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The Rhode Island Mall is poised for revitalization

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A year-and-a-half after its interior was shuttered, the Rhode Island Mall, long a fixture in the area's retail landscape, is poised for revitalization. Last month, Massachusetts-based Winstanley Enterprises, LLC and Surrety Equities, LLC, of New York, announced they had purchased the 450,000 s/f property for \$38 million.

The mall, located at 650 Bald Hill Rd. near the intersection of Rte. 2 and Interstates 95 and 295, opened in 1967. Originally known as the Midland Mall, it was the first two-level, enclosed shopping facility in New England and for years was a bustling, popular destination for people throughout the region. Last year, the four remaining tenants left the mall, leaving only three anchors - Sears, Wal-Mart and Kohl's - operational.

The new owners say they are "very excited to breathe new life into the development" and to "revitalize the vacant portion of the mall into a thriving retail space." They plan to renovate the interior and exterior of the 225,000 s/f mall portion of the property to create larger spaces that cater to anchor tenants. It's expected that design work, planning and construction will take approximately two years.

The sale is obviously good news for the city and the state and also means some 225 construction jobs and 150 full and part-time jobs. Coupled with new stores along Rte. 2 and the recent expansion of the Warwick Mall, the city is well suited to take advantage of the rebounding economy.

We are pleased to welcome Winstanley Enterprises and Surrety Equities to Warwick and look forward to working with them as the design and construction process moves ahead.

Scott Avedisian is the mayor of Warwick and the chairman of the RIPTA board of directors.

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