

Eastern Hills Mall redevelopment clears key hurdle, paving way for Uniland plan



A rendering of the proposed redevelopment of the Eastern Hills Mall site.

COURTESY OF UNILAND DEVELOPMENT



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Story Highlights

- Eastern Hills Mall redevelopment receives concept and environmental approval.
- Uniland is planning 1.3 million square feet in commercial space and 1,435 residential units.
- The project still faces challenges, including \$29.6 million in needed sewer infrastructure updates.

The proposed redevelopment of the Eastern Hills Mall just took an important step forward.

The project, which calls for converting the traditional mall into a town center, got concept approval and State Environmental Quality Review approval tonight at the Clarence Planning Board.

"This achievement clears the path for the next phase of the project: actively attracting a dynamic mix of tenants, including retail, dining, health and wellness providers, entertainment venues, office users and more," said Carl Montante Jr., Uniland vice president of marketing and strategic initiatives, in a statement to Business First.

Uniland Development Co.'s plan for the site includes 1.3 million square feet of commercial space and 1,435 residential units. The project is expected to be completed in three phases, with the first phase projected to take between five

and 10 years; the second phase between 10 and 15 years; and the third phase between 15 and 20 years, based on plans filed with the town.

The first phase includes about 516,000 square feet of retail/commercial space; 92,000 square feet of restaurant space; 58,000 square feet of hotel space; 353,000 square feet of general office/co-working space; 62,000 square feet of entertainment space; 21,000 square feet of fitness space; and 87 multi-family residential units.

"Planning and design work will begin in earnest as leasing progresses, setting the stage for a walkable, mixed-use destination unlike anything currently in the region," Montante said in th statement.

There are challenges for the residential portion of the Eastern Hills Mall redevelopment plan.

There are multiple years' worth of work for a [multi-project plan](#) for sewer updates, projected to cost \$29.6 million in 2023 dollars, which are needed to have the infrastructure capacity for residential use at the mall site, Business First has previously reported.

[Erie County has started](#) the process and included \$3 million for engineering work in a 2025 consolidated bond resolution, but funding sources for the rest of the work were still to be determined.

"As infrastructure is expanded, the plan is to strategically incorporate more sewer-intensive developments like multi-family housing and hotels," Ryan Weisz, Uniland senior marketing manager, previously told Business First.

The interior of the Eastern Hills Mall was [closed by the developer](#) in early 2024 to allow for partial demolition and other work to begin. Another factor in the closure was tied to unsustainable overhead costs, according to comments by Carl Montante Jr. at a September 2024 WNYSCAR breakfast.