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Walmart testing fresh-focused changes

Walmart recently committed to opening or converting more than 150 stores in the next five years – with its smaller Neighborhood Market format set to benefit. Two new stores, one in the Dune Lakes area of Santa Rosa Beach, FL, the other in the Vine City neighborhood of Atlanta, are the first to open under the new initiative.

The stores aren't just new or remodeled. They're also bigger. With 57,000 square feet of salesfloor and pickup and delivery space, the new stores will have a footprint that's about 17,000 square feet larger than the average Neighborhood Market. The company said the expanded space will allow it to sharpen its focus on value, speed and convenience.

With the larger layout, the company is looking to offer a broader assortment across the entire store. Customers will see the biggest gains in fresh departments. There will be more to choose from in bakery, produce, meat and dairy. Plus, the expanded service deli will offer more hot case options.

"We work hard to maintain price leadership," said Kyle Kinnard, senior vice president, Neighborhood Markets, Walmart U.S. "So, whether customers are looking for last-minute necessities for the beach or a meal for the family, they can be confident they're getting their items at the everyday low price they can count on at Walmart.

The updated stores also feature wider aisles to give customers more room to shop and make navigating stores easier — as well as more space for pickup and delivery orders. "The larger space includes dedicated room for refrigerated goods, so associates can keep orders moving at an even faster pace," said Kinnard.

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