

Retail complex planned in New Lenox

December 7, 2006

By Patrick Ferrell Special to the Daily Southtown

A second developer plans to build 1.5 million square feet of retail space near the future Interstate 355 interchange in New Lenox.

Zaremba Group LLC, of Cleveland, on Monday submitted plans for a 176-acre development at the southwest corner of U.S. 6 and Cedar Road in New Lenox. The development, dubbed Cedar Crossings, would straddle both sides of Interstate 355.

It would be directly across U.S. 6 from a 1.5 million-square-foot mall proposed by Forest City Enterprises, also of Cleveland. That development calls for a split between a lifestyle center and a big-box complex.

Lifestyle centers blend automobile accessibility with pedestrian attractions to accommodate people's desire to park close to particular stores while also offering pleasant surroundings for more leisurely shopping. The Cedar Crossings development would be more of a typical shopping center.

Mark Carlson, construction manager for the Zaremba Group project, said Cedar Crossings would be similar to shopping centers at 151st Street and LaGrange Road in Orland Park and at 191st Street and Harlem Avenue in Tinley Park.

"This is very automobile-oriented," Robin Ellis, the village's planning and development administrator, said of Cedar Crossings.

While both proposed developments need various approvals, including zoning changes, from the village board, the Zaremba Group plans to begin work next summer and open in fall 2008, a full year before Forest City has proposed opening its lifestyle center.

Carlson said the Zaremba Group already has letters of intent from retailers that would fill 700,000 square feet, or 75 percent, of the project's first phase.

Officials with the Zaremba Group were unavailable, and Carlson would not disclose names of potential retailers at Cedar Crossings.

According to the company's Web site, the Zaremba Group has built a handful of projects in Illinois, including a number of CVS Pharmacies and two smaller shopping centers in Aurora.

According to Ellis, the Zaremba Group already has submitted a traffic study, and the village has asked Forest City to also submit one.

Ellis said the village has also asked each developer to submit a market study, showing that the area will support 3 million square feet in retail space.

A 1999 study conducted by the village showed it could sustain at least 2.5 million square feet, Ellis said.

The Herald News of Joliet

