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## Council approves a whole new Whole Foods

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January 4, 2007

Whole Foods Market's new store planned at Segoe Road and University Avenue may offer a made-to-order sushi bar or a place to consume beer and brats in front of a flat-screen TV.

The store, approved this week by the Madison City Council, is about 35,000 square feet larger than the current Whole Foods Market, 3313 University Ave.

"We're doubling the size, which allows us to bring in a lot more," said spokeswoman Kate Klotz. "There could be more places to congregate with restaurant-quality food instead of just coming in to grab groceries."

Klotz said officials of the natural and organic foods chain haven't decided yet how to occupy the 65,000-square-foot store and will meet with the community to help make those decisions before the store opens in early to mid-2009.

Besides the restaurant venues, she said another possibility is expanding the store's whole body section, which includes vitamins, makeup, hair care and other products.

The store's new location puts it a stone's throw from Sentry Foods at the Hilldale shopping center and across University Avenue from Copps.

But a stronger competitor of Whole Foods may be Trader Joe's, which opened late last year a few miles away on Monroe Street. Both Whole Foods and Trader Joe's offer natural and organic food, and the two grocery chains battle each other across the country.

"The way we see it is competition is good for any market," Klotz said. "Our goal is to increase the visibility of natural and organic products. We're really proud of the value of our products."

Whole Foods Market operates 185 stores and reported that revenue was up 19 percent to \$5.6 billion for its latest fiscal year ending last Sept. 24. Trader Joe's, privately owned by the Aldi Group of Germany, has about 250 stores with annual revenue estimated at \$4 billion.

The City Council's approval of the project came after an earlier plan was rejected because of objections that included excessive surface parking. The approved two-story design also includes other commercial space, an 11-story condominium tower, townhouses, a parking garage and public green space.

Steve Holzhauer, of Eppstein Uhen Architects, said revising the store's plans was a long process that involved about 10 of the firm's architects.

"In the end, I think the city will get a phenomenal project," he said.

[Return to story](#)

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