

This Grand Island project was held up by sewer issues. But those have been cleaned up

Buffalo News Story, June 16, 2026 Jonathan D. Epstein

After 20 months of battling with the state over a sanitary sewer extension, developer Frank Chinnici is finally ready to get started this year with construction of his Rivertown mixed-use project on Grand Island. Chinnici's Legacy Development and his partner, Roger Trettel, have been working for more than four years on a project that would bring nearly 320 new housing units to a 26-acre site off Grand Island Boulevard, between Webb and Whitehaven roads.

But it was held up since October 2024 while the state Department of Environmental Conservation reviewed the sewer plans, as the town's sanitary system has operated under a state consent decree since 2011 because it can't handle large volumes of overflow water from heavy storms.

Chinnici said he received the state approval in the mail earlier this month, clearing the way to start significant site work, since there's a nine-foot change in the grade. "It feels sort of surreal," he said. "At some point, you say to yourself, is this really going to happen? And when it does, you say it doesn't feel real."

Plans call for 288 apartments, 16 patio homes and 15 townhouses, as well as a 36,000-square-foot indoor athletic facility and 35,000 square feet of retail space. The athletic facility would be designed as a multi-purpose entertainment facility, with activities including pickleball. Chinnici and Trettel are in discussions with a chain called The Pickle Pad to open one of its indoor gaming, food and drink venues at the site.

"They don't have anything in New York right now," Chinnici said of The Pickle Pad, which has or is opening nine locations but nothing north of New Jersey. "We think that concept would work real well at Grand Island. And if not Pickle Pad, then it's something similar."

The multi-phase project would start with construction of the first five apartment buildings, with 178 units, and the indoor athletic facility, all clustered in the center of the site. That portion of the project would cost about \$54 million to construct over about 30 months, Chinnici said. The rest would follow with at least two more buildings, depending on the success and pace of absorption of the first phase.

The \$95 million project received site plan approval from the town in May 2024, after the town previously rezoned the land in April 2022 under a “planned development district” to facilitate the redevelopment.