

Oneonta Mayor – Hometown Oneonta Column

520 words

A Thousand New Residents? Here's Part of the Plan.

Ah, youth... There is nothing as entrepreneurial as a youthful spirit; or as willing to invest itself in potential. The future lies ahead, and it is filled with possibilities. That there are well advertised obstacles to be navigated is a blessing and curse. A way around can be charted, and a better way plotted, but it requires attention to the possibilities.

And that is where we come in. We are signaling, "If you aren't happy with your prospects... Here we are."

Oneonta is a charming little city with as much heart as you'll find anywhere. And living here could be an idyllic option for anyone unsatisfied with the quality of their life.

While we (obviously) love and embrace all ages – and would be pleased to welcome them as neighbors - we are specifically targeting a 25–40-year demographic in a marketing campaign that's now under way.

Oneonta is courting a youthful demographic. Young families, couples, and singles, who are in search of a future that is promising and fulfilling.

The last two decades of our high school, college, and university graduates will be hearing quite a bit from us. Our messaging will be engaging, and I believe that it will touch a chord, and hopefully encourage a return visit.

Graciously, the three institutions have given us the permission and freedom to anthropomorphize their mascots in illustration... And what a gift they've given us!

There is no more effective bit of branding to employ in connection with alumni than their school mascots. And we're having a lot of fun with the dragons, hawks, and yellow jackets. We imagine them older, with the trappings of age and family. It's not just Red, Swoop, and Buzz that we spend time with, but their families, their kids, and babies.

Thanks to a cadre of SUNY Oneonta students, and the volunteer efforts of a collection of our area's leading marketing professionals, our campaign is in progress.

We have a podcast. Yes. A podcast.

It's called "The Hill City Gambit" and you can find it on most services, Amazon, Spotify, Apple, and others.

So, what *is* the gambit?

If we realize our goal of bringing those thousand new neighbors to our community, will they have the housing they need?

We think so. We hope so. But that is the gambit.

Not "If you build it, they will come." But rather "They are coming, and we WILL build it in time." I have confidence that we will, because Oneonta has answered the call.

We will find housing. We will build housing. We will, because more than 5-dozen people are volunteering their time and energy to find creative strategies that maximize the potential of our housing stock and create new opportunities for development.

It's a chicken or egg scenario, but neither comes first.

Housing development. A booming retail sector. Population growth.

They are going to happen simultaneously, and it's going to be a juggling act.

But there will be an increasingly youthful vigor to our little city. More folks that will help. It's an exciting prospect.

If you want to join our efforts, let me know. All4Oneonta.com

