

Sweetbay, Temple Terrace reach compromise

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by [Michael Hinman](#)

When Sweetbay Supermarket opens its new store in Temple Terrace's downtown redevelopment zone, it's going to face a different direction and sit tucked behind retail stores lining North 56th Street as part of a compromise company officials struck with city leaders.

The plan was announced during a public presentation by Sweetbay officials Wednesday night that surprised some residents who had come to protest the store's original site plan.

"I had to take a little bit of a step back tonight because I was geared for battle," said Grant Rimbey, a local architect and one of the advocates of the downtown redevelopment who had opposed Sweetbay's original plan.

A March site plan of the 38 acres of land near the intersection of Bullard Parkway and North 56th Street had Sweetbay moved more than a block north of its current Kash n' Karry location facing west toward 56th with a parking lot separating the road and the store. While this is a standard setup for larger stores, it was contrary to the New Urban plan developed by city officials that would have buildings just 10 feet from the street and a more pedestrian-friendly interior to the entire mixed-use development.

New Urbanism is usually not conducive to the grocery store market, said Russ Lake, Sweetbay's corporate development director.

"It was a formula that I didn't find economically viable for us," Lake said of some of the more recent plans involving Sweetbay on the site. "This brings us back to right where we started on day one, we face the store to the north."

The Sweetbay will be mostly hidden behind retail shops and residential units that will line 56th Street, and while it will face Bullard Parkway, there will be more buildings blocking the front as well. The parking lot will remain but now be on the north side of the building that will allow customers to still park near the store.

As part of the deal, Sweetbay officials will give up their long-term lease they have with their Kash n' Karry store on the south end of the redevelopment zone as soon as the doors open on the new store. Neither city nor company officials would discuss details of the new lease, as they say it's still being negotiated. When Temple Terrace Mayor Joe Affronti was asked how much money this would end up costing the city, he said it was something that was going to be discussed at the city council's regular meeting on June 6.

Councilwoman Glenda Venable, who had expressed concern about the previous Sweetbay involvement in the redevelopment area, said many of the problems she had were assuaged.

"This is certainly 100 percent better than what we saw on (May 26) when I left depressed," Venable said.

Plans for the project are still preliminary despite the millions of dollars already being spent. [Unicorp National Developments Inc.](#) of Orlando is developing the land to include retail, commercial and residential elements on a site that currently contains two aging strip malls less than 50 percent full.