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# More development along Platinum Mile

**By Alina Suriel**

Property taxpayers along the Platinum Mile corridor of I-287 will be happy to know that ongoing development is continuing in the area with the rehabilitation of one of the corporate parks on Westchester Avenue.

A building which will contain an 85,000 square foot new medical facility is in the process of being built on Westchester Avenue in a 13-acre professional campus formerly known as The Harrison Executive Park, according to the firm behind the deal, Simone Development of the Bronx. The compound, which has been renamed the Purchase Professional Park as part of the revitalization effort, is already home to three other buildings used as corporate offices and medical facilities at 3000, 3010 and 3020 Westchester Ave., respectively. The fourth building located at 3030 Westchester Ave. is set to be completed and occupied in the first quarter of 2015, and has already been leased to WESTMED Medical Group.

“The renovations and modernizations that we are making at the Purchase Professional Park are a significant investment by our company that will clearly position this complex as the choice location for medical practices and business professionals in Westchester County,” Joseph Simone, President of Simone Development.

The other three buildings in the Purchase Professional Park were built in the late 60’s to early 70’s, and have been all been renovated



*A new medical facility on Westchester Avenue is the latest series of developments along the I-287 corridor, where over a million square feet of commercial office space has been repositioned since 2008. Photo courtesy Simone Development*

part of the overhaul of the space.

Upgrades include refurbishment of the exterior facades, repairs in the lobbies and all common area hallways and restrooms, and replacement of some of the hardware in all of the elevators. In addition to these structural improvements, new, energy efficient LED lighting is being installed in all of the parking areas, and an existing courtyard will receive a new fountain centerpiece and outdoor furniture for employees and visitors.

According to information on its website, WESTMED Medical Group is a physician-owned, multi specialty group medical practice. The healthcare organization already has an internal medicine practice located at 3020 Westchester Ave., but Dean Bender, a representative of the Simone Development, told the *Review* that he believes all of WESTMED's offices will be moved to the new building at 3030 Westchester Ave.

The plan for 3030 Westchester Ave. fits in perfectly with the town's intention of encouraging development along I-287, an area that had previously been occupied by mostly corporate office buildings which made up 60 percent of the area's tax base. The years following the 2008 recession saw up to 30 percent of these buildings left vacant after many corporations fled the area. The surrounding communities were so affected by the loss of revenue that the rehabilitation of the Platinum Mile was written in as a priority of the 2013 Town Comprehensive Plan.

Harrison Councilman Joe Cannella, a Republican, highlighted some of the challenges faced in revitalizing the area.

"The buildings and the Platinum Mile is basically eroded and that's been going on for a long time, and that has affected the tax base overall," Cannella said. "It's a problem that will continue because many of those buildings are too expensive to rehabilitate in their current form. They were not built with the expectation that they'd have a hundred year capacity, and as a result some of them are reaching the end of their life."

Bender highlighted the trend of reconstruction along the Platinum Mile by wellness and healthcare facilities. Memorial Sloan Kettering opened a new outpatient facility on Westchester Avenue early in October, and N.Y. Health & Wellness, a medical practice combining holistic and conventional medical practices, opened in December less than five miles away from the Purchase Professional Park.

"Now they're starting to call it the medical mile because a lot of those office parks along there have been turned into medical space," Bender said.

Harrison Councilman Stephen Malfitano, a Republican, was glad to see development along I-287 regardless of what type of businesses happened to settle in.

"It's still the Platinum Mile," he said. "And what businesses ultimately end up locating there, it just so happens that we're seeing more development in the medical field, and some biotech. Nothing is constant, the world doesn't stand still, and to see this type of renewed interest in development, it's encouraging."

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