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## Vacant Ford dealership to be redeveloped into shopping mall

Premium content from Orlando Business Journal - by Chuck Wanager, Staff Writer

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The former McNerney Ford dealership on East Colonial Drive will be redeveloped into a new 87,000-square-foot, three-building shopping mall.

The location has sat vacant since 2001, when the dealership closed.

Plans call for the shopping mall -- dubbed the V.N. Town Center -- to go on 8.13 acres.

Robert Tran LLC of Orlando owns the property.

The mall will consist of:

- A new two-story, 24,000-square-foot office building with retail space
- A new one-story, 9,000-square-foot retail building
- The existing 54,000-square-foot McNerney Ford building would be remodeled at a cost of about \$1 million.

The cost to construct the two new buildings -- which are to have a Spanish Mission design -- has yet to be determined. Construction will begin this fall, with the mall opening by next summer, says James Garritani of Designers Architecture P.A., and architect for the project.

Robert Tran, owner of Robert Tran LLC, says he's now lining up tenants for the venture. The lease rates and tenant mix have yet to be determined.

The planned new shopping mall is in the county's State Road 436/State Road 50 Area Redevelopment Plan Study Area, which is aimed at improving the appearance and land use of the intersection and surrounding property.

Tran's retail proposal would be "consistent with the overall vision for the area," says Mildred Fernandez, the commissioner whose district includes the site.

As a result of meetings with county officials, the plans emphasize aesthetics - such as an attractive exterior -- more than a typical site plan, says Saballi. The mall will have extensive landscaping with lots of plants and trees, he adds.

### V.N. Town Center

What: Redevelopment of former McNerney Ford dealership at 5700 E. Colonial Dr. into a new 87,000-square-foot shopping mall

Status: Plans in initial stages

Developer and contractor: Robert Tran LLC of Orlando

Engineer: Florida Engineering Group of Florida

Architect: Designers Architecture P.A.