

# LIDL TO CONVERT LI'S BEST MARKETS

## German-based grocer plans major move on Island

BY TORY N. PARRISH  
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Discount grocer Lidl's takeover of the 24 Best Market stores on Long Island will start with the closing of one supermarket, remodeling of two stores and opening of two new locations by early 2020.

"We are happy to soon bring Lidl's unique and fresh approach to grocery shopping to Long Island," Johannes Fieber, CEO of Lidl US, said in a statement.

The U.S. arm of Germany-based Lidl finalized its purchase of 27 stores, including all 24 on Long Island, that were owned by Bethpage-based Best Market in January for an undisclosed price.

The first wave of changes is set to take place at five Long Island locations by early next year:

- Lidl will close the Hicksville store at 434 Jerusalem Ave.

- Two new Lidl stores will open — one in a former ShopRite space in Plainview, at 998 Old Country Rd. in the Morton Village Shopping Center, and the other in a former Waldbaum's space at 812 Main St. in Center Moriches. Both are locations where Best Market had already planned to open new stores before it was announced in November that Lidl was buying the chain.

- Two Best Market stores will be remodeled and converted to the Lidl name — in the Hubbard's Commons shopping center at 725 Sunrise Hwy. in West Babylon and in Turnpike Plaza, at 711 E. Jericho Turnpike in Huntington Station.

The Plainview store is being described as a replacement for the closing Hicksville store, which is smaller and 3.8 miles away.

Best Market stores employ about 2,500 people, including 50 at the Hicksville store, said Will Harwood, spokesman for Arlington, Virginia-based Lidl US.

All employees who were working for Best Market when Lidl acquired the company will be offered Lidl jobs with the same or better pay and benefits, but they may not be in the same type of positions, he said.

All four of the stores converting to the Lidl name in the first round of changes are or will be in leased spaces.

Lidl is not yet disclosing details about when the Hicksville store will close or its timeline for work on the other four locations.

The Best Market stores not on Long Island are in Harlem in Manhattan; Astoria, Queens; Holmdel, New Jersey; and Newington, Connecticut. The Connecticut store was not part of the Lidl deal.

Lidl, categorized as a limited-assortment store, carries an average of fewer than 2,000 "center-store" (packaged) goods and perishable items, according to Inmar Analytics, a Long Grove, Illinois-based grocery industry research firm. Other limited-assortment stores include Trader Joe's, Aldi and Save-A-Lot.

Limited-assortment stores are usually smaller than traditional supermarkets, 15,000 square feet versus 35,000 to 60,000 square feet, and they carry a high per-

centage of their own private-label brands over nationally advertised ones, according to Inmar Analytics.

From 80 percent to 90 percent of Lidl's products are private label, Harwood said.

The company's stores on Long Island will have an average sales floor area of 20,000 square feet.

Lidl stores don't have the full-service deli, meat and poultry, and seafood departments that are present in Best Market and other traditional supermarkets, but the grocer sells those products in refrigerated cases.

In the Lidl stores on Long Island, customers can expect to see streamlined shopping, new fixtures, fresh produce and fresh-baked goods, the company said.

The entire process of converting the Best Market stores on Long Island to Lidl locations should be finished in two to three years, Harwood said.

Despite Long Island's high median household income, Lidl will be a local retail disrupter that will attract a high number of consumers — low-income to upper middle class — looking for discounts as they contend with the high costs of property taxes, utilities, transportation, housing and other expenses, said retail expert Burt Flickinger III, who founded Manhattan-based Strategic Resource Group and has studied the Long Island retail market.

"It's going to be an ongoing competitive nightmare for every food retailer on Long Island," Flickinger said.

## Booze ads get the boot in city

BY ALISON FOX  
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Mayor Bill de Blasio on Tuesday said all alcohol advertising on city property will be banned — effective immediately — including places like newsstands and bus shelters.

De Blasio announced the executive order, which includes all future advertising contracts or contract renewals, citing a study that exposure to alcohol advertisements can increase the likelihood of alcohol consumption.

"There's no doubt that far too many New Yorkers struggle with serious substance misuse issues, among them excessive drinking," de Blasio said in a statement. "This order banning alcohol ads from City property reaffirms our commitment to health equity and our stand to protect the well-being of all New Yorkers."

The executive order also applies to phone booths, Wi-Fi LinkNYC kiosks and recycling kiosks. Venues like restaurants, stadiums and concert halls that already sell alcohol are exempt.

According to the mayor's office, there were 110,000 alcohol-related emergency room visits in the city in 2016, and 2,000 New Yorkers died from alcohol-related causes, including liver disease and driving accidents.

"In New York City, we see far too many deaths related to alcohol," Health Commissioner Dr. Oxiris Barbot said in a statement. "We know exposure to alcohol advertising can lead to drinking more alcohol, more often — behavior that can be harmful and even fatal."



JEFF BACHNER

Lidl supermarkets are categorized as limited-assortment stores, featuring a high percentage of private-label products.

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