

UPDATE: Vartan hopes to break ground on Harrisburg mixed-use building by Nov.

By Eric Veronikis

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[Vartan Group Inc.](#) plans to break ground on its \$13 million 100,000-square-foot mixed-use residential and retail building in Harrisburg by November, said Hovig Ralph Vartan, who heads the Susquehanna Township-based development company at an afternoon press conference.

The company might even have to wait until next spring to break ground on the project to complete the land-development process and to wait out the winter freeze-thaw period, [Mayor Stephen R. Reed](#) said. Construction would take about a year to complete, Reed said.

The five-story building would sit on a half acre in the 1500 block of North Sixth Street. The property is mostly empty except for several abandoned, blighted buildings, Reed said. The developer hopes to construct the building to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards, Reed said.

It would house 40 residential apartments and lofts on the top four floors. The first floor will include an approximately 3,580-square-foot family-style restaurant and neighborhood-style retail spaces. It might feature a barber and dry-cleaning store, Vartan said of the style of business the company is hoping to attract.

Most of the residential units will sell between \$150,000 and \$350,000, Vartan said. Rentals will go for about \$1,000 per month for a one-bedroom apartment, he said. The company expects to attract mostly young professionals to live in the building that make between \$35,000 to \$75,000 a year, Reed said.

There will be a 60-space garage beneath the building and a common area on the roof for residents to use, Reed said.

The project will be financed with private dollars, Reed said.

The building is the first of a series of development projects Reed said are in the works for a section of the city that he has dubbed [The Northern Gateway](#). The Northern Gateway project will include a staged integration of development projects and the widening of North Seventh Street. It runs from Maclay Street to Herr Street and includes the Sixth and Seventh street corridors.

The Northern Gateway is expected to attract professional, clerical and retail jobs in the North Seventh and North Sixth Street corridors and surrounding neighborhoods, Reed said. The ambitious plan calls for more than \$150 million in improvements throughout the area.

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