

# Hy-Vee to spare MLK store

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**Months of criticism from residents and community activists appears to have led to a compromise by Hy-Vee over a Des Moines store.**

**The Harding Hills Hy-Vee will close only temporarily while it is made into a smaller store in its existing building, officials announced Monday.**

**The West Des Moines-based grocer made a similar decision in March, saying it would create a smaller store in Lincoln, Neb., to serve a neighborhood where a full-sized store will close.**

**The Lincoln store is slated to be about one-fourth the size of a regular Hy-Vee. Hy-Vee officials on Monday didn't say how big the smaller Harding Hills store would be but said it would still provide staples.**

**The renovation will not happen for at least a year, said Hy-Vee spokeswoman Chris Friesleben.**

**Hy-Vee officials said in September that the Harding Hills store would probably close in late 2009 after a new store opens in Beaverdale. Store patrons and activists said the closing of the store, at 3330 Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway, would leave north-central Des Moines residents without a nearby grocery store. Hy-Vee officials have said the Harding Hills operation is not profitable.**

**A Citizens for Community Improvement official said Monday that Hy-Vee's decision didn't change her group's views, because the store will still have to close during the renovation. "It would be a detriment to the community to close the store just for a day," said Sharon Zanders-Ackiss, Des Moines CCI director.**

**She noted that stores at other locations have remained open during construction projects.**

**Jane Magers, who lives in the Mondamin Presidential Neighborhood, reacted to the store's projected closing by standing in front of it with a protest sign for five days a week from Valentine's Day through March. She has shopped at the store since it opened in 1986.**

**"I'm ecstatic. It's everything I've hoped for," Magers said of the change in Hy-Vee's plans. "I've got to admit that it shows what a few dedicated people can do."**

**Friesleben said building the Beaverdale Hy-Vee would take a year. The timetable for renovating the Harding Hills store will not be set until the Beaverdale store is nearly finished, she said.**

**"It will have to close for a short time so we can remodel the inside," Friesleben said. The store now has about 33,000 square feet, making it about half the size of the new Beaverdale store.**

**Hy-Vee officials have not yet discussed what they will do with the remainder of the Harding Hills building, which the company owns, Friesleben said.**

**One legislator called Hy-Vee's decision a "win-win situation."**

**"When Hy-Vee talks about 'there's a smile in every aisle,' I'm pretty sure when this word gets out, people in my district will be very happy," said Democratic Rep. Wayne Ford of Des Moines.**