

10 years later, Park Lane's transformation about to begin

By Mike Higdon, Reno Gazette Journal mhigdon@rgj.com July 12, 2017

The large potholes cratering the entrance to the Century Park Lane theater are filled for the first time in years. Developer and land owner Chip Bowlby had them patched while preparing to demolish the other 45 acres of cracked and broken asphalt left from the footprint of a 1960s-era mall.

The groundbreaking ceremony for Reno's biggest eyesore is fast approaching. Bowlby plans to build apartments and commercial and office space in the lot left empty for a decade. The only things staying are the theater, its rear parking lot and a nearby bank and veterinary clinic.

To give a sense of size, the entire downtown casino core, including the National Bowling Stadium and Circus Circus parking garage, can fit within the same space Park Lane Mall once occupied. In its place, he's planning a [Park Lane master plan](#). Bowlby has also started construction at the Rancharra master planned housing community, Summit Club complex and Meridian 120 near Boomtown.

Bowlby hopes to have the first 750 apartments and adjacent commercial spaces pre-leasing by the end of the year. Each chunk of the project should roll out in phases, opening more units over time, he said. "It's probably a five-year buildout if we're lucky," Bowlby said.

To get started, he filed a \$4.1 million demolition permit with the city of Reno to rip up everything, including sidewalks, lights and signs. "We're pretty much replacing the whole thing," Bowlby said. That will make way for another permit to reconfigure the storm drains and sewer system. He said that permit should get filed with the city on July 21. The [city should then reimburse Bowlby](#) up to \$3.5 million for this work over the course of two years, according to Reno City Council meetings last November.

The city will reimburse Bowlby's company from the fees paid by the city's sewer customers. Public Works Director John Flansberg told the Council in November that the city would have to replace the 50-year-old infrastructure soon anyway, so it makes sense to use the fees in this way.

Once the two permits are ready, Bowlby wants to plan a groundbreaking event within the next four to six weeks. He said it'll be big, with special guests, but didn't specify who might appear.



Provided to the RGJ, Reno Land Development

Eight months later, he expects the major roads and infrastructure to be done, literally paving the way for restaurants, a grocery store, 1,619 apartments, 45,000 square feet of office, 85,800 square feet of retail and a one-acre park. The architecture of the project resembles popular California mixed-use plazas with parking garages hidden behind the apartment and office units inside all the buildings instead of out in the open. People will drive inside the buildings to park. A major grocery store should anchor the center of the project, with the theater in its current spot.

He expects the project to bring \$63 million of tax revenue to the Redevelopment Agency, which could be spent on the infrastructure improvements in the surrounding neighborhood — a neighborhood with the least expensive rents and housing prices in Reno, according to a previous RGJ analysis.

"This is a go; this is a real go," Bowlby said about the Park Lane redevelopment project.