

# In The News



## The Shippensburg News-Chronicle

New owners seek revitalization for Shippensburg Shopping Center  
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The Shippensburg Shopping Center – known locally as the Kmart center – was sold Dec. 20, to developers who say they have a positive record of bringing new life to struggling shopping sites.

Liza Rice of WRDC, says, "We're excited about this and looking forward to redeveloping this center."

Rice and Karen Martin were instrumental in the negotiation that led to the purchase by WRDC, a company based in Ardmore, Pa. Ownership of the center is listed under WRD Shippensburg LP.

They say short-term improvement plans include an expanded façade, additional signage and more welcoming landscaping at the location along Route 174 (Walnut Bottom Road) in Shippensburg Township.

As a 2005 Shippensburg University graduate, Rice says she was well aware of the property before it appeared on the WRDC acquisition radar.

"When this came across our desks, I already knew about it," Rice says. "I knew it before the Wal-Mart was built."

She says the center is in an excellent location in a growing locale.

"We're really excited and looking forward to giving this the attention we think it deserves," Rice says. "We have a track record of turning around centers."

Martin says turnarounds are "what we do." She says the Shippensburg Shopping Center – a location that was the community's first shopping center – has a lot going for it.

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“It’s a great location,” Martin says. “We thrilled about Volvo’s decision to locate its headquarters in Shippensburg and the location is more visible than the Wal-Mart site.”

Both women point to Kmart as one of the current principal tenants, but stress that the future remains to be determined.

“Kmart’s lease is about to expire soon,” Rice says, “and they have some options.”

Martin says the future is bright whether Kmart decides to stay or go.

“I have Kmart’s in some of my other centers and they do well,” she says. “If they decide to leave, we have a couple of great tenants now and interest from other retailers.”

In addition to Kmart, the Shippensburg Shopping Center is presently occupied by Planet Fitness, Brother’s Pizza, Puff -N-Snuff, the Better Days Animal Shelter thrift store and BizWop.

Chad Stine, president and CEO of Bennett Williams Realty in York, brokered the deal for the seller – Shippensburg Shopping Center, a Maryland LLC. Hill Management of Maryland owns that interest.

Both Rice and Martin are careful not to make premature commitments they may be unable to fulfill, but Shippensburg Township Supervisor Steve Oldt says initial discussions with the two women suggest WRDC ownership is promising for the township, the shopping center and the overall community.

“In our discussions, they seem very interested in making changes and doing things to improve business for the tenants,” Oldt says, “things the previous owners had no interest in doing. They didn’t seem to care.”

Oldt and other township officials were unhappy with Hill Management’s decision to block the construction of a connector that would have permitted traffic to flow back and forth from the Shippensburg Shopping Center to the more recent development that includes Kentucky Fried Chicken, Taco Bell and Rutter’s Farm Market. Hill officials also blocked the Capital Area Transit commuter bus from stopping on its property to pickup up and drop off passengers traveling from Shippensburg to work in Harrisburg.