

New Alltown Location In Pittsfield Aims For Half Convenience Store, Half Neighborhood Market

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191,430 unique monthly visitors



Alltown is going to open their location at First and Tyler Streets. The former O'Connell's site has been completely upgraded.

PITTSFIELD — For those who care about what they put in their bodies, whether they be gluten-free, vegan, or just a overall conscious-eater, grabbing food on the go can be a challenge.

Ryan Riggs hopes that those passing through the new Alltown Markets store at First and Tyler streets will find the healthy choices they're looking for.

"This Alltown in Pittsfield is really the first store in, sort of, the new branding," said Riggs, senior vice president at Alltown Markets.



In addition to a selection of fresh produce, there is also "enhanced" food and beverage options, including locally sourced products whenever possible.

Those options include artisan flatbread pizza, breakfast sandwiches made with cage-free eggs, all-natural chicken tenders and soda.

The store, which opened Wednesday at 90 Tyler St., was previously operated as "Convenience Plus," until it was purchased by Global partners, which operated Alltown Market, from O'Connell Oil in April 2016. The store closed in late September 2017 to begin the rebuild, according to the company spokeswoman Paige Griffiths.

There are 70 Alltown locations, most of them in New England, she said.

Riggs believes "the timing was right" to utilize the Morningside neighborhood location to launch their new brand.

Between 16 and 20 employees will staff the store, which will be open 24/7, at least initially, Riggs said. The hours may be adjusted as time goes on, depending on the need.

The city has had a lot of input about the layout of the new site, according to City Councilor Earl Persip. While Persip would have rather see a full grocery store be made available for the residents in the neighborhood, he is pleased with what had been done at the site.

"A lot of people depend on getting groceries at convenience stores in that area," said Persip, a councilor at large. "It's better than what was there before. I think they took the time to really consider it and make it as much of a neighborhood feel as possible."

A Cumberland Farms several blocks away at First and Adams streets is also a busy neighborhood store.

"Competition is good," Persip said.

"That whole area is pretty much a food desert," said City Councilor Peter White, who also serves at large. "You don't really have anywhere that you can pick up anything fresh, so if they're going to provide that it's definitely a service."



The new Alltown design brings increased outside lighting to the corner and eliminated a dangerous curb cut, he said.

White hasn't heard of any safety concerns about the overnight hours, and thinks that it will offer a service for those who work nights.

"There are people who work all kinds of different shifts," White said. "There are people who need to get a coffee, gas, or a snack late at night. If we had a 24-hour diner, it would be great."

In years past, the area surrounding the convenience store location had drawn frequent police response, including at least two shootings.

"Fortunately for us this isn't our first store," Riggs said. "We have some standard processes and protocols in place to help (employees) proactively engage with consumers who may be a little disruptive. Because we were open here prior, we are somewhat aware of the neighborhood and the community" and felt comfortable reopening at the same location.

Kate Lauzon, of the Morningside Initiative, said she's pleased to hear that there will be healthy options at the new location, but hopes that it will not increase the prices of goods.

"I'm always concerned about how much convenience stores cost the walking population," she said. "That will take a big chunk of their food stamps and they're left with nothing for the rest of the month."

As great as it is to have more convenience stores in the neighborhood, Lauzon, a Plunkett Street resident, said they don't alleviate a need for a local grocery store.

Residents who travel on foot or by public transportation would benefit more from something in walking distance to their homes.

"Honestly, I'd rather see a mom and pop grocery store on Tyler street," she said. "Even me, with a car, with my two kids, I'd rather not have to jump in my car and drive across town."

