-acre parking lot in front of the former Pick 'n Save, according to the proposal.

"It is a constant battle that Menards has to fight to keep that parking area looking clean as we try to make sure the neighborhood looks nice," the proposal said.

The solution: extend outdoor storage units around the parking area and allow legal vehicle parking within the facility.

"The expansion will act as a fence to prevent outside access to the parking lot," according to the proposal.

The planned investment would total \$3 million, according to the company.

Menard, in its 2017 filing, said operating a self-storage center at the former Pick 'n Save would help pay for the building's maintenance costs until the home improvement retailer eventually expands into that space.

There was no immediate word Thursday from a company representative as to whether that is still the long-term plan.

Nor was there information on when the outdoor storage expansion would happen — assuming the zoning board approves Menard's request for a variance.

Menard's proposal surfaced just days after the city's long-time efforts to redevelop Northridge Mall had a setback.

That city's condemnation order targeting the mall, which closed in 2003, may not have followed reasonable standards required by law, according to a new decision from the Wisconsin Court of Appeals.

The court reversed a ruling by Milwaukee County Circuit Judge William Pocan that upheld the raze order. The appeals court sent the case back to the circuit court for further consideration.

That decision could be appealed to the Wisconsin Supreme Court. The decision is being reviewed by the city attorney's office.

Meanwhile, people who live and work on Milwaukee's far northwest side who want the site redeveloped will be facing a longer wait.