

= Southtown Center =

Southtown Center , colloquially known as Southtown , is a regional shopping mall in Bloomington , Minnesota , a suburb of the Twin Cities . Southtown Center consists of 534 @, @ 650 square feet (50 @, @ 000 m2) of retail space . The center contains 38 retail tenants and is anchored by AMF Bowling Centers , Bed Bath & Beyond , Herberger 's , Kohl 's , and T.J. Maxx .

The first phase of Southtown Center opened on November 3 , 1960 , with two more phases proceeding in 1963 and 1964 . The mall is partially enclosed , while the majority of the center contains open air structures . Several additional buildings were constructed on the property throughout the years , while minimal renovations took place to maintain the mall 's appearance .

= = History = =

= = = 1960 ? 62 : Construction , grand opening , and additions = = =

Southtown Center opened on November 3 , 1960 in Bloomington , Minnesota and became Bloomington 's " first regional shopping center " . The center was developed by Kraus @-@ Anderson , Inc . , a Bloomington @-@ based construction firm , with founder Lloyd Engelsma taking over as the site 's project manager . According to Engelsma , Southtown was built atop " a strip of cow pasture " near a busy intersection in Bloomington , taking up nearly 37 acres of land ; Engelsma had " high expectations for the new center . " During construction of the mall , three labor strikes occurred which heavily delayed construction ; unideal and inclement weather created further setbacks during the construction . Montgomery Ward , a Chicago @-@ based department store , announced that they would be opening up a location at Southtown , and became the mall 's only anchor ; Ward filled a 188 @, @ 050 square feet (17 @, @ 000 m2) building , the largest Ward department store in the United States .

After the center 's opening , several additions took place at the mall . During 1963 , a 43 @, @ 000 square feet (4 @, @ 000 m2) AMF Bowling Center was constructed on the north side of the property ; the bowling alley is still currently in use today . In 1964 , a Mann Theatres was constructed on the property ; Southtown Mann Theatre became the first movie theater to be attached to a shopping center in the Twin Cities . However , the cinema was completely remodeled in 1980 , removing some its original decor , before being torn down in 1995 to make way for additional retail .

= = = 1998 ? present : Store closings and rezoning = = =

Montgomery Ward prospered as Southtown 's largest tenant until 1998 , when Ward announced that they would be closing nine underperforming locations as part of their " ongoing operations and strategic initiatives to return to profitability . " Filling Ward 's vacancy was Herberger 's , a Minnesota department store , who had agreed to purchase several other closed Montgomery Ward stores in the Twin Cities area . Toys " R " Us agreed to lease the other side of the Ward store that Herberger 's hadn 't leased .

In September 2014 , several plans were created by the city of Bloomington in order to rezone several parts of the shopping center . However , Southtown 's owner , Kraus @-@ Anderson , stated that the rezoning would " threaten Southtown 's existence and that customers like things how they are . " Several Bloomington locals and customers of Southtown created a website to persuade the city of Bloomington not to continue with any redeveloping plans . Despite the creation of the website and Kraus @-@ Anderson 's frustration and concern during the proposed redevelopment , the city council approved the project in July 2015 . In April of the same year , Southtown 's 44 @, @ 548 square feet (4 @, @ 100 m2) Toys " R " Us closed after their 26 @-@ year lease expired . Despite this closing , Southtown Center has maintained a 99 percent occupancy rate for many years .