



# Study could unlock mall's potential

Midwest City Memorial Hospital Authority grant helping fund market study for Heritage Park Mall

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Contributing Writer

The journey toward Midwest City's Heritage Park Mall revitalization may be long, but officials say they hope the final result will make it worthwhile.

"We know this is going to be a complicated project because all mall redevelopments inherently are – that's what we've seen," said Robert Coleman, Midwest City economic development director. "In moving forward, we hope to attract a firm who has successfully dealt with, who's had a successful outcome in a similar situation elsewhere."

This phase of the city's journey is thanks to a \$27,500 grant funded by Midwest City Memorial Hospital Board of Grantors, matched dollar-for-dollar by Midwest City Council. That grant made possible the Heritage Park Mall Market Study and Redevelopment Plan.

"What we did is develop and issue a request for proposals, which we released last week and transmitted to more than two dozen firms that have

some history in working with 'dead' malls."

Firms receiving the RFP included one in Oklahoma City, four in Dallas and others located throughout the country, Coleman said. Proposals are due back to the city on Sept. 1, although Coleman said he hoped an Aug. 15 project meeting would bring at least some of those firms' representatives to look at HPM first-hand.

"We've already had seven of these companies show interest, and we want to work closely with whomever takes charge of this to really formulate something that will be specifically beneficial for this situation," Coleman said.

The market study's total budget is \$55,000 and city staff have already begun their own assessment of the mall, including businesses already in it. As HPM's fortunes have lagged, the 40-acre mall has fallen to the point where only three tenants – LifeChurch, Sears and Pelican's Restaurant – re-

## By the Numbers

**69,000** Consumers live within 10-minute drive of the mall

**29%** Area households that earn more than \$60,000 annually

**\$55,000** City's budget for market study

main active onsite, Coleman said.

"All three are concerned that nothing is being done to remedy the situation, and we also have the Meadowood neighborhood, which is adversely impacted by what's happening – or rather not happening, just over the fence," he said. "Then there are other issues, such as maintenance and the shift of business to other areas of the city."

Those are factors the market study should address, as well as many others, Coleman said. According to data compiled by city staff, about 69,000 consumers live within a 10-minute drive of the mall, but only 29 percent of area household earn more than \$60,000. Traffic by the mall has also declined in recent years and a great deal of competition has sprung up along Se 29th Street and S. Douglas Boulevard, Coleman said.

"The owners are obviously desperate for tenants and have entertained lease options proposing uses

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