

Supermarket chains showing faith in city neighborhoods

Grocery stores are a vital ingredient in inner-city revitalization, and some Atlanta neighborhoods are getting a lift from major chains' expansion plans.

Publix, which already plans a store in a major West End development, now plans to open a location on the east side as well.

Kroger, which has a small-scale store across from Atlanta City Hall, is considering two more downtown locations.

The chains are using development incentives to reduce the risk of entering areas not previously served by large grocers.

Inner-city revitalization efforts bring Publix store to East Lake

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Publix Super Markets will build a store in Atlanta's East Lake neighborhood as part of a massive revitalization effort under way there.

It is the chain's second store in an inner-city area not previously served by a major grocer. Last spring Publix announced plans for a store in Historic Westside Village development on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive near the Ashby MARTA station.

The Publix in East Lake will be built by **M.J. Lant Development** and W. Michael Murphy & Associates in conjunction with the East Lake Community Foundation's \$120 million revitalization project. The foundation is partially funded by developer Tom Cousins.

The freestanding 44,270-square-foot store will be built along Glenwood Avenue and will open about a year from now.

The area's revitalization includes a YMCA, Drew Charter School and the restoration of East Lake Golf Club, where legendary golfer Bobby Jones learned the game. Several mixed-income



JEROME THOMPSON / Staff

housing developments have also gone up, including Villages at East Lake.

Tom Cousins, chairman and chief executive officer of Cousins Properties, said the East Lake Community Foundation paid for the land where Publix will build its store.

Cousins said Publix's plans are a "bold thing to do."

Publix spokeswoman Jennifer Bush in Lakeland, Fla., said the grocer has to have a base of customers to support a store and

believes there will be a good base in East Lake.

"It's over a million-dollar investment to get a store open and running," Bush said. "If we don't have sales, we can't do this as only a community goodwill gesture. A store has got to be profitable."

Publix isn't the only chain eyeing inner-city locations and seeking development assistance.

Kroger could open a 30,000-square-foot grocery store at Techwood and Parker Street next year. Integral Properties, master developer of Centennial Place, is seeking \$300,000 to \$500,000 in incentives from the city to help cover infrastructure costs.

"Typically, what has been missing in these neighborhoods, is the appropriate retail to support the burgeoning, and in the case of East Lake, exploding, residential," said Kevin Hanna, president of the Atlanta Development Authority. "Grocery stores in particular are what is needed to maintain if not increase that residential development."

The authority also is negotiating with Kroger to build a store on Georgia Avenue in the Summerhill neighborhood adjacent to Turner Field, where residents are clamoring for services.