

## This Vineland manufacturer is set to double its facility size

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Cherry Hill Courier-Post

Feb. 24, 2026

VINELAND — Precision laboratory glass manufacturer [Glastron Inc.](#) is set to modernize and nearly double the size of its facility at 510 N. West Blvd. under a concept that city officials just accepted.

The project calls for an 8,700-square-foot addition, without enlarging the roughly 1.9-acre campus. Demolishing several structures, such as a house used as an office, is to clear room for improvements in parking, traffic flow and stormwater control.

Zoning board officials voted 5-0 to approve a use variance after a hearing at their meeting Feb. 18. The company next must submit a fully designed site plan for board approval.

Glastron, founded in Vineland about 1969, is at the corner of North West Boulevard and Erin Street. It remained locally owned until sold to Restek Corp. in January 2010.

Restek, which is based in Pennsylvania, filed the use variance application.



Project attorney Michael Guccio and planner Stephen Hawk testified that neither manufacturing capacity nor the workforce will increase under the plan. But the 42 employees will end up with much nicer working conditions, they said.

“They’re on top of each other, somewhat,” Hawk said.

“And their break room and their lunchroom is right up against the production area. They have a very small training room. They’d like to modernize their bathroom and have more efficient storage of their finished product and the product that comes in.”

Hawk said the campus overhaul also will take related traffic off Erin Street.

Parking spots along the boulevard are coming out in favor of on-site parking. Pavement also is being taken out along the boulevard and also along Erin Street.

“Effectively, the only thing that will continue to occur along Erin Street will be the two to three times a day, FedEx pick-ups of finished products,” Hawk said. “And they’ll be no more employees and traffic coming in and going out throughout the day during the one shift.”

The closest neighbors to the facility are a few single-family residences and the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home, according to testimony.

This property actually comprises two lots. The smaller lot is zoned for residential use, and the larger is zoned for residential and business use.

Zoning board officials have oversight because manufacturing technically isn't permitted in either zone.

Gruccio noted, however, that the same area was once zoned for industrial use. Train tracks run the length of the boulevard, and historically much business and commercial development in Vineland occurred near the boulevard.

Hawk said Restek regards a South Jersey presence as important because of the region’s significant glass manufacturing “talent pool.” Laboratory glass manufacture requires a skilled workforce, and there are a number of glass companies in the area.

“And it’s one of the reasons why Restek would like to expand here and have their employees be treated with a proper layout,” Hawk said. “Because they can’t find this kind of talent everywhere.”

Glastron workers last year experienced a major change in their status. The site became fully employee-owned, an arrangement already in place at its parent company.