



## **Uniland Dev. and MDC select Gensler for Eastern Hills Mall redevelopment**

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Clarence, NY Uniland Development Co. and Mountain Development Corp. (MDC) have selected Gensler, a real estate planning and design firm, to provide master planning services for the redevelopment of the Eastern Hills Mall property on Transit Rd.

Uniland and MDC envision a town center-style destination where people live, work, shop and play.

The Gensler hiring was the result of a national search that brought firms with global reputations to Buffalo to compete for the opportunity to masterplan 100 acres of retail property for the region's first town center. This assignment marks the first phase to determine the future of this multi-year project, which could eventually become one of the most popular places to live, work and visit in Western New York.

"We undertook a deliberate and broad-based search to identify the best design firms in the country for this project, and we ended up choosing the largest design firm in the world," said Uniland Vice President Carl Montante Jr. "Even though they're global in scope, their project leader has Buffalo roots and is passionate about the positive impact this project could have in the region."

The project lead, Marc Bruffett, is a principal and strategy director at Gensler's New York City office. Bruffett is a graduate of the University at Buffalo's School of Architecture and Planning and an advisor to the program. He and Montante recently served as evaluators to the School's Capstone Studio project in which the students spent a semester creating redevelopment concepts for the mall property.

Despite their experience with similar projects around the world, Bruffett said that a 100-acre site is "nearly unprecedented" and that his team is excited about the long-term, transformational outcomes.

"We see extraordinary potential for redeveloping the Eastern Hills Mall into a world-class destination to live, work, and play," said Bruffett. "The site is large enough to consider many potential uses. It is easy to imagine an entirely new experience that affords tremendous long term value to the Buffalo community, including both residents and visitors."

The master planning phase will take nearly all of 2019 and include market research, feasibility analysis, concept plan approval, and branding. Gensler will work with local stakeholders such as

residents, business owners and government officials in compiling data and assessing specific opportunities.

During the redevelopment process, the Eastern Hills Mall will continue to operate as normal.

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