

Lack of retail options in Protea Glen, Soweto

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South African retailers have moved quickly to secure space in the 30,000sqm Protea Glen Shopping Centre in Soweto, to capitalise on the centre's fast-growing trade area.

Situated at the highly-visible nexus of Protea Boulevard and the K15 highway – the main arterial between Lenasia and Krugersdorp – the R360 million centre is the only retail destination in this area of budding residential development.

"We recognise the enormous potential for growth in the area, with the highest purchasing price in Soweto," says developer Mike Nkuna of Masingita Property Investment Holdings, pointing out that independent analysts Fernridge Market Research have rated the development site as 'excellent', thanks to its superior accessibility, high profile and central location.

"Protea Glen Shopping Centre is right on the doorstep of a recently-completed R50 million sectional title residential development with a planned second phase already in the works."

Alf Levin of Township Realtors points out that more than 20 000 affordable housing units have already been built in Protea Glen, with another 15 000 in the construction or planning phases. The 2 000 sectional title units around the new shopping centre – along with a new 130-bed private hospital and Grace Bible Church – are expected to stimulate even more residential growth.

That's in addition to 27 000 new houses at Lufhereng, next to Protea Glen, and 35 000 new houses being planned for the southern side of the N12 next to Lenasia.

The steady pace of leasing at the centre confirms that retailers recognise the centre's potential.

Leasing specialists Retail Network Services have already signed up a 3,500sqm Shoprite and a 3,500sqm Pick 'n Pay to anchor the new centre, which is scheduled to open for trade on 27 September 2012.

Retail Network Services is a full-service specialist retail leasing company which ensures that the intricate, and often puzzling, tenant mix is crafted to suit each centre's unique footprint, with successes the likes of Pan Africa Shopping Centre in Alexandra, Edendale Mall in Pietermaritzburg, Mdantsane City in East London and Tsakane Mall in Springs.

Retail Network Services is also familiar with the unique character of the Soweto retail market, with the successful leasing of Jabulani Mall under its belt.

"Retailers realise that not only is the centre located to serve local residents, but also commuters from Lenasia, Krugersdorp, Randfontein and Potchefstroom," explains Gavin Tagg of Retail Network Services.

The centre will have a selection of 90 stores in total when it opens.

He adds that there is currently an outflow of residents to other shopping nodes because of the lack of retail options in Protea Glen and surrounding areas.

"Most of the residential growth is in formal housing in the C- and D-household income categories," says Tagg.

"What's more, that growth is consistent and we're seeing ongoing investment – and that builds a stable community with increasing consumer expenditure."