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Oh my gosh! Big plans for the Genosh

By Jillian Follert
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After years of false starts, it looks like the Genosha Hotel will finally get the makeover it's been waiting for



Jason Liebrechts/ Metroland

A local developer is hoping he can turn the deteriorating Genosha Hotel into a success story by converting the 169-year-old building into a mixed use building with retail, office space and apartments for mature students.

main floor will be retail -- likely a coffee shop and restaurant -- with office space, one-bedroom and bachelor student apartments on the upper floors.

"We're looking for really nice, high-end uses," he said. "That area of the downtown is changing already and if we bring really good tenants in, it will bring in new life and good traffic."

The apartments will be aimed at mature students such as those in UOIT's bachelor of education program who will be attending classes downtown as of this fall, he said.

Mr. Summers isn't the first developer to set his sights on the Genosha and make big promises.

In October 2005, Toronto firm ICC Global Group bought the vacant property for \$1.8 million and company CEO Rob Mattacchione said it would be fully restored and turned into a 100-room boutique hotel, prompting excitement among downtown business owners and politicians.

But plans quickly began falling apart and in July 2007 he pulled the plug after the City turned down his request for a \$1-

million grant, 10-year property tax deferral and 40 parking spaces.

"We'll examine selling it," Mr. Mattacchione said last summer. "But if the return isn't there, we're not averse to boarding it up and land banking it for 10 years. If it's boarded up, I think that's going to really hamper the revitalization in the downtown."

Mr. Summers said his project won't be a repeat of past disappointments and he has the credentials to back it up.

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