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## Downtown Winooski continues to rise

By Matt Sutkoski  
Free Press Staff Writer

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WINOOSKI -- The city's downtown redevelopment is at a beginning, a middle and an end.

Some of Winooski's radical transformation is up and running; some of it is a buzz of construction activity; and some of it is in the form of blueprints, the gleam in a developer's eye.

Winooski Falls, the name developers HallKeen and the Braverman Co. have given the new downtown, is about at its halfway point, said Ken Braverman, the Winooski Falls project manager. He marveled that the entire, complex enterprise has not suffered major glitches or set backs. "I hope I'm not jinxing us," he said.

Keeping track of the changes in downtown Winooski almost requires a scorecard. Here's a synopsis:

A new 920-space municipal parking garage opened last year. So did a new headquarters for the Vermont Student Assistance Corp.

Spinner Place, a multistory building housing students, is finished, with the bulk of the University of Vermont students expected to move in during September. Ground floor retail space remains empty, awaiting the students and the completion of nearby site work, Braverman said.

The Riverwalk, a series of boardwalks, decks and gathering spaces along the banks of the Winooski River is almost finished. A large deck on the west side of the Champlain Mill is open, with park benches installed for people who want to gaze at the river. More will come, Winooski City Manager Gerry Myers promises. "We're hoping for a lively and vibrant streetscape," he said, envisioning musicians, vendors and public gatherings on the deck. The first step toward that idea came this week, when a hot dog vendor applied for a permit to set up shop on the deck, Myers said.

Barlow Square, a 213-unit apartment complex, is rapidly rising south of East Allen Street. Braverman said he'll start signing leases for residents in the fall, and they'll begin to move in next March.

Construction of the Cascades, luxury condominiums, is planned for the banks of the Winooski River. Work is scheduled to start in the fall, Braverman said.

Overall, workers are about on schedule with construction, aided by mostly benign winter and spring weather. Interest in the apartments and condominiums remains strong, Braverman said. A perceived slowdown in the housing market and rising interest rates have had no effect on the project, he said.

On East Allen Street on Monday, Tiara McGuire of Jeffersonville watched the construction from her aunt's back porch with her sons Danny McGuire, 9, and Mathew Delorme, 3. McGuire said she thought the project was good for the city, but she said Barlow Square would erase the view of the Winooski River from her aunt's home.

The family had just experienced the boom as workers blasted away ledge below them. Similar work this year is suspected in contributing to shifting land behind two East Allen Street apartment buildings, but Braverman said the bank has since been stabilized.

Moments after one blast, Danny McGuire said he couldn't wait for another. "I can't wait to see the explosives," he said.

Contact Matt Sutkoski at 660-1846 or [msutkosk@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com](mailto:msutkosk@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com)

Going in circles Winooski's roundabout, designed to smooth the flow of traffic through downtown, has been open for five months. Is it working? Is traffic in the busy junction better -- or worse? E-mail us at [metro@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com](mailto:metro@bfp.burlingtonfreepress.com) and let us know.

