

## Proposed grocery store at 39th and Prospect clears another hurdle

The Midtown KC Post: October 26, 2012.

The east side is one step closer to getting a full-service grocery store, a refuge in what is called a food desert.

Recent approval this month by the Tax Increment Financing Commission clears the way for a new Aldi store at 39th Street and Prospect Avenue, said Aldi attorney Phil Klawuhn.

The store that neighbors have been fighting for since 2004 will be up and open some time next year, he said.

Margaret May, director of the Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council, said, "It will be a great thing to have. I have been to countless meetings."

About 35 percent of Ivanhoe residents do not have cars and often take buses to grocery stores and have to change stops carrying bags of food, she said.

The problem is nationwide with planning experts struggling to bring grocery stores into inner cities suffering from the food desert problem. They say it costs society millions in health care costs because residents survive on fast food.

Aldi has also pledged to hire local residents, May said, which would provide needed jobs.

"We're really excited about it," she said.

Former 3rd district at-large councilman Troy Nash helped establish a TIF district a 39th and Prospect about six years ago but it took time for Aldi to gain control of 24 land parcels, knock down structures and do other things and then the recession hit.

Klawuhn said they now have all 24 parcels and all that remains is final city council approval on two of them that had been previously been in the condemnation system.