



This copy is for your personal, noncommercial use only. You can order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers [here](#) or use the "Reprints" tool that appears above any article. [Order a reprint of this article now.](#)

## Friedman's in talks with Deer Creek developer

**Friedman's Home Improvement eyes Deer Creek void as way to return to its roots**

By [Jamie Hansen](#)

Published: Thursday, November 3, 2011 at 11:37 a.m.

In the wake of Lowe's pulling out of the proposed Deer Creek Village shopping center, Petaluma-grown home improvement store Friedman's is eyeing the space as a new opportunity to return to its roots.



Architect's drawing of the proposed Deer Creek Village shopping center.

Friedman's Home Improvement made a point to throw its hat in the ring shortly after Lowe's announced its decision not to build in Petaluma.

"It's in our roots," said Friedman's chief financial officer David Proctor of being in Petaluma. He's also the company's chief operating officer.

Company staff worked over the weekend to draw up plans of what the site would look like with a Friedman's and submitted them Tuesday to the developers for consideration, said Proctor.

The developer, Merlone Geier Partners, has said it intends to fill the void Lowe's left with another home improvement store. The project's environmental impact report, which is expected to come before the planning commission in late November or December, is tailored to a home improvement store.

Merlone Geier won't comment on which companies it is negotiating with, said spokesperson Marko Mlikotin. He also re-stated what the developers have been saying: that getting the necessary approvals for the project is their main goal at this point.

Still, there are just a few large home improvement stores that fit the bill: Home Depot is one; Orchard Supply Hardware is another possibility, though it tends to occupy significantly smaller spaces than the one planned for Deer Creek.

Home Depot is evaluating the Deer Creek Village site as well, said Kathryn Gallagher, a spokesperson for the company.

Orchard Supply Hardware spokesperson Rick Saunders would not say whether or not the hardware store has been in discussion with Merlone Geier.

Meanwhile, Friedman's Vice President Barry Friedman and Proctor have voiced enthusiasm over the Deer Creek site as a potential way for Friedman's to return to Petaluma. That's something the company has been trying to do for years.

"We just keep looking for ways to get back," Proctor said.

**Circle BANK**  
 BANKING SERVICES DESIGNED FOR PROFESSIONALS  
 FREE BUSINESS CHECKING  
 ONLINE Banking  
 Transfer Funds  
 Pay Bills  
 Check Fraud Prevention  
 Pre-Authorization Payments  
 11-WA0061-01-28  
 Member FDIC

Copyright © 2011 PressDemocrat.com — All rights reserved. Restricted use only.

Friedman's got its start in Petaluma back in 1946, when brothers Benny and Joe founded it. The company left town in 1976 after its lease ran out, and shortly after, a fire destroyed the building it had occupied. Ironically, Benny Friedman once owned the land that Deer Creek Village is developing, said Proctor.

Friedman's currently has locations in Santa Rosa, Sonoma and Ukiah.

In 2009, looking to return to Petaluma, Friedman's signed a non-binding letter of agreement to be part of the Target-anchored Regency Centers development.

Those plans fell through in late 2010, when Friedman's heard from the Regency Centers developers that they were not able to accommodate the store at the site.

Earlier, the company had proposed a store on Hopper Street, near the city's former sewer plant. Those plans failed because of concerns about the location and the time needed to decommission the plant and build the store.

In 2009, Friedman's also set its sights on Deer Creek Village, entering into early negotiations with the developers. Ultimately, though, the developers chose Lowe's.

At a city council meeting in 2009, several councilmembers spoke in favor of Friedman's occupying Deer Creek Village, saying the locally owned company would be a better fit for the community.

"We believe we'd take good care of Petaluma," Proctor said, adding that the company supports agriculture and commercial builders in addition to those working on home projects.

Petaluma hasn't had a home improvement store that caters to large-scale projects since 2009. Yardbirds, the Petaluma-based chain that had served the town, had been purchased by Home Depot in 2005. In 2009, Home Depot closed all its Yardbirds stores.

Orchard Supply Hardware has a store in Petaluma, but tends to serve smaller-scale projects.

(Contact Jamie Hansen at [ja.mie.hansen@arguscourier.com](mailto:ja.mie.hansen@arguscourier.com))