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An investor has scrapped plans to turn Big Town into a little village and instead will pursue an industrial warehouse development.

Spencer Alpert had proposed bulldozing Big Town Mall and the Big Town Exhibit Hall to make room for an urban-style development of apartments and shops similar to Dallas' Mockingbird Station. "Big Town has a brand name, and it can be a source of pride for Mesquite again," said Mr. Alpert, principal of Alpert Capital, explaining his reasoning. "I felt this type of project could succeed, given some of the problems in that area."

But at least one Mesquite City Council member objected to putting apartments and a retail sector on the site of the state's first enclosed shopping mall.

So at a public hearing Monday, Mr. Alpert will pitch his idea for The Parks at Big Town, with five industrial warehouse spaces dominating the site.

Council member David Paschall, who spoke against the plans for apartments, said Tuesday that he had not seen the latest proposal but had heard about the shift in focus.

"All I can say is that it sounds like a positive improvement over multifamily," Mr. Paschall said.

In the new plan, about 60,000 square feet would be dedicated to retail use, and comparable space would be set aside for offices. The shops wouldn't compete with those in the Town East Mall area but more likely would cater to the surrounding industrial businesses, Mr. Alpert said.

Some features from the original renderings would remain to enhance the site's visual appeal. "We had the architect work on reorienting the front of the park to retain the lake and fountain and some of the higher amenities," Mr. Alpert said.

Monday's hearing will deal with creation of a tax-increment finance – or TIF – zone along U.S. Highway 80 in the Big Town area. The zone's boundaries aren't set, but a preliminary proposal calls for the zone to stretch along Highway 80 from its split with Interstate 30 to LBJ Freeway. Some boundaries would bulge to fill in spaces north and south of the highway not already zoned for homes.

"It's designed to help develop an area that's typically difficult to develop," said Tom Palmer, the city's economic development director.

In a TIF zone, tax revenue generated from new improvements is spent to improve infrastructure in the zone that normally would be paid for by developers. Tax revenue from the original value of the area still goes into the city's general fund. The TIF setup "provides the city with a potentially better quality of development," Mr. Palmer said.

He said the state Department of Transportation's plan to widen and improve Highway 80 would enhance the incentive for developers.

The benefit to Mesquite comes with time, as more attractive developments appeal to other developers. And eventually the TIF would expire, sending higher tax revenue to the city. "The area is a