

# Lloyd Center

Continued from C1

"I have been at Lloyd Center for almost 10 years, but I feel like this mall is going down," Chorduky said.

With nearly all its big-name tenants gone, Lloyd Center is little more than a cavernous shell. Ambitious plans to re-envision the mall as an entertainment destination haven't materialized or are on hold. The mall appears at risk of becoming a 23-acre dead weight in a neighborhood that has struggled with crime for many years, in a part of town where redevelopment plans have frequently come to naught.

The city's economic development agency says it has no intention of intervening.

## Even Cinnabon is gone

Lloyd Center was ahead of its time when it opened in 1960 as a 100-store, open-air mall.

At the time, it was said to be the largest mall in America and its urban location and proximity to downtown set it apart from shopping centers elsewhere. It was also walking distance from mass transit lines, making it easily accessible to shoppers throughout the Portland metro area.

In an effort to keep up with the times, the mall, which anchors the Lloyd District, was renovated into a multi-level, enclosed shopping center with a prominent food court in the early 1990s. At the time, it remained one of the most important shopping hubs in the city.

In recent years, though, Lloyd Center has faced similar challenges to malls across the country. They've struggled to retain their allure with the explosion of online shopping and have been pushed to adapt as faded retail chains have downsized in efforts to save themselves.

But while Washington Square and Clackamas Town Center continue to draw shoppers to the suburbs, Lloyd Center feels like a sterile wasteland.

At least 37 retail storefronts sat empty on the first two floors of the mall during a Jan. 15 visit, with security gates rolled down over their doorways. The third-floor food court, which is surrounded mostly by office space, and other stores throughout the mall remained closed due to the pandemic. Those that were open were mostly, if not completely, void



Jamie Goldberg/The Oregonian

**Lloyd Center is facing an existential crisis that has only intensified during the pandemic as anchor tenants and signature businesses have departed.**

of customers.

The ice skating rink at the mall's center remained closed due to state health restrictions as well. The number of shoppers that roamed the halls could be counted on two hands, the sound of their staccato footsteps breaking an oppressive, eerie silence.

Nearly every store on the east wing of the first floor was gone, except for Old Navy. Its corporate parent, Gap Inc., confirmed earlier this month that the store will close at the end of January. A man who sat on a bench in front of the empty storefronts that used to be home to Sears and Marshalls seemed surprised that anyone else would venture to that part of the mall.

Along with Old Navy, Gap, which has a significant footprint on the second floor of the mall, is set to close this month as well and was advertising closing sales of 40% to 80%. Part of the store had already been cleared out.

While Barnes & Noble, Ross, H&M and Forever 21 remain open, all four anchor spots at the mall now sit empty with the departure of Macy's. Many other stores have left as well, including Charlotte Russe, Payless Shoes and the Made in Oregon store.

Even Cinnabon is gone. A sign at its former storefront asks customers to seek their toasty treats at Washington Square or Clackamas Town Center instead.

Allie Stewart who took over

as general manager at Lloyd Center in Sept. 2019 quietly left the position last year. Stewart did not respond to an interview request from The Oregonian/OregonLive.

Lloyd Center management declined an interview request from The Oregonian/OregonLive, too, and would not answer questions via email about the future of the mall beyond saying that they were continuing to support current tenants and building community partnerships.

"These are challenging times for many retail businesses, but Lloyd Center is constantly identifying new ways to reimagine the mall and provide a vibrant space for Oregonians to enjoy," said Ann Grimmer, marketing director for Lloyd Center and the mall's owner, Cypress Equities. "We understand that our community is eagerly awaiting updates, but right now our focus remains on supporting current tenants and expanding community partnership opportunities."

## Theft drove stores away

Bob Dye, the general manager of Dimond Center in Anchorage, Alaska, served as general manager at Lloyd Center from 2015 to 2019. Dye said persistent and brazen shoplifting played a major role in Lloyd Center's struggles during his time there. He said that Marshalls, specifically, vacated its space because it was losing too much money to shoplifting. A spokesman for Marshalls

wouldn't comment on whether shoplifting played a role in the store's departure.

The Portland Police Bureau received 1,546 reports regarding shoplifting in the Lloyd District from May 2015 to November 2020 with 307 incidents reported the year Marshalls left in 2018. Only three business districts, downtown and the much larger Gateway and Columbia Corridor districts, reported more shoplifting that year.

"Despite the best efforts of the Portland Police Bureau, I think the crime in and around the Lloyd District, the physical assaults, auto thefts and the gigantic shoplifting problem, those were the big issues," Dye said.

Anthony Fell, who owned Toys N More at Lloyd Center from 2002 to 2017, said shoplifting played a major role in his decision to leave.

Fell said the mall no longer felt like a safe place for shoppers and merchants during his final years at Lloyd Center. He said management has also consistently failed to deliver on ambitious promises to bring in new tenants and reinvent the mall. Instead, the number of empty storefronts continued to increase as the mall was unable to replace departing merchants with new businesses.

"COVID put the death nail in it," Fell said, "but the mall was already on the way down."

Still, Dye believes that the mall has the right components to potentially reinvent itself.

Before the pandemic, roughly 25,000 office workers traveled to the Lloyd District each day, Dye said. He added that the mall's proximity to the MAX line and other public transportation options, as well as its large and mostly covered parking lots make it easily accessible to visitors.

But to draw customers back, Dye said Lloyd Center needs to reposition itself as an entertainment and restaurant destination. He said another option for Lloyd Center could be to dedicate a portion of the mall to residential apartments, which in turn would bring more customers to the district.

"I do think that Lloyd Center still has a future, but not in its present form," Dye said. "Retail will inevitably still populate the center, but the main focus must be on food and entertainment."

## Reinvention plans stall

As recently as 2019, Lloyd Center did appear to be in the process of repositioning itself as an entertainment destination.

California-based Live Nation Entertainment signed a long-term lease with the mall in 2018 and announced plans to bring a new concert venue to the top floor of the vacant Nordstrom space. A proposal filed with city development officials in January 2019 called for converting retail space at the mall into a Bowlero bowling alley with an arcade, bar and restaurant.

Mall officials also announced

in 2018 that a new 14-screen movie theater would be built in the former Sears space.

That announcement came two years after a Santa Monica-based developer announced plans to convert the parking lot of the Regal Lloyd Center multiplex across the street into 1,100 apartment units. The 10-screen Regal theater was expected to close during the second phase of that development.

But the ambitious plan fell apart last October. The lender pulled the plug on the project known as 1400 Multnomah, claiming that the developers Bob Bisno and Dan Palmer's operating company had stopped making payments on their loan.

At the same time, the new 14-screen theater hasn't materialized. Neither has the bowling alley or concert venue. New York-based Bowlero didn't respond to a request for comment from The Oregonian/OregonLive. Live Nation said in a statement that plans for the new concert venue are on hold.

"The developer is re-thinking the master plan and re-capitalization," a spokesman said. "We're working with them through this process in as timely a fashion as possible."

Lloyd Center occupies an enormous footprint in one of the city's central neighborhoods. Yet a spokesman for Prosper Portland, the city's economic development agency, said that it hasn't talked with the mall's leadership about the mall's future and doesn't anticipate playing any role in its future.

As more and more tenants have departed Lloyd Center, speculation about the mall has only grown. Some have called for it to be razed and repurposed. Over the last few years, it's been floated as a possible location for a new ballpark by those backing the longshot effort to bring Major League Baseball to Portland.

But while the pandemic has created new challenges for Lloyd Center and indoor shopping hubs in general, Dye, the mall's former general manager, said it would be a missed opportunity if the mall were torn down.

"Lloyd Center is really a fixture, it's been in Portland since 1960," Dye said. "I think it would be a shame to see it torn down. Repurposed? Certainly. But I'd hate to see it torn down because I think it has a tremendous amount of potential."

# Therapy

Continued from C1

"I usually don't see a lot of kids for neck or back pain, but it's starting to manifest. We are not moving enough," said Kremer.

The pains of working from home, or schooling from home, could be alleviated if Central Oregonians had more outlets to exercise, say doctors and physical therapists, but COVID-19 restrictions have closed or limited capacity at gyms and indoor recreational facilities.

"Gyms are an outlet for people to get exercise, reduce stress and manage their body weight," said Kremer. "Now it's winter again, and the last two to three months we've seen a lot of the chronic stuff settling in: people working from home, shorter days, it's tougher to move and walk, not everyone has the home gym advantage."

Carpal tunnel syndrome, which occurs when wrists are compressed, is another increasing problem, said Zamboni. If left untreated, it can lead to numbness, tingling or weak-



Dean Guernsey/For The Bulletin

**Jeni Roberts receives chiropractic treatment from Jason Kremer at the Wellness Doctor in Bend.**

ness in the hands and arms.

The posture imbalances don't cause pain right away but after a period of time, they can occur without warning.

"After months of inactivity, people are getting strained one day just putting on their socks," said Kremer.

From the business point of view, the increased number of patients with ergonomic problems has slightly offset a

general downturn in the number of patients coming in for treatment at physical therapy clinics.

"Patient numbers are holding steady now, but initially there was a three-month dip during the stay-home order," said Kremer.

A few factors contributed to the downturn. These include a fall in the number of elective surgeries, which is often followed by physical therapy. Sports injuries were also fewer in number, as the lockdowns have cut many organized sports programs.

But while business was slow at times, the pandemic closures did open up new opportunities to help those with physical ailments, specifically the use of technology to improve relations with patients during the pandemic. Some pain-relief problems have been assessed and corrected over Zoom calls.

"Virtual physical therapy is available," said Zamboni. "It's better than nothing, but of course it's not as good as in-person physical therapy."

Reporter: 541-617-7818, mkohn@bendbulletin.com

## ANNIVERSARY

### Bob and Joyce Vincik

Bob and Joyce (Taylor) Vincik, of Bend, had their 55th wedding anniversary Friday but will celebrate with a tropical vacation post-COVID-19.

The couple were married Jan. 29, 1966, at St. Catherine's Church in Torrance, California. They got married during the war, after only knowing each other for two months. Three priests turned them down prior to finding one who agreed to marry them. They said the marriage would never last. They have three children: Scott, of Ter-

rebonne; Tamara (and Dillon) Mosnot, of Portland; and Jill, of Xiamen, China; and two grandchildren.

Mr. Vincik was a special services technician for Qwest Communications until retiring in January 2000. He is an avid fly fisherman and fly tyer as well as a waterfowl hunter.

Mrs. Vincik was an office assistant in Disability Services at Central Oregon Community College in Bend until retiring in January 2009. She enjoys sewing, reading, family time and entertaining.

The couple have lived in Central Oregon 42 years.



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**HOW HAVE YOUR PLANS CHANGED?**  
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COVID-19 is impacting our community and local business in many ways. The business uncertainty over the next few months is one of many challenges. The economy and how we shop has changed, yet we do not know by how much or how long.

To help with some of the uncertainty, please take the time to start a survey about your current shopping needs.

This information will help local business and this newspaper get a better understanding of your needs and plans.

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