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Big retail may bump Harrisburg

Large project at N.C. 49 at Stough Road planned; town official fears added traffic

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A developer plans to build a retail project in Concord just a few miles north of neighboring Harrisburg, where town leaders have said they want to keep big-box development away.

The developer said the 765,000-square-foot project was planned well before Harrisburg's Town Council voted against allowing a Lowe's Home Improvement store to be built in the town.

Town Council member Steve Sciascia, who fought to ban the Lowe's, said the Concord project would bring unwanted traffic to Harrisburg. Sciascia said he hoped customers at least would support smaller Harrisburg businesses as they drive through.

"I think that's going to cause a lot of the problems we were trying to prevent, but it's not nearly as bad as if we had it in our town," he said.

The project, at Stough Road and N.C. 49, would be at the western end of Cabarrus County's so-called Westside Bypass, which eventually will connect the area to Kannapolis Parkway/George W. Liles Parkway and N.C. 3.

It should give residents in eastern Cabarrus an option other than driving to Concord Mills or Afton Ridge to shop, said George Dewey, president of developer Aston Properties of Charlotte.

"That intersection is going to really change during the next four or five years," Dewey said. "It's an ideal spot."

Dewey would not name potential tenants but said the development would be a "quality project."

"We're in discussion with several national retailers that are the best in their class," he said.

Concord annexed land for the project in December. Dewey said the development could open in 2009, but no firm dates have been set.

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