

Revitalizing east side

NEWS, TOP STORIES

RiverWest to transform city's Riverfront District

By Dillon Davis - cdavis@aimmediamidwest.com



Pictured is a rendering of The Mill on Flax, a development in the works for the east side of Delaware.

Courtesy | RiverWest Partners

Columbus-based investment and development firm RiverWest's interest in revitalizing Delaware's east side is beginning to take further shape with the announcement of plans for a mixed-use development on Flax Street, which would stretch west to the Olentangy River and east to Central Avenue.

Last week, the firm went public with plans to develop five parcels totaling nearly five acres located at 15 Flax St. to be known as The Mill on Flax. Included in the plans are 180 residential units, 3,000 square feet of resident amenity space, an outdoor pool, and 5,000 square feet of commercial and retail space lining the project's Central Avenue frontage.

By redeveloping the original Delaware Manufacturing Company building that exists on the site, RiverWest said it hopes to "embrace the neighborhood's rich history in manufacturing." The building will serve as the "centerpiece and heart of the development," according to the firm.

"We are very excited to continue to expand our investment in the east side of Delaware," RiverWest stated in a press release announcing its plans. "Complementing our recently announced plans to rehabilitate the

historic Delaware Train Depot into a restaurant, brewery, and gathering space, which is just blocks from the proposed development, this project will enrich the commercial fabric of the Eastside community and serve as proof of concept to the viability of the neighborhood's resurgence."

RiverWest first met with Delaware residents on Feb. 2 in a town hall meeting aimed at garnering feedback on what the residents would like to see in the area. At the time, RiverWest Principal Brian Suiter said he firmly believed the site would include some sort of mixed-use development.

"As we continue to sort of see the benefits and the opportunities in Delaware, there's really a growth potential that comes there with the size of the city and how quickly it is growing," Suiter said in February. "So, obviously, there's great opportunity from that.

"But we also saw the east side being somewhat under-invested in the past bunch of years, both privately and publicly. The city has put a lot of time, energy, and money into Sandusky Street and the infrastructure around there, but the east side of town hasn't necessarily been given that same kind of consideration."

RiverWest met with residents in a second meeting on March 1 to share its vision ahead of the announcement, a meeting that Suiter said was "well attended" with the plans being "well received."

"We're excited about the possibilities of being a catalyst for this side of town," Suiter told The Gazette.

In contemplating the city's vision for a Riverfront District along the Olentangy River, RiverWest said it has also planned for "rich outdoor spaces" with the expectation to tie into the proposed district with multi-use trail connections and improved walkability.

The firm said it is also proposing to improve pedestrian access and connections to downtown along Central Avenue, as well as to construct a new pedestrian bridge crossing the Olentangy River to connect residents on the east side directly to Mingo Park.

While a significant step forward for the firm, RiverWest stated there is still plenty of work to be done as the project continues to evolve heading into advanced stages.

"In coordination with their design team, ArchAll Architects, and Osborn Engineering, the developers will advance conversations with the neighborhood, city, county, and state stakeholders to continue improving the project's plan over the course of the next several months," the release stated.

Any formal proposal will need to be reviewed by the Delaware Planning Commission before receiving final consideration from Delaware City Council. RiverWest stated it hopes to start construction by the end of the year.