

Neighbors hear Harriman update

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When it comes to a piece of land that could hold three Crossgates Malls, it's pretty easy to say there are a number of ways to develop that area.

Such an area exists between Brevator Road and the University at Albany campus, and between Western and Washington avenues. About four years ago, a proposal from Harriman Research and Technology Corporation was developed as one of the first steps in a lengthy developmental process that will create homes, buildings and open spaces.

During the McKownville Improvement Association meeting last Thursday, the group heard a presentation from Tim Dunn of Harriman Research and Technology Corporation, who then answered questions residents had about the proposed development.

"This area is growing quickly but not as quick as other areas in the country," said Dunn. "Our process was to do a thoughtful market assessment and to see what it could handle and what the needs are."

Working with Saratoga Associates the Harriman group determined there to be a need for residential and retail components, the retail not being "big box" stores, but rather smaller convenience stores, such as dry cleaners and coffee shops.

This would encompass a "live,

work, play" community where locations would be within walking distance, including events and activities which take place on the Universities campus.

Some buildings will be taken down and some will remain. Those proposed to be still useful

transfer and commercialization.

"These goals are substantially in line with those of HRTDC's institutional partners," the report read. "The chief goal of this brief report is to set forth a series of next steps upon which the partners can agree in order to make near-term progress toward these goals achievable.

The next steps in this project are developing a master plan, conduct a traffic study and more immediately, put out an RFP (request for proposal).

MIA members were concerned about speeding through the development to get from Washington to Western avenues and vice

versa, as well as concern with the traffic that will result from such a development.

"We hope this will serve as an alternative to using Fuller Road," said MIA President Don Reeb. "If there are more people coming in and out of SUNY, that is going to have to be addressed in the traffic study."

Dunn's presentation also described this step-by-step process, explaining the need for community input to help in this 25-year project, to see it through for the future.

"Some of the ideas we are getting from these meetings are amazing," said Dunn. "We are keeping records of comments and questions, to show here's what we're hearing and what can be accomplished."

"We'll try to be as open as possible, so you can let us know if you like what we're doing or if you don't," he said. "We're going to make an honest effort to hear your concerns and you are never going to not have an opportunity to get in touch with us."

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are 8, 8A, 9 and 12.

Those to be torn down eventually will be buildings 4, 5, 7A and building 2.

"It is not cost efficient to continue to operate these existing buildings," said Dunn. "It could cost the state \$12 million to maintain and operate."

The Albany Plan, already implemented, vacated buildings 4, 5 and 7A in 2004; and buildings 1 and 1A in 2005.

According to a report by Hamilton, Rabinovitz and Alschuler, Inc. for the Harriman Corporation, which was completed in 2004, the redevelopment of this area has specific goals. They are to attract high-tech enterprises to Albany, thereby creating jobs and diversifying the economy; assist the University at Albany in building on its leadership position in scientific research and developing new technologies; increase the local tax base; provide long-term management of a valuable state asset; and to promote technology