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News

McDonald's may move to clear way for mall site redevelopment

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BRISTOL — The city is trying to work out a deal that would have the downtown McDonald's move to a spot next door to Dunkin' Donuts on North Main Street.

City councilors have given tentative backing to a land swap that would shift the fast food restaurant to a new spot on the 17-acre former mall site.

The move may be made before the rest of the property is redeveloped as part of a bid by the Long Island-based Renaissance Downtowns to remake the city center.

Edward Krawiecki, Jr, the city attorney, said the new eatery will likely be "more upscale" than the existing McDonald's.

Krawiecki said its owner is eyeing 80 seats, including some outdoors, and an atmosphere akin to the McCafe-style that some of the chain's establishments have adopted.

It is not clear how the plan fits with the Discount Food Outlet grocery store that sits close by the site where the new McDonald's would go.

"It's definitely in that area," Krawiecki said.

The city owns the entire site except for the parcel where the McDonald's sits and the Dunkin' Donuts property.

Councilors gave unanimous backing to the concept of swapping land with the company so that a new restaurant could be erected beside the doughnut shop.

Renaissance has been heavily involved in the negotiations, officials said, and is on board with the idea.

Officials have long said the existing McDonald's site is a potential roadblock for any revitalization scheme for the property because it sits in the middle of a key portion of it. Moving it to the side would obviously help, they said.

Krawiecki said that McDonald's will have to follow the normal land use rules for downtown. He said he expects the company to present plans before long in order to secure the necessary approvals.

It is not known whether the restaurant will seek to maintain its drive-through window, but it's a typical feature of many McDonald's.

The city has allowed a drive-through window at the Walgreen's erected at the corner of Main and South streets, which may serve as a precedent.

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