



# COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT CASE STUDY

## The Shoppes at Legacy Park Tuscaloosa, Alabama

### Owner

Alumni Properties & Investments

### Management/Development Company

Alumni Development & Construction

### Type of Project

Retail Power Center

### Size

216,323-square-foot shopping center on 16 acres

### Architects

MJM Architects

### Major Tenants

The Fresh Market, PetSmart, Burlington, DSW, World Market, Dick's Sporting Goods, and Five Below. In addition to the anchor stores, The Shoppes at Legacy Park has Bama Fever, Mountain High Outfitters, The Vitamin Shoppe, Village Nail Bar and Chuy's.

### Demographic

The population of Tuscaloosa is 116,990 residents, and 1.1M in Metro Birmingham.

### Public Sector Support

Mayor Walter Maddox's plan includes sales tax revenue sharing between the city and the developer as well as property tax rebates to the tune of \$18.6M. They also streamlined permitting, waived fees and expedited approvals.

## Revitalizing a Community

The Shoppes at Legacy Park is a prime example of transformative development. Located at 15th Street and McFarland Blvd. in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, the site was previously part of the Cedar Crest neighborhood that was devastated by the April 27, 2011, tornado. The city had considered turning the lot into student housing, but ultimately chose retail development for its long-term economic and operational advantages. By 2015, the site had been reborn as a vibrant retail power center.

The Shoppes at Legacy Park is the fruition of a vision to rejuvenate a region left desolate by a natural disaster, shifting from potential residential use to a commercial nexus aimed at boosting economic activity. The choice for retail development was driven by its potential to generate substantial revenue and minimize city maintenance costs; a decision that led to the transformation of the site into a thriving retail destination that is vital to the surrounding community.



## Public-Private Collaboration

A robust partnership with the City of Tuscaloosa was crucial for the success of this project. Mayor Walter Maddox championed a generous public finance package that included \$18.6 million in sales tax revenue sharing and property tax rebates. Additionally, the city streamlined the permitting process, waived fees and fast-tracked approvals; all of which were fundamental to successfully completing this project. The city further contributed \$2.6 million toward essential infrastructure improvements, such as the widening of McFarland Blvd and water main extensions to enhance the project's foundation.

## Challenges and Opportunities

The Shoppes at Legacy Park navigated several challenges, including significant amendments to the recently adopted city code MX5 and overcoming public scrutiny as the first major redevelopment post-tornado. Despite these hurdles, the project successfully merged public incentives with private capital investment from Alumni Development & Construction to achieve a compelling outcome.

## Economic Impact

The estimated economic impact of the Shoppes at Legacy Park includes:

- Creation of 500 annual jobs
- The generation of approximately \$37.2 million in annual sales taxes
- Collection of about \$160,000 annually in property taxes

Regarding actual returns since its inception, the development has amassed \$9.8 million in tax collections for the City of Tuscaloosa, while the city has abated \$5.4 million and invested \$1.4 million in infrastructure, resulting in a net gain of \$2.9 million or a 208 percent positive ROI.



## A Center of Community Life

The success of the Shoppes at Legacy Park is measured in both economic terms as well as its role as a vibrant center of community life. It has revitalized an area marred by disaster, providing a dynamic retail environment that draws both residents and visitors. This development has become integral to the economic and social fabric of Tuscaloosa, showcasing the profound impact of effective public-private partnerships in urban redevelopment.

In conclusion, the Shoppes at Legacy Park stand as a testament to the transformative power of such collaborations, demonstrating the potential to repurpose devastated areas into thriving commercial hubs. The \$64 million tax abatement for the redevelopment of the McFarland Mall further underscores the city's ongoing commitment to urban revitalization efforts. •