

North Avenue Residence Hall Questions and Answers



What is the goal for the Residence Hall project?

- Iona's goals for the project on North Avenue are to increase the quality and quantity of residential housing options for students and to participate in the revitalization of North Avenue.

What is the scope of the new Residence Hall project?

- Iona College filed an application for a seven-story mixed-use development on North Avenue with taxable, commercial uses on the ground floor and six floors of student housing.
- The new facility will be constructed on the Mirage Diner property acquired in January 2014, along with properties adjacent to the diner located on White Oak Street.

What are the benefits of the new building?

- Because many students live in unregulated off-campus housing today, this college-managed Residence Hall will provide additional security and management of the student population while increasing the number and quality of student living options at the College.
- Iona is committed to New Rochelle's stated goal of revitalization of the North Avenue corridor. The College will continue the taxable square footage in the

ground floor restaurant and retail space once it is redeveloped rather than removing this commercial property from the tax roll.

- Additional investments in North Avenue by the College include investing funds to assist the City in making roadway improvements on City property in the vicinity of the College and initiating a partnership with the City to launch a Storefront Enhancement Program, which will provide financial assistance to property owners in an effort to improve the appearance of commercial storefronts located along North Avenue.

How many residents will be living in the Residence Hall?

- The proposed Residence Hall will accommodate approximately 310 beds, suite-style, with no more than four students per suite. The Residence Hall is designed to provide apartment-style living, including living rooms and cooking/laundry facilities as well as common areas to meet the needs of upperclassmen. The Residence Hall will also accommodate a one bedroom apartment for the Residence Director.
- It is anticipated that upperclassmen will choose to live in the new facility rather than in off-campus housing.

What about parking for the new facility?

- Resident parking for students will be managed through a new system of required permits and will mandate parking on campus at Iona. These permits are expected to reduce the impact of student parking on the surrounding streets.
- Parking for the retail/commercial spaces will be provided in a new lot adjacent to the building with access via Summit Avenue.

How will you replace the Mirage Diner?

- The street level of the new facility will be retail operations including a restaurant serving both the community and campus, which will maintain taxable commercial space on North Avenue.

What process did Iona use to develop the proposal for this project?

- Shortly after President Nyre's arrival in 2011, the College engaged in a series of community meetings with neighbors and elected officials resulting in renewed support from the College and City of New Rochelle to develop North Avenue.
- On June 18, 2013, the New Rochelle City Council enacted a new special permit that allows for the development of College-related uses in the North Avenue Zoning District.
- In January 2014, the Board of Trustees approved a Campus Master Planning process to identify potential locations and designs for a new Residence Hall, consistent with and in furtherance of the College's strategic planning process.

- The City of New Rochelle’s Planning Board granted a special permit and site plan approval for the multi-use building after a public hearing on December 15, 2014.
- Throughout the planning process, the College solicited input from students and community leaders through a series of community meetings.

Why this location on North Avenue?

- The need and options for a new Iona residence hall have been discussed publicly for several years. An initial proposal to place the dorm on Mayflower Avenue was withdrawn due to community and City preferences for a location on North Avenue.
- When the owners of the Mirage Diner approached the College about purchasing the property, it created a perfect prospective location as it sits directly across from the main campus entrance on North Avenue.
- This location is consistent with the City of New Rochelle’s focus on North Avenue development. “We look forward to working with Iona College in the implementation of their master plan,” said New Rochelle City Manager Charles B. Strome III. “The proposed development of College facilities on North Avenue will enhance existing commercial uses, attract new businesses and encourage revitalization along the entire North Avenue corridor.”

What are you doing to minimize the impact of this new development on the surrounding community?

- Iona is determined to develop this new residence hall in a manner complementary to the surrounding neighborhood. The height of the facility is consistent with nearby buildings and will be designed with similar brick façade and style.
- The new Residence Hall will be constructed according to green standards intended to minimize environmental impact.
- The design will leverage the street elevation of Summit Avenue and place green barriers (trees and shrubbery) to provide buffers to the homes directly adjacent to the property.
- Parking and access to the building will be directed away from White Oak Street toward North Avenue by a change to two-way traffic on a short section of White Oak and signage at the facility’s parking area.
- Additional security and residence hall staffing will be employed in the building as well as in the surrounding community.

- Several changes are being implemented to ensure safety during the construction:
 - Traffic will be restricted from the parking lane on North Avenue in the immediate vicinity of the Diner site.
 - The sidewalk will be relocated into the parking lane and lined with Jersey barriers for pedestrian safety. This altered pedestrian walkway will be in place through construction.
 - Permanent fencing and perimeter lighting will be installed to secure the site during the construction period.
 - The bus stop at North Avenue and Summit Avenue will be discontinued during demolition and construction. Nearby stops at the High School and near Dunkin Donuts should be used until further notice.

What is the timeline for the development?

- On September 17, 2014, the Board of Trustees endorsed the proposal.
- Demo, site work and easement work began on February 14, 2015.
- Construction of the building is expected to begin around April 1, 2015.
- Regular community communications and input meetings will continue through the construction period.
- The goal is for the new Residence Hall to open in August 2016.

How can I stay informed about the project?

- A new website provides ongoing communications about the status of the development project at www.iona.edu/NorthAveResHall.
- Regular community meetings with the neighborhoods adjacent to the property will provide the opportunity to learn about the current status and ask questions about the development.
- A special “construction hotline” will be staffed to answer your questions and concerns once construction begins. The number is (914) 633-2318.
- We have established a “closed-loop” process to track issues and communicate their resolution to the community and press. This information will be shared at the regular community meetings.