
Executive Summary

Setting Itself Apart: Developing An Innovation Community at the Harriman Research and Technology Park

Over the course of the last half-century, the State of New York has developed and managed an important asset – the W.A. Harriman State Office Campus. In 2002, leveraging the emerging high-tech strength of the Capital Region, Governor George Pataki proposed the transformation of approximately 250 acres of the 330-acre site into a world class Research and Technology Park. Turning the last five decades of investment into a vital asset for the next 50 years requires setting it apart from the hundreds of other technology parks in the nation.

In May 2004, the Harriman Research and Technology Development Corporation (HRTDC) was established as a subsidiary of the Empire State Development Corporation to transform the W. A. Harriman State Office Campus into a world-class research and technology park. That redevelopment utilizes a unique partnership between several stakeholders – the Empire State Development Corporation, the New York State Office of General Services (OGS), the State University of New York at Albany, the City of Albany, and future private developers and investors.

The planned creation of a cutting-edge Innovation Community, resulted from a collaboration between the HRTDC and a team of consultants led by Saratoga Associates that was retained to undertake a Market Assessment and develop a Master Plan and Implementation Strategy for the Harriman Campus. The consulting team included some of the top national players in technology park design and marketing. In addition to Saratoga Associates, the other consultants were Economic Research Associates of New York City; Ballinger AE of Philadelphia; Fisher Associates of Rochester, New York; James Roberson, former president of Research Triangle Park; and Wordsmith of Albany. Together, the team designed the Innovation Community, which will stand out from the crowd of technology parks springing up regionally and around the nation.

The creation of the Innovation Community at the Harriman Campus represents this new generation of university-affiliated research parks – places that become global destinations, catering to creative people. The programming and design of this recommended Master Plan envision the kind of live/work/play environment that today’s technology innovators demand. At the same time, the site and its amenities readily support the greater economic, residential, and recreational goals of Albany and the Capital Region. In fact, the Master Plan leverages its urban locale to focus on strengths in the regional academic and economic environments. The design of an Innovation Community must fit seamlessly into the urban context of Albany – taking advantage of the City’s existing architectural styles and density to create a vital local neighborhood that attracts and encourages creativity.

Highlights of the recommended Master Plan include:

- > An urban design that reflects the architecture of Albany and creates a dense walkable environment;
- > Direct pedestrian and vehicle connections with the university and a learning center to foster collaboration;

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- > A signature boulevard that provides a gateway from both I-90 and Western Avenue to the new community, framed by buildings with small shops, services, and cafes on their first floors catering to local workers and residents with offices and loft apartments on upper floors; and
 - > A public park and “green space” designed to provide passive and active recreation – within walking distance of the research and residential buildings while also available to residents of surrounding neighborhoods.

Although New York’s Capital Region is emerging as a technology leader, it continues to develop important ingredients such as a strong research base and a critical mass of technology companies. Most other technology hotspots, such as Cambridge, Massachusetts; Raleigh, North Carolina; and Austin, Texas have these as a foundation. The Innovation Community concept helps build a foundation by leveraging Albany’s urban locale to attract the creative class of workers that drive new companies.

The Innovation Community provides an important mechanism to address a challenge facing many upstate cities, including Albany – urban population decline. The redesigned Harriman Campus will become a people magnet, drawing residents back into the city. Public and private sector investment will foster the development of advanced technologies and new products, create high-quality jobs, stimulate investment and economic growth, expand the City of Albany’s tax base, and encourage technology transfer and innovation.

Project Goals

The need to catalyze regional innovation in science and technology and provide an economic development engine to the Capital Region guided the project’s planning process. With this vision in mind, the team reached out to the community and other stakeholders to identify issues and concerns and define specific project goals. The following represent the finalized project goals:

- > Support economic development and job growth in the City of Albany and the Capital Region by capitalizing on the region’s emerging leadership position in scientific research and development of new technologies.
- > Capitalize on the Harriman Campus's proximity to the University at Albany, and leverage the University's research and development resources in ways that create jobs, increase the property tax base and enhance the community.
- > Create a viable, comprehensive and flexible Master Development Plan supported by Market Assessment data that will result in the development of projects and facilities as an exciting and competitive address in world markets.
- > Identify physical elements of the existing Harriman Campus that can support new growth initiatives.
- > Assure that plans recognize the importance of obtaining and facilitating adjoining neighborhoods’ endorsement of the resulting Master Plan.
- > Increase economic and fiscal benefits to the City of Albany through creation of a technically acclaimed, balanced environment for growth, job retention and fiscal results.

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- > Expand the City of Albany's property tax base through market-based, smart growth development projects.

Current Market Conditions

The Capital Region is emerging as a world-leader in nanotechnology research. The nanotechnology sector is an extremely diverse and energetic sector that has potential applications across a variety of related high-technology industries. Biotechnology, renewable energy resources/systems, advanced materials and information technology companies are key drivers of nanotechnology research.

Since 1990, Albany County has experienced modest economic growth, with expanding high-value sectors including Professional and Business Services, Education, and Health Services. This, together with the forecast for future employment in the Capital Region suggests that there likely will be adequate new growth to support new office/R&D mixed-use development.

The successful implementation of plans for the Innovation Community at the Harriman Campus requires achieving several goals in the regional marketplace. Attractive neighborhoods, arts and entertainment, and a stable economic environment, coupled with an involved local government provide the basis for success. The Capital Region is steadily gaining recognition as a center for academic, corporate and government research. Recent investments by the state and the private sector have provided an important foundation for growth. The Harriman Campus could become a nexus for interdisciplinary collaboration efforts among the growing academic, government and private sector research and regional marketing efforts.

Our analysis also found that the City of Albany been experiencing a gradual decline in population and households. At the same time, the region's population and household count have grown. Households moving out of Albany have recently been replaced by incoming households with lower household incomes. From 2005 to 2010, the number of households headed by individuals within the 35 to 64 years age cohort is forecast to increase at a faster rate. With the spread of population to neighboring counties, the City of Albany must be able to retain baby boomers and empty nesters that are migrating out. Residential units must be well positioned to attract these age cohorts along with tech-park workers.

Throughout the Capital Region, the level of interaction and collaboration among academic institutions in supporting high-tech learning programs and commercialization efforts has grown significantly. While many technology-oriented partnerships have involved the University at Albany and the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), smaller educational institutions have also established concerted efforts to capitalize on the region's growing eminence in the nanotechnology and biotechnology sectors. The presence of top-tier academic institutions, a well-educated workforce, and significant increases in University Research and Development are regional assets that contribute to the demand for academic and R&D space in the proposed Innovation Community.

The Innovation Community at the Harriman Campus can accommodate a diverse set of academic needs and uses both inside the realm of nanotechnology and biotechnology. The University has dramatically increased its research funding in the past several years. In the midst of this growth, and along with the continuing success of the University's federally-funded research centers, the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering was named the number one college in the nation overall for nano- and micro-

technology in a survey of peer institutions conducted by Small Times magazine (May/June 2006 issue), topping other colleges and universities in the categories of education, facilities, and industrial outreach. This and other strengths dictate that a core mission of the Park be to leverage University research and development to create jobs, increase the property tax base and enhance the community generally. As part of this activity the University projects that in the near future it will need additional academic space amounting to some 70,000 to 110,000 square feet, and several hundred apartment-style units for university-related housing.

Existing hotels are currently clustered near the Albany airport and downtown locations. While several mid-scale hotels are located near the Harriman Campus, few offer significant meeting and business amenities. A learning center, combining meeting and conference facilities/amenities with hotel accommodations, will help meet the Albany market's current demand for business and meeting facilities.

The Harriman Campus can potentially support an 80 to 120 room lodging and conference center facility that will cater to visitors, conference attendees, visiting faculty at the University at Albany, New York State agencies, Albany Nanotech, and others.

Retail demand for general merchandise, apparel, and specialty shopping is currently well-served by regional and super-regional shopping centers such as Crossgates Mall, Colonie Center, and Stuyvesant Plaza, as well as big-box retailers. The Harriman Campus is well positioned to be a personal service and convenience retail hub given its proximity to the student and technology park employee population, as well as new residential and commercial uses that would be included in the redeveloped campus.

Based on the City of Albany's historic share, the Harriman Campus could attract at least 150 new residential units in the near term. Residential units should include a mix of rental and for-sale product with diverse configurations, including townhouse, condominiums, and single-family units.

Existing Conditions on the Harriman Campus

The first step to maximizing the value of the Harriman Campus involves understanding the assets already in place, including the buildings, infrastructure and transportation elements. Albany is fortunate in that it enjoys all of the major transportation services: a gleaming new airport; a brand new passenger rail station; ready access to the Northeast's pivotal crossroads of north-south and east-west Interstate corridors I-87 and I-90, intermodal freight storage with port access and transfer facilities for rail, truck, air and water traffic, and convenient and historic inter-city boulevards and streets. The Harriman Campus is situated nearly dead center at the confluence of all of these assets, in the heart of Tech Valley.

The Harriman Campus is comprised of 18 buildings, including a Central Utility Plant (CUP), an electric substation, and over 3.2 million gross square feet of space. These buildings were built from 1958 to 1970. The existing buildings at the Harriman Campus currently use the CUP that produces and distributes chilled water and steam through a network of underground tunnels, and an electric substation that serves each building with power. While the CUP is projected to operate for at least 15 years, it will be retired as the State gradually vacates the campus and new buildings with their own HVAC systems are built. The electrical system, which is comprised of a 115/13.8 kv OGS-owned electric substation and extensive

distribution conduit system, could service future residents and tenants who could benefit from low distribution charges.

A physical condition analysis conducted by the Project Team concludes that not all buildings are adaptable for R&D. The interiors of buildings are dated and would require full retrofits for any adaptive reuse. In a market with ample availability of office space, demolition of non-adaptable, aging structures is necessary to pave the way for new world-class research and technology facilities.

The existing Ring Road provides excellent connectivity and regional access. However, it also isolates the campus, a condition that will need modification to redevelop it into a live/work/play environment. An analysis of pedestrian and bicycle route connections indicates that the University at Albany and the Harriman Campus both have their own systems, not connected to each other or to the surrounding neighborhoods.

Elements of the Innovation Community

Innovation entrepreneurs are highly mobile. Attractions of urban life and the quality of cultural opportunities stimulate them. By understanding these issues and integrating them into the design of the Harriman Campus, the team has set the stage for a new community that should be very attractive to the creative class. The design of the Innovation Community transforms a 1960s suburban style office park into a 21st century urban neighborhood. The Harriman Campus moves from a place where people come solely for work and leave each night into a live-work-play community.

At the same time, the community creates an important amenity in this part of Albany. By weaving itself into the fabric of the neighborhood, it will provide important neighborhood-scale retail services to local residents. New public transit connections, along with new pedestrian and bicycle access, can bring the new community members and current residents together.

An important aspect of the Master Plan is the signature boulevard that provides a gateway to the new community and hosts buildings with neighborhood retail on the first floors. The small shops and restaurants along this road create a vibrant neighborhood center for innovators in the new community as well as local residents.

A lower density residential neighborhood is proposed for areas reclaimed by removing the outer Ring Road on the southwest perimeter of the existing Campus. Additional multi-family units are also proposed in both the mixed-use neighborhood and adjacent to the future park. The presence of residential units fronting the remaining portion of the inner ring road serves as buffer to the surrounding neighborhood from noise and traffic. Additional residential units could be located throughout the Harriman Campus in new and renovated buildings, should future demand warrant.

Just east of this proposed boulevard, along the northern portion of the site, is a mixed-use neighborhood. A Learning/Conference Center attached to an 80 to 120 room lodging facility will anchor this east-west corridor. The cluster will also host academic, R&D, general office and multi-use residential buildings in neighborhood square setting. The design of all buildings will reflect the architecture of Albany and design standards will be established to create a dense walkable environment.

The new design drops much of the existing ring roads in favor of a more grid-like network, evoking a more neighborhood center feel. New cross streets will bridge the interior of the community and create a more walkable, neighborhood scale streetscape. This familiar street pattern provides a clearer and more intuitive sense for way-finding. It also makes project phasing easier. Parking will be provided in parking structures, many hidden behind small retail buildings, and in surface lots, primarily on the eastern part of the site.

The pedestrian network is one of the community's primary amenities. It will build on the extensive existing system of sidewalks, plazas and recreational spaces. The network will provide pedestrian connections among uses and to the open space. Direct, non-vehicular connections between the Innovation Community and the University will link the currently disparate pedestrian networks and foster collaboration. Two emerging bike systems, the proposed Albany Pilot Bike Route and the University at Albany's Purple Path, would offer connections with the area surrounding the Harriman Campus, the University and Downtown Albany.

While there are currently no plans to move the State Police Academy, its future relocation could further enhance connectivity between the Harriman Campus and the University at Albany. Additional development pads for academic expansion could be created on the west side of along the new north-south boulevard, if the State Police Academy were to be relocated.

The public park, fashioned in the mold of parks designed by 19th century master architect, Frederick Law Olmsted, will provide an important amenity for researchers, students, faculty and local residents. Walking paths and water features will provide new community members and local neighborhood residents an opportunity to reconnect with nature. The park will also provide space for active recreation in a part of the city that needs an amenity of this quality. The park also serves to help buffer the existing neighborhood from the office, research and retail activities along the northern and eastern portion of the site.

Sustainable design for the buildings (new and redeveloped) and the integrated landscape will be assets in efforts to attract an environmentally sensitive technology workforce. LEED¹ certification should be sought for individual buildings.

Marketing Plan

The first phase in implementing the Innovation Community at the Harriman Campus involves sending out a Request for Proposals to private developers that have the proven capability of developing the mix of uses planned for the site.

The objective in Phase 1 is to include amenities that will attract other developers and businesses to the new community. Therefore, concurrently with the construction or rehabilitation of the first office and research buildings, Phase 1 development must include residential uses with ground floor retail and the hospitality/learning center. Associated parking structures, including those hidden behind ground floor

¹Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design ("LEED") certification indicates that the construction of a building is done in an environmentally-friendly manner in terms of construction materials, long-term maintenance and energy efficiency.

retail establishments will be added. All buildings will be two or three stories in height. Architecture will be fresh, simple and reminiscent of the history of the Capital District

Phase 1 development is proposed for the northwest quadrant of the site. This area is currently not occupied by existing structures and is highly visible from Washington Avenue. This location is away from existing neighborhoods. The lack of demolition and absence of need for environmental remediation will keep Phase 1 costs down. Also project visibility will provide access to a greater market as the fledgling community develops.

The success of the Phase 1 program will serve as a critical stepping-stone for subsequent development of other long-term redevelopment components. Therefore, creating a clear vision of the long-term development vision for the Harriman Campus is essential in the first phase. Lessons from comparable parks provide the following useful guidelines for long-term development:

- > Create market address for Innovation Community;
- > Leverage educational, regional and research institutions;
- > Provide nanotechnology, cancer genomic & IT facilities;
- > Support with supply chain amenities and services;
- > Focus on synergistic mix of research, office, academic/training, government, production, and corporate uses.

Potential redevelopment opportunities for the long-term vision of the Harriman Campus include flexible multi-tenant facilities that could house regional technology companies, nanotechnology product and tool manufacturers, other University sponsored start-up companies, and support services that include legal, consultancy, accounting and financial services. The Harriman Campus could also accommodate a diverse set of academic needs that would support the educational programs and research of the University. As the Harriman Campus is redeveloped, retail, parking, streetscapes and interior paths and walkways to support tech workers, empty nesters, and the University's community members could be expanded. Student and faculty housing are possible options for redevelopment over the long term.

Property Disposition Plan

There are two possible methods for transferring the land at the Harriman Campus to the private sector for redevelopment - either through a master developer, or through a multiple developer parcelization process.

Under the *Master Developer* option, a private developer acquires the Harriman Campus through fee simple ownership or long-term ground lease. The Master Developer finances new buildings, while the public sector provides incentives and infrastructure improvements, such as ring road demolition and internal road connections, roundabouts, building demolition, asbestos removal and other environmental remediation, open space and parks and parking decks. The Master Developer will also be responsible for marketing the project, as well as management of the development.

Under the *Multiple Developer Parcelization Process*, a Management/Disposition Entity would act as a "land bank" and divide the campus into parcels for sale or long-term lease to multiple developers. As the market demand evolves over time, the Management/Disposition Entity would market tracts and issue

RFPs for individual parcels. OGS would transfer title to the Management/Disposition Entity that would subsequently transfer individual parcel titles to selected developers. An existing or newly-formed local development corporation, not-for-profit corporation or HRDTC could act as the site managing entity. The public sector would provide incentives and infrastructure improvements, such as ring road demolition and internal road connections, roundabouts, building demolition, asbestos removal and other environmental remediation, open space and parks and parking decks.

Transforming the half-century old W.A. Harriman State Office Campus into the 21st century Innovation Community involves the development of a Master Plan that is responsive to the needs of stakeholders and the community, considers market demand, leverages regional assets and opportunities, and utilizes existing real estate resources. This cutting-edge community would serve as economic catalyst to a region that is already emerging as a hub of technology. To see this vision become reality, multiple partnerships among various public and institutional entities, together with private sector investment are necessary. The result would be a world-class research and technology facility that distinguishes itself from all the rest.