



ANTON, SOWERBY & ASSOCIATES

IN THE NEWS

LA Fitness plans new center in Clinton Township

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A new LA Fitness will be constructed on the site of the former Stu Evans Lincoln Mercury dealership on Hall Road (M-59) in Clinton Township. (The Macomb Daily/DAVID DALTON)

LA Fitness plans to build a new center on the site of a closed auto dealership on Hall Road (M-59) in Clinton Township to replace an older gym located down the street, officials said last week.

The Irvine, Calif.-based fitness club chain plans to demolish the former Stu Evans Lincoln Mercury building east of The Mall at Partridge Creek and construct a new 50,000-square-foot state-of-the-art facility, according to Joe Sowerby, partner at Anton, Sowerby & Associates Inc. of Mount Clemens.

"We expect the demolition to take place in the next few weeks and their goal is to have a new fitness club open for business by the end of the year," Sowerby said.

Sowerby said Spirit Master Funding III LLC, a large equity fund that specializes in commercial businesses, acquired the Stu Evans property in 2007 for \$13.8 million under a leaseback agreement with the auto dealer when the owner, John Evans, filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy.

Spirit recently held an auction to sell off equipment and materials still on the site and entered into a 20-year land lease with LA Fitness, Sowerby said. LA Fitness is expected to invest between \$3.5 million and \$4 million in the new center, he added.



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The move fills a commercial vacancy along the bustling M-59, which carries up to 100,000 cars a day and will be located between Partridge Creek and Walmart.

LA Fitness did not respond last week to requests for comment, but township Supervisor Bob Cannon said he was happy to give the gym a new home. Cannon said he was told the company will eventually close an existing gym on Schoenherr at M-59 in Sterling Heights once the new one is operating.

"I am sorry to see another community lose them, but we are happy to have a very stable, quality company moving in," Cannon said. "I would expect it will have a positive economic spinoff on the shopping centers, gas stations and restaurants in the area."

Cannon praised LA Fitness for trying to recycle light poles and other building materials from the Stu Evans site. "It would have been easier for them to push those into a landfill, so right there it shows they're all about doing the right thing," he said.

Sowerby, a former auto dealer, said it "breaks my heart as an old car guy" to see the dealership property converted into a non-auto use, but added the vacancy had been an eyesore for the past five years.

Meanwhile, LA Fitness is also going to redevelop a former Farmer Jack store on Mound Road at M-59 in Sterling Heights into a new \$5 million gym, according to a report in Crain's Detroit Business.

Those two are among six new fitness centers the company is adding in metropolitan Detroit, with the others being on Coolidge Highway in Troy, Orchard Lake Road in West Bloomfield Township, West Road near Interstate 75 in Woodhaven, and Mack Avenue at Moross Road in Grosse Pointe Woods, according to the Crain's report.