

Green Acres Mall revamp plan includes new Panda Express, Dave's Hot Chicken, Shake Shack and more



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'An amazing next chapter for the property'

Shake Shack, Dave's Hot Chicken, Panda Express and ShopRite are among retailers that will be coming to the mall as part of the Valley Stream property's redevelopment. Credit: Newsday/Kendall Rodriguez; Photo Credit: The Macerich Co.

By Tory N. Parrish

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Long Island's first Panda Express eatery, as well as Dave's Hot Chicken and Shake Shack, will be among the new tenants in the revamped Green Acres Mall, where a redevelopment estimated to cost at least \$130 million will start soon.

Next week, bulldozers will begin taking down parts of the Valley Stream mall, said Richard Madramuthu, vice president of leasing for The Macerich Co., the Santa Monica, California-based real estate investment trust that owns the mall.

Last year, Macerich [announced the redevelopment plan](#), which includes adding a ShopRite supermarket, entertainment venues and more restaurants and landscaped open spaces, with the aim of elevating the look of the property to [draw higher-end tenants](#) to the Sunrise Highway property.

The planned project has helped boost leasing activity at the mall, Doug Healey, senior executive vice president of leasing at Macerich, told analysts during the company's earnings call Monday.

WHAT NEWSDAY FOUND

- **Demolition will begin** next week at Green Acres Mall as part of a redevelopment of the Valley Stream property that will cost an estimated \$130 million and \$150 million and add a ShopRite supermarket.
- **Panda Express**, Dave's Hot Chicken and Shake Shack will be among the new fast-casual eateries at the mall after the redevelopment is finished.
- **New tenants** will open in phases beginning in 2026 and ending by fall 2027, according to a Macerich official.

"Demand in pre-leasing have been very strong with almost 50% of the project square footage committed and another 17% in the [letter of intent] stage. Tenants will open in phases beginning in 2026 with full completion by fall 2027," Healey said.

The redevelopment project will include the demolition of the former Sears building, giving Sunrise Highway motorists an unobstructed view of the new lineup of fast-casual restaurants with sidewalk entrances at the mall. It also will bring 370,000 square feet of redevelopment to the Northeast portion of the mall, Macerich officials said.



A rendering of the completed and revamped Green Acres Mall, which will include eateries such as Panda Express, Dave's Hot Chicken and Shake Shack. Credit: The Macerich Co.

Construction and new-tenant openings will occur in phases, said Madramuthu, who provided updated timelines for the project and the names of some of the incoming restaurants to Newsday during a tour of the mall Tuesday morning:

- A freestanding, 80,000-square-foot ShopRite will be built on what is now a parking area. The store will open in fall 2027.
- A former Sears, an attached parking deck and Sears Auto Center will be demolished and replaced with surface parking.

- The former Kohl's will be converted to a new full-service restaurant, retail and service-oriented use on the first floor and a big-box retailer on the second floor in October 2026.
- Some existing interior mall space along the perimeter of the main building will be converted to six fast-casual eateries, including Panda Express, Dave's Hot Chicken and Shake Shack, which will open in summer 2026. Those six restaurants will have sidewalk entrances and face Sunrise Highway.
- A 10,000-square-foot entertainment venue will be opening on the second floor of the mall across from Launch Family Entertainment, a 34,181-square-foot facility under construction that will have bowling, trampolines, an arcade, a ninja warrior course and food.
- All of the mall's main entrances will receive new facades, with the grand entrance also getting new streetscaping.

Macerich said last year that the redevelopment had an estimated cost of \$100 million to \$115 million. But the newest estimates put the cost at between \$130 million and \$150 million, spokesman Arun Khosla said.

Sprucing up, diversifying

Green Acres Mall was built in 1956 and bought by Macerich in 2013. Its largest tenants are Macy's, Primark, Uniqlo, H&M and Old Navy.

In 2016, Macerich built an adjacent shopping center, Green Acres Commons, whose tenants include BJ's Restaurant & Brewhouse, Ulta, 24 Hour Fitness, Dick's Sporting Goods, HomeGoods and Aldi.

A Walmart supercenter is also on the property.

The mall and shopping center total 2.06 million square feet on a 100-acre campus.

Macerich declined to disclose the vacancy rate for the mall.

But the mall and shopping center's location on busy Sunrise Highway and close proximity to Queens — there isn't a Walmart in New York City — make them a valuable asset for Macerich, generating \$1 billion in retail sales and drawing 18.4 million visitors annually, Macerich officials said.

But it was time for a refresh, Madramuthu said.

"You drive up and down Sunrise Highway. And you look at Green Acres. It looks like a very ... tired mall. For us, the aesthetic and improving the sight line for the property was huge," said Madramuthu, adding that the closings of the mall's Kohl's in 2019 and Sears in 2021 were the catalysts for the property's revamp.

Green Acres Mall is an older retail property with a mix of mid-tier stores, putting the property in a class of malls that is not performing as well as malls with high-end stores and luxury brands, said David Caputo, a data scientist at Moody's CRE, which is a commercial real estate data provider in Manhattan.

There is a high demand for mid-tier malls to be renovated to assets that are more profitable, such as open-air shopping centers, and diversifying the tenant mix more, he said.

"Also, renovating existing facilities is more cost-effective than constructing new ones, particularly given current construction costs," he said. "As part of these redevelopments, owners want to Amazon-proof their retail centers, which can be done by adding nontraditional tenants, such as sports and entertainment centers, indoor pickleball facilities, fitness gyms ... to drive foot traffic and reduce vacancies," he added.

On Long Island, two struggling malls are being redeveloped as open-air shopping centers — the [former Broadway Commons](#), a Hicksville mall that was renamed The Shops on Broadway last year, and the [former Sun Vet Mall](#), a Holbrook property that was renamed The Shops at SunVet in 2023.

At the nearly vacant Sunrise Mall in Massapequa, [Amazon is under contract to buy 26.7 acres](#) for an operations facility it wants to open. The mall's owner, Sunrise Mall Holdings LLC, which received approval from the Nassau County Planning Commission on May 1 to subdivide 67 acres of the mall property, plans to redevelop a 32.3-acre section that it is retaining.

The newcomers

Panda Express has 26 restaurants in New York State, most of which are in New York City, but none on Long Island.

Panda Restaurant Group, which is headquartered in Rosemead, California, did not respond to a request for comment about its restaurant planned for Green Acres Mall.

Founded in 1983, Panda Express is a chain of Asian-food restaurants with flavors that “are a combination of Chinese roots with an American taste,” according to its website.

The chain has more than 2,500 locations across the United States and a presence in 11 other countries, according to Panda Restaurant Group's website.

The Dave’s Hot Chicken eatery opening in Green Acres Mall will be operated by a franchise group that brought the concept to Long Island last month with the opening of a restaurant in Carle Place. The group also opened a Dave’s Hot Chicken franchise in Fresh Meadows, Queens, in January.

“They’re performing really, really well. I think the product is phenomenal and there is excitement about the brand,” said Jeff Froccaro, co-owner of the franchise group.

Founded in 2017 and headquartered in Pasadena, California, Dave’s Hot Chicken specializes in chicken sliders, tenders and bites.

The chain has more than 300 restaurants nationwide, 95% of which are franchises, spokesman Josh Levitt said.

Milkshake and burger chain Shake Shack has five restaurants on Long Island.

The Manhattan-headquartered chain is on a fast track for expansion across the country, having opened 43 Shake Shack restaurants last year to bring its total to 579. And it plans to open 45 more this year, including a drive-thru in Selden, spokeswoman Kate DeMarco said.

Also, Shake Shack plans to open two other Long Island locations in 2026 — at Tanger Outlets Riverhead and in Commack, she said. ■