

P. 3 January 14, 2009

Glass Works on the cutting edge

Developer sees 'walkable' village as Guilderland's future

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Two hundred years ago, area residents could not have imagined what it would be like to travel miles and miles in a mechanized vehicle to get a cup of milk or a loaf of bread; now people can't imagine otherwise.

Platform Realty President Daniel O'Brien, has a different vision for the future, though, and sees residential development moving toward echoing the quaint comforts of small villages.

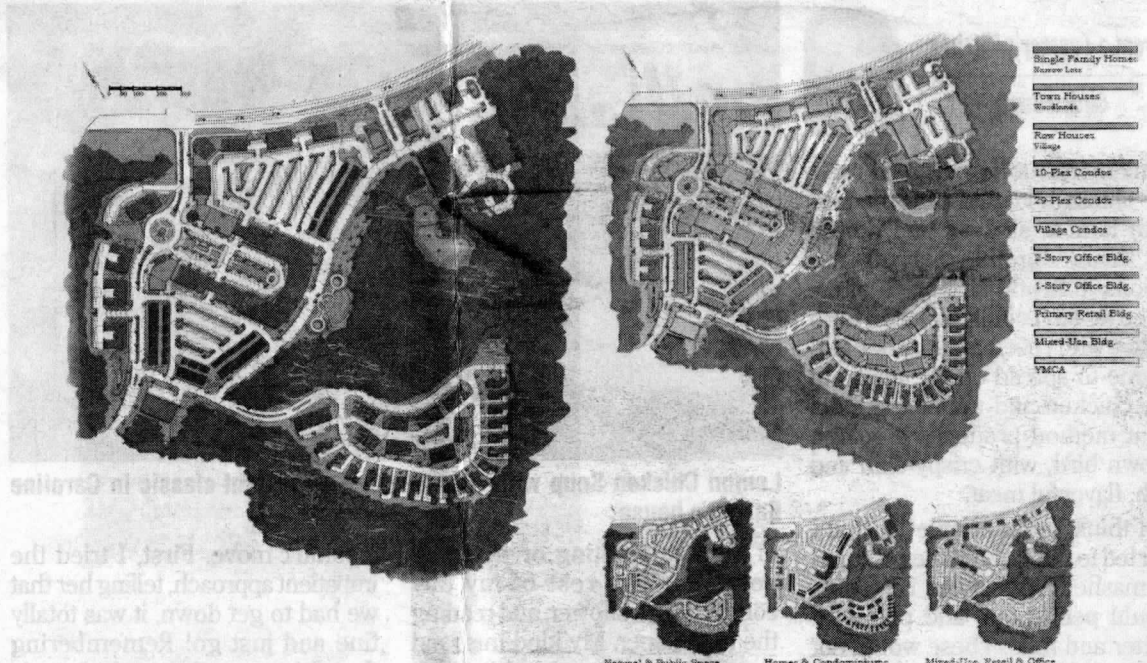
Platform is the developer of Glass Works Village LLC, a 57-acre mixed-use development that recently was approved by the Town of Guilderland. It sits on Route 20 near the Guilderland Public Library.

Planning Board Chairman Stephen Feeney said the town of Guilderland is seeing "good growth" and the village is a large part of that.

"That's an exciting project that I hope they can pull off," Feeney said.

The development got its name from an old glass factory that used to sit on the site. Platform representatives said they consulted with Guilderland Town Historian Alice Begley to help name the village.

People have tried these types of developments in other areas, O'Brien said, and location is the



amphitheater providing residents with pleasant scenery.

There will also be a "fair space" where meetings and small festivals could be held.

"Right now, Guilderland doesn't have a town center," said Lisa O'Brien.

The village is expected to develop close to 190,000 square feet of commercial space. Nearly 100,000 square feet will be dedicated to small shops, boutiques and restaurants, 80,000 square feet of non-retail professional offices and a 10,000-square-foot day care building adjacent to the YMCA, according to information provided by Platform. There will be close to 300 residences for sale, made up of cottage homes, townhouses, condominiums and

from recent college graduates to seniors looking for a place to settle down after retirement.

"The one demographic if may skip over is the family demographic," O'Brien said. "It's mostly for young people and empty nesters."

O'Brien said families living in four-bedroom homes on larger plots of land actually have detrimental effects on the economy, costing municipalities more money per child in education costs than the residents pay in taxes. The combination of retail and other commercial buildings in the village will provide a larger tax base, and Platform representatives said it will be able to generate more taxes than will be spent on the education of the children living in

recalled the caller saying.

Representatives said New York state's sluggish economy has not effected Platform's plans, and with the variety of housing options available in the village, Platform officials said they expect success.

"We're not feeling a housing crunch for this sort of project," O'Brien said.

He added that there are not many housing options for under \$200,000 in the Capital District that are so close to other community amenities.

David Schultz, a former Guilderland resident, partner and president of Media Logic said public transportation will be a large part of the development.

O'Brien said there are preliminary plans to put a heated

O'Brien said, and location is the most important factor in creating a "village."

Platform scoped out 10 to 15 other towns as potential locations for the village, but the Guilderland location fit the bill best, O'Brien said.

"[Glass Works] is central to Guilderland, and it has all the amenities you as a Guilderland resident would want to have," he said. "It really is a true village based on its location and a lot of the design elements."

He said the most important feature of the village is its "walkable" nature.

Within walking distance of the village is Guilderland Elementary School, a senior center, the Guilderland Public Library and a YMCA, with Price Chopper Plaza and the Western Turnpike Golf Course just down the road.

"We couldn't have created what we needed to create in another part of the town," said O'Brien.

O'Brien's wife, Lisa, a public relations representative for Platform said the village will be aesthetically pleasing, with bike trails, greenery and an

for sale, made up of cottage homes, townhouses, condominiums and condominium lofts. All of the condominium buildings will have underground parking and elevator service. As required by the Town of Guilderland part of the residences will be designated for seniors 55 and older. Platform expects to spend close to \$100 million over a seven- or eight-year period to construct the village, according to information provided by the developer.

"There is a shortage of townhomes and condominiums in Guilderland," Platform President O'Brien said.

Glass Works Village developers intend to fill that hole and provide residents with the opportunity to live in a relatively maintenance-free environment.

There will be no lawns to take care of and residents are not responsible for waste removal and plowing.

While no official prices have been set, Platform is hoping to sell 1,000-square-foot lofts for less than \$200,000. Units for single families could also be purchased for between \$300,000 and \$400,000, depending on the extras.

O'Brien said the village will cater to a large demographic, ranging

taxes than will be spent on the education of the children living in the village.

"It's less expensive per square foot," O'Brien said.

Increased traffic in Guilderland, especially on Route 20 was an issue raised at numerous Town Board meetings during the Glass Works approval process. Platform representatives said they continue to address the matter. Platform studies show the bulk of the Village traffic will be on "reverse commute," meaning traffic will move toward and away from the City of Albany at opposite times of normal rush hour traffic.

Joseph Sausto, a partner of Glass Works Village LLC, also pointed out that with whatever additional traffic the village does build it will also bring with it increased commerce and growth. He added many town officials acknowledge the inevitable expansion of the town.

O'Brien said his office is already getting calls inquiring when purchases can be made, and one interested caller commented on the hopes he can cut down on his driving by moving to the village.

"I'd like to move there, and move my office there and never have to use my car again," O'Brien

O'Brien said there are preliminary plans to put a heated indoor bus stop in the village, with televisions monitoring weather and the location of Capital District Transit Authority buses using tracking software.

Glass Works Village has cleared most of the major the hurdles to get construction under way and the Town Board passed a resolution to rezone the site as a Planned Unit Development on Tuesday, Nov. 18. The Town Board approval was the last "discretionary" approval needed to proceed.

Glass Works Village received approval from the Guilderland Zoning Board of Appeals for a height variance on one of its buildings on Wednesday, Jan. 7, and the project is now undergoing final engineering for items including water and sewer.

As the development stands now, a two-lane road behind Guilderland library connects it to the village, however the road cannot be built for at least two years. During that time, other solutions, such as improving Mercy Care Lane can be explored as alternatives, as the representatives of the library oppose the additional traffic behind it.