

# Westfield Topanga Readies for Major Renovation

*By Karen Jordan*



While many developers across the country are giving up on traditional malls, Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield is investing \$70 million to renovate another one of its prime Los Angeles shopping centers.

The company announced this week its Westfield Topanga Mall, a 1 million-square-foot upscale indoor shopping center in the San Fernando Valley's Warner Center area, is scheduled to be modernized with a sleeker look and updated amenities. It comes at a time when brick-and-mortar retailers are ramping up their competition for shoppers with the growing online shopping industry.

The mall is near the company's outdoor shopping center The Village and its proposed \$1.5 billion Westfield Promenade that could replace a failed mall with offices, residences, hotels, entertainment and stadium space on 34 acres at the site.

The announcement follows Westfield's \$1 billion renovation of its sprawling Westfield Century City mall unveiled last year.

The Topanga mall renovation, which is scheduled to begin this fall, is planned to focus on the mall's interior. Plans include new dark walnut paneling, tiling, new flooring and new, eco-friendly lighting fixtures. The property's restrooms and family lounges are scheduled to be renovated while new art work and new security cameras are added. New entertainment and restaurant options are expected to be available in the future, according to the company.

Now is the right time for the project, according to Molly Unger, vice president and general manager at Westfield Topanga.

"This is something our customers have been asking for and we think they will love the results," Unger said in a statement.

The upgrades show how committed the mall's owner, Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield, is to Los Angeles, according to Larry Green, executive vice president of U.S. development at Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield.

"By enhancing the destination's design, décor, environmental sustainability and technology, we will ensure that it continues to offer one of the very best shopping experiences, not just in the local community, but in the entire country," Green told

CoStar News. "This project, in turn, will also support the city's goals for the Warner Center and is another step towards the creation of a transit-oriented, lively downtown district with entertainment, office, housing, dining and world class shopping elements."

Work at the mall, which houses high-end stores including Nordstrom, Louis Vuitton and Cartier, is expected to take place after business hours and not during the mall's opening hours. The shopping mall, at 6550 Topanga Canyon Blvd. in Canoga Park, California, was built 54 years ago.

The renovation is scheduled to be completed next year.

Jay Rubin, principal at brokerage firm Lee & Associates, said that the renovations should help the mall better compete with the conveniences of online shopping.

"It's important to modernize and provide modern amenities to get people away from their computers," Rubin said. "I think Westfield, and any company in that business, is investing a lot of time and resources to figure out how to attract people."

The mall is near a Metro Orange Line bus station and Warner Center shuttle, and it is located within a zone outlined in the city's Warner Center 2035 plan, which seeks to redevelop the suburban area into a more modern live-work-play community. The plan, under review by city officials, includes more than 400,000 square feet of office, about 1,400 residential units, two hotels and a 15,000-seat entertainment and sports center.

The low-rise project has drawn criticism from local residents who worry about congestion and construction. But others praise its plans for mixed-use design and walkability.

"The plan is a fabulous concept," said Bob Sonnenblick, principal of Sonnenblick LLC, who is knowledgeable of hotel projects in the area. "I actually think it's going to become a wave of the future and how large projects are going to be looked at, approved and designed."

[Karen Jordan](#), Los Angeles Market Reporter **CoStar Group**