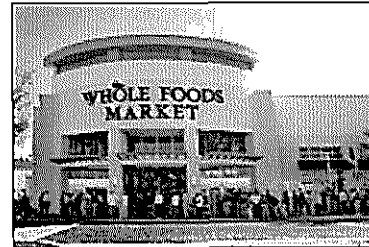


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Ward secures Whole Foods

By Andrew Gomes
Advertiser Staff Writer



Texas-based Whole Foods Market will be the anchor tenant at the \$100 million-plus redevelopment of Ward Village Shops in Kaka'ako.

General Growth Properties

WARD VILLAGE SHOPS REDEVELOPMENT

Apartment tower

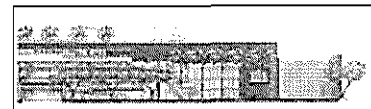
- 165 rentals
- 17 stories

Parking structure

- Seven stories
- 1,010 stalls

Retail

- 200,000 square feet of shop space
- Two stories
- Anchored by Whole Foods Market in a 67,000-square-foot space



WHOLE FOODS MARKET INC.

Whole Foods Market, an upscale supermarket chain specializing in natural and organic foods, plans to open its first Hawai'i store as the anchor tenant at the \$100 million-plus redevelopment of Ward Village Shops in Kaka'ako.

Founded: 1980 in Austin, Texas

Number of stores: 181 in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom

The Texas-based retailer with 181 stores said yesterday the two-story, 67,000-square-foot market should open in early 2008.

Sales: \$4.7 billion for the fiscal year ended September 2005

Average store size: 32,000 square feet

Whole Foods will be the biggest of several retail stores and restaurants to fill about 200,000 square feet of new retail space being created by General Growth Properties Inc., owner of the Ward Centers retail complex that includes Ward Village Shops.

Number of employees: 32,000

Web site: www.wholefoodsmarket.com

The Whole Foods-anchored project includes a 17-story rental apartment building and seven-story parking structure that replaces former warehouses, parking and a small retail building that used to house Starbucks, Kua'Aina Sandwich Shop and other stores. A Pier 1 Imports will be incorporated into the project.

The ambitious development, announced in 2004, will be the biggest for the expanding Ward retail village since the \$40 million, 156,000-square-foot entertainment complex with theaters, restaurants, stores and parking that opened about five years ago.

Whole Foods has considered entering the Hawai'i market for several years, and previously expressed formal interest to locate a store at Ward Centers that did not work out.

Jimmy Chan, general manager of taro and sweet potato chip manufacturer Hawaiian Chip Co., said he had been hopeful that Whole Foods would decide to enter the market.

"It's a giant specialty gourmet food store," he said. "It's basically a Costco-sized Down To Earth. They're real good about the sampling. I'm real excited."

Chan believes the presence of Whole Foods also enhances the opportunity for Hawai'i food manufacturers to sell their products through the chain, which said it maintains a strong commitment to offering local and regional foods.

Whole Foods is sure to ratchet up competition in the grocery business, and give consumers more choices.

The company also will fill a grocery store void in the heart of Kaka'ako's luxury high-rise condominium community where several posh towers are being joined by at least six more under construction within walking distance of the Whole Foods site.

"We are very excited to be bringing such a prominent retailer into our shopping center and Hawai'i," said Jeff Dinsmore, vice president of development for General Growth. "Its presence at

Ward Village Shops will further strengthen our mission of creating an environment where people can live, work and be entertained in Kaka'ako."

The retailer did not give details of what Hawai'i consumers can expect to see in the store. But at some recently opened stores, the product array has included 300 varieties of cheese, a walk-in wine cellar, sit-down seafood restaurant, chocolate dipping station, organic salad bar, made-to-order sushi, "natural doughnuts" and organic baby wear.

A new Whole Foods store in Nebraska will fry fish bought from its seafood section, and prepare fresh pizza baked in a brick oven.

Henry Leoiki, a draftsman for a local engineering firm who has been to Whole Foods on the Mainland, said prices are kind of steep on some items, but he'd be happy to have a store here.

"It would be good — like a healthy Trader Joe's," he said. "If they come here, definitely you'd be stuck in there."

Whole Foods was founded in 1980 in Austin, Texas, and has grown to become one of the largest natural and organic foods retailers.

The company reported sales of \$4.7 billion in its fiscal year ended in September 2005, and has a goal to reach \$12 billion in sales by 2010.

The Hawai'i store was one of 10 new stores the company said it recently committed to open.

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