

Local News

Rochester's Main Street poised for big change. Here's what's in store

WXXI News | By Brian Sharp

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Max Schulte / WXXI News

Construction at Center City Courtyard Housing, a five-story affordable housing complex that will occupy a full city block fronted by Main Street, Washington Street, Broad Street and North Plymouth Avenue. This building will have 161 affordable housing apartments.

The year ahead is shaping up to be a busy one downtown with new buildings going up, at least one building coming down, and one major corner being reborn.

“The main focus right now, no pun intended, is Main Street,” said Dana Miller, the city’s neighborhood and business development commissioner.

Projects are underway or planned from West Main and Plymouth to East Main and Clinton, and various points in between. Here are some of the highlights:

- Site work started a few weeks ago on the \$70 million, 160-unit Center City Courtyard. The former parking

lot on the west edge of downtown is fenced and abuzz with construction vehicles.



Provided / Image Passero Associates

A rendering of the proposed Center City Courtyard looking northwest with West Broad Street in the foreground.

What's envisioned is a five-story development that will cater to lower-income and recently homeless residents. Work should be completed in May 2025, said Whitney McClary, development director for CSD Housing.

Then the development team will shift its focus across the street, on another former parking lot now being used by the development team for storing materials and construction offices. The idea there is to do some planned development that could include some kind of small-format retail, McClary said, similar to what Target has been rolling out in neighborhoods nationwide.

- Renovations began this fall on the Executive Building at West Main and North Fitzhugh streets.

Developer Milos Vojvodic plans to complete the overhaul in phases over the next three to five years. The once-glamorous Powers Hotel-turned-office building will be remade for apartments, a restaurant, a marketplace and offices. First come the offices, which will include expanded space for the Monroe County Public Defender.



Local News
Renovations begin on historic downtown building, promising to restore its former grandeur

Brian Sharp, September 5, 2023

The once-glamorous Powers Hotel building dates to the late 19th Century.

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When the eight-story building was the Powers Hotel, it was described in its heyday as the “Waldorf of Western New York.” The hotel opened in 1883.

- Further along Main Street, city officials are optimistic that work could start in 2024 on the former Riverside Hotel. The downtown fixture perched along the Genesee River’s eastern bank has been vacant since it closed in early 2020.



Max Schulte / WXXI News

The Rochester Riverside Hotel, formerly the Radisson Hotel, on East Main Street has been vacant for since the hotel closed in 2020.

Miller has been talking with owner and developer Angelo Ingrassia about a development plan that would convert the upper floors to apartments and reopen the hotel on the lower floors.

“We've been having conversations with him pretty much every week on that,” Miller said. “You know, quite honestly, that building and the Main and Clinton building are the two most challenged buildings on Main Street right now. And we see a way forward for both of those.”

Ingrassia declined comment on the project. He also owns the historic Sibley Triangle Building at the corner of Main and East that he plans to convert to student housing.

- Home Leasing plans to start work in February rehabbing and renovating the group of Main and

Clinton buildings that Miller referenced. Because of the location, that work will require use of the adjacent sidewalk and likely a traffic lane (on North Clinton, East Main or both) for access and equipment staging, officials said.



Provided Image / InEx

A rendering of the Main and Clinton redevelopment shows the corner buildings restored.

There are plans for other adjacent and nearby buildings — including a small mid-block structure that the city plans to tear down to open the block for sidewalk dining and events. The city has yet to close on buying the property, Miller said, but will move quickly to demolition once it does. That is expected in the first quarter of 2024.

“There's a lot coming,” Miller said. “And what we're now seeing is the visible progress after many years of planning.”

Among the other major projects is Constellation Brands' new headquarters along the river and across the street from Blue Cross Arena. The company plans to move in early next year.



Local News **See the 5 downtown Rochester projects that will share \$10M**

Brian Sharp, December 5, 2022
Gov. Kathy Hochul made the announcements during a news conference Monday.

Ibero-American Development Corp. expects to begin construction of its planned \$32 million Alta Vista

project in early 2024 as well. The six-story, 76-unit mixed-income development at Franklin and Pleasant streets near the Inner Loop promises supportive units for survivors of domestic violence, as well as space for the Landmark Society of Western New York's offices.

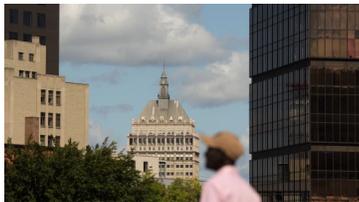
Occupancy is expected in mid- to late-2025, officials said.

Elsewhere, interior demolition could start in late 2024 on the former Richford Hotel at the edge of the old Midtown block, across the street from the Hotel Cadillac.



Max Schulte / WXXI News

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Local News

On the brink: Rising office vacancy downtown fuels concern

Brian Sharp, October 27, 2023

The worry is about now and what's to come with estimates that upwards of 31 percent of downtown office space is vacant — and what is rented is

likely to downsize with employees working from home.

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