Update on the Former Mall:
Skyview on the Ridge
January 17, 2019

Like many in Irondequoit, I happened to drive by the former Irondequoit Mall and see the old carousel lit up. I believe I joined thousands of residents in taking a trip down memory lane, remembering the promise that the former Mall once held as the region’s premier shopping center.

Nostalgia is driven by an affection for the past, and it is because of that affection that the Irondequoit community so deeply wants to see the former Mall become a vibrant part of our community, once again. That path to revitalization has been lengthy. It began in 2014 when former Supervisor Bello, myself and the Town Board worked to terminate the tax breaks for the former owner, thus ending our relationship with his failed plans.

With the sale of the mall to a new owner in 2016 came the promise of a redevelopment more in line with reality. As we approach the third anniversary of the Mall’s sale, I contend that we are closer than ever to seeing a substantial portion of it come back to life. Given the former Mall – now known as Skyview on the Ridge - is over 900,000 square feet, we must remember that this is no small feat. For comparison’s sake, an average local Wegmans store is about 75,000 to 100,000 square feet.

Let’s look at what we already know. First and foremost, all taxes are being paid by the owners. The former Macy’s – comprising approximately 129,000 square feet – has already been redevelopment to house Conduent and the Ronald McDonald House Charities Sale.

On the other end of the property, Pathsone has already received Town approval to construct 170 senior housing units in the former Sears, as well as a new five-story building. Altogether, this project will comprise an estimated 180,000 square-feet, with half of that being in the former Sears.

The portion comprising the former Food Court area and carousel – some 180,000 square feet - will be redeveloped in 2019. I expect plans for the exterior work – a brand new façade – to be before the Town Planning board either this month or next. A new roof and HVAC system are also slated to be installed.

Included in that first phase of redevelopment of the central Mall area is the planned Town Community and Recreation Center. After an extensive public engagement session in 2017 and 2018, where over 1,000 residents weighed in on what they’d like to see in this amenity, we have been hard at work developing both the physical and financial structure for this to occur.

The owner of Skyview – Angelo Ingrassia – has made good on his pledge to not seek any profit from the Town’s presence, and thus, we will pay NO base rent on the 42,000 square feet. Based on public feedback and the input of our community center citizen advisory Board, we are putting the finishing touches on a schematic design that will help us estimate a final budget. It has been exciting to see how a former Mall can take on a new life in the form of a community asset we have always deserved in Irondequoit.

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The Town Board will next decide whether to move forward with presenting a plan of action for the community. If the Board decides to proceed, I expect there will be a referendum, ideally in the Spring.

Everything that I described, which is in the pipeline for 2019 or has already happened, comprises about 400,000 square feet (nearly half of the Mall). I will not be satisfied until the entire former Mall has been redeveloped. However, I believe we have moved on from the days of broken promises, and now tangible progress is within our grasp. Because of everything the former Mall means to Irondequoit, we must be tireless in our pursuit to make that happen.