



The Maui News / MELISSA TANJI photos

The Rev. Kealahou Alika (center) holds a blessing Thursday morning for the new T.J. Maxx store that will be built in the parking lot of the Maui Mall. The 26,000-square-foot store is anticipated to open by next summer.

T.J. Maxx breaks ground, to be one of many new additions to Maui Mall

By MELISSA TANJI, Staff Writer

KAHULUI — Ground was broken Thursday for a new T.J. Maxx store, which will be one of several new additions to the Maui Mall that customers will see over the next year or so, said an official with the mall ownership group.

Construction will begin next week on the 26,000-square-foot national retailer that sells designer brands at discount prices. Some have described T.J. Maxx as an upscale version of Ross Dress for Less, which has a store nearby. T.J. Maxx will be in the mall's southwest parking lot across the street from Taco Bell. It is scheduled to open in summer 2015.

"We are thrilled to be starting construction on the T.J. Maxx store," said Bryan McFarland, an official with mall owner Alberta Development Partners, which purchased the mall from Alexander & Baldwin earlier this year.

In addition to T.J. Maxx, the mall will install new shade structures, a new fountain at the mall entrance between Longs Drugs and Whole Foods Market and new furniture and other improvements in the next couple of years, he said, addressing at least 30 people who gathered Thursday morning in the parking lot for the ceremony.

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Mayor Alan Arakawa looks at a metal piece he turned over in the dirt during a blessing Thursday morning for the new T.J. Maxx store at the Maui Mall. Bryan McFarland (left), a principal with Alberta Development Partners, the new owners of the Maui Mall, joined the blessing. Also at the event were Daryl Arita (right) and Robert Poulson, co-owners of Arita-Poulson General Contracting. Behind the group are construction screens for a new Bank of Hawaii.

T.J. Maxx

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After the ceremony, McFarland said that there will be new tenants in the mall by next summer; they will include a mix of national and local businesses. He did not disclose those tenants.

To make up for the lost parking spaces, McFarland said that the grassy area near Wendy's in the mall will be transformed into a parking lot, which will be ready before T.J. Maxx opens.

Last year, the Maui Planning Commission granted a special management area permit for two single-story buildings, which would add 31,940 square feet to the 185,700-square-foot mall. One of those buildings will be for T.J. Maxx.

The store's offerings include women's clothes and handbags and household items. There are three T.J. Maxx stores on Oahu, at the Ward Village Shops, Pearlridge Center and Pearl City Gateway; this will be the first store on the Neighbor Islands.

The buildings were designed by Riecke Sunnland Kono Architects.

The T.J. Maxx will be next to the \$3.2 million, 13,500-square-foot Bank of Hawaii banking center currently under construction at the intersection of Puunene and Kamehameha avenues. The bank is expected to open in February.

Chucky Ferreira, president of the mall merchants group, said that he was excited about the T.J. Maxx addition.

"Any new addition for me is nice," said Ferreira, owner of YNVU Clothing Co. "It will bring a demographic to the mall we didn't have before."

Those shoppers will be older and looking for more upscale products, he said.

Denver-based Alberta Development Partners, an affiliate of Chicago-based Walton Street Capital, purchased the Maui Mall from A&B, which originally developed the mall in 1971.

A cornerstone of the mall is the County Service Center, which Mayor Alan Arakawa says needs to be moved. The County Council currently is considering three alternative sites for the service center.

McFarland said that "rumors" about his company displacing the County Service Center were not true and added that he wanted to work with the county.

Maui County Communications Director Rod Antone said that Alberta Development Partners had informed the county that the center, which houses the Motor Vehicle and Licensing and Real Property Tax division offices, was not part of the future plans for the mall.

While the new owners were not booting out the center, county officials said that the owners would be charging the county higher retail lease rates.

The county has negotiated to stay until the end of 2016, with the option to extend for one year should construction of a new service center be delayed, Antone said.

■ Melissa Tanji can be reached at mtanji@mauinews.com.