



Ground broken for Jefferson Plaza in Farmingdale

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November 20, 2013 by ROBERT BRODSKY / robert.brodsky@newsday.com



Ralph Ekstrand.

Plans to build new retail and housing near railroad stations was one of the focal points of the recent campaign for Nassau County executive between Republican Edward Mangano and Democrat Thomas Suozzi, with both candidates professing better ideas to spur downtown development.

Mangano and area legislators Thursday will announce a new downtown streetscape project, including new curbing, concrete sidewalks and roadway paving. Mangano, who defeated Suozzi, was expected to attend Wednesday's ceremony but canceled because of a scheduling conflict. In a statement, he said the project would generate "millions in economic development for our local economy."

The county's Industrial Development Agency granted Farmingdale developer Anthony Bartone and his partner, TDI of Irving, Texas, a 20-year tax break to help finance the project. The developers will make payments in lieu of taxes starting with \$201,000 in the first year and increasing to \$1.9 million by the 20th year.

Jefferson Plaza will include two complexes -- one with 115 apartments and more than 13,000 square feet of retail expected to be complete in 16 months and another with 39 apartments and 6,200 square feet of retail that Ekstrand said will be done in a year.

Nassau County and Farmingdale officials ceremonially broke ground Wednesday on a 154-unit housing and retail project near the village's Long Island Rail Road station -- the centerpiece of a plan to revitalize the downtown area.

The privately funded project, known as Jefferson Plaza, has been planned for seven years and is expected to cost \$59 million.

"This will be the linchpin for our transit-oriented development," said Farmingdale Village Mayor

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"This is a model for Long Island," said Eric Alexander, director of Vision Long Island, a smart growth group. "This project is going to be the talk of Long Island today and moving forward."

The mixed-use project is expected to add 100 construction jobs and 10 full-time jobs, primarily retail positions.

Members of the Carpenters Local Union 290 protested the ceremony, chanting for "local work" although they declined to elaborate on their concerns.

Bartone said half of the project's contracts went to organized labor and that he was still negotiating with Local 290.

"I don't understand why they are protesting," he said.

[< back to article](#)