



Launching College Town

By Joel Seligman

COLLEGE TOWN HAS BEEN LAUNCHED! College Town will provide 500,000 square feet for retail, a hotel, a parking garage with 1,500 spaces, restaurants, and housing on a 14-acre development at the intersection of Mt. Hope and Elmwood avenues. Soon, thousands of students, residents, Medical Center patients, and campus visitors will start visiting College Town.

The new development will break ground later this year, and an official opening is planned for 2014. The project is the product of extraordinary collaboration among development partners Fairmount Properties, Gilbane Development, and the City of Rochester, as well as the University.

On December 19, 2012, College Town received \$4 million from the State of New York as part of the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council program. This capstone funding for this \$100 million project allowed the University the next day to announce that we would go forward with College Town. We believe that College

▲ **GATEWAY CORNER: A 20,000-square-foot Barnes & Noble bookstore will be an anchor for College Town, a retail development designed to transform the intersection of Elmwood and Mt. Hope avenues into an urban village center. Work begins this spring, with an opening planned for 2014.**

Town will spur economic development through the creation of hundreds of jobs, revenue through sales, income, and property taxes, and the conversion of an unused, tax-exempt site into one that will generate taxes and keep residents and goods and services within city limits.

College Town will feature a Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center consisting of 136 rooms, 3,000 square feet of meeting space, and an 85-seat American fusion restaurant.

Flour City Provisions, a 20,000-square-foot supermarket, will be a vibrant grocer that will offer prepared foods, wood-fired pizza, salads, and sandwiches, as well as gluten-free, natural, local, and organic offerings.

College Town notably also will include a two-story, 20,000-square-foot Barnes & Noble bookstore that will be our official University bookstore and offer programs with broad appeal to the community, including such programs as children's story hours, lectures, and book signings.

More than 20 street-level retailers, including a salon and spa, a bank, and multiple restaurants with outdoor patio seating, will be part of College Town. The upper floors will provide new residential housing for those who seek proximity to the University, the Medical Center, and Rochester's central business district, as well as space for University administrative offices.

Alas, College Town will mark the demise of the Towne House, which was a hotel

until 1982, when it was converted into student housing and other spaces, including the University's primary data center. In its place will be an attractive urban village center.

College Town is designed to promote walkability in an environment with wide footpaths and green space to create a park-like atmosphere. In the future, a visit to College Town may include attending a concert in the open-air gazebo, purchasing fresh produce from the farmer's market, enjoying a meal, or visiting a local art show.

I am especially thrilled that College Town will provide more than 1,500 parking spaces, including 948 University-designated spots, surface lots, and on-street parking.

Let me particularly express my gratitude to Ron Paprocki, our senior vice president for administration and finance, who did an outstanding job quarterbacking our efforts to make College Town a reality.

College Town is the culmination of years of planning and coordination among the University, the City, neighborhood residents and businesses, and project participants, including the Mt. Hope Avenue Task Force, the Mt. Hope Business Association, the Southeast Area Coalition, and Mt. Hope Cemetery. Working together, we have adhered to a comprehensive community-based vision of what our neighbors in the Mt. Hope area want to see for their neighborhood. Within a short while, College Town will be here. 📍