



## Premium outlet mall appears headed to prime Southwest Freeway location in major real estate deal

By Ralph Bivins | October 30, 2014

Good news for outlet mall fanatics.

One of the biggest parcels of available land on the Southwest Freeway is being eyed by one of the world's best outlet mall specialists — Simon Premium Outlets.

For Inner Loopers, the best part of it all is this: You won't have to go to the hinterlands to get a fix of outlet shopping. The proposed site is only a 10-minute drive from The Galleria.

Imagine, no more endless sojourns to distant outlets in Katy, Texas City – or God forbid, San Marcos. The great bargains you get at outlet malls — they really cheaper, aren't they? — will be easily accessible.

Wait! This is more than just an outlet mall story.

This is a major real estate deal. The ingredients (with apologies to Ken Hoffman, the Houston Chronicle's majordomo of junk food):

### **The site**

The 192-acre site, with an enormous half-mile of frontage on the Southwest Freeway, has been the campus of Texas Instruments, which is vacating the property and selling it off. Located just outside Sam Houston Tollway, between Kirkwood Road and West Airport Blvd, the tract is in the hamlet of Stafford. A lot of this acreage remains vacant and some of it is used for softball fields.

Of course, vacant land along the Southwest Freeway is a rarity, unless you want to drive out to Wharton, or something. The developer calls this site the biggest chunk of "infill" land anywhere on the Southwest Freeway – and he's right.

### **The vision**

A proposed 400,000-square-foot outlet mall is only a part of this huge development, which will be called Legacy. Other elements include 600,000 square feet of office space, 2,400

apartment units and a hotel. Legacy is supposed to be a live/work/play environment that will appeal to the Millennial generation. (All developers say that these days.)

The walkable project will have a “public green” and the developer says many of the large oak trees on the property will be retained.

### **The outlet mall**

With Simon as the proposed outlet mall operator, the Legacy project will have one of the most formidable retail center developers in the world. Simon manages The Galleria and operates Houston Premium Outlets near Fairfield on the northwest side of Houston, Katy Mills mall in west Houston, plus about 300 other retail centers in North America, Europe and Asia.

Simon is based in Indianapolis, but don't let that fool you. This is a world-class retail organization that has deep relationships with every major retailer. Don't be surprised when you see this mall open with great brands like Burberry, Coach, Cole Haan, Elie Tahari, J.Crew, Kate Spade and Kenneth Cole.

### **The developer**

Street Level Investments, a Dallas-based realty firm, is developing the mall. Street Level has a sister company — Edge Realty Partners, which specializes in retail center brokerage around Texas.

For the apartments that will be built there, Street Level is bringing in JBL Partners, a well-seasoned multifamily developer from Dallas.

Texas Instruments had been operating at this campus for decades. But in July, Texas Instruments moved out to a building on University Boulevard in Sugar Land. The tech firm still has some employees working on the old campus for a while.

Street Level expects to close on the land purchase in early 2015 and get busy on this project, which is quite large, says developer Brian Murphy, a partner in Street Level. “We expect to start construction after the first of the year,” says Murphy.

Then, if everything falls in place, the Southwest Freeway could have an outlet mall in a couple of years, perhaps, in time for Christmas shopping in 2016.

*Ralph Bivins, editor of Realty News Report, is a past president of the National Association of Real Estate Editors.*

[http://houston.culturemap.com/news/real-estate/10-30-14-premium-outlet-mall-appears-headed-to-prime-southwest-freeway-location-in-major-real-estate-deal/?utm\\_source=alert&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=alert1655](http://houston.culturemap.com/news/real-estate/10-30-14-premium-outlet-mall-appears-headed-to-prime-southwest-freeway-location-in-major-real-estate-deal/?utm_source=alert&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=alert1655)