

Nassau backs Farmingdale mixed-use project

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Nassau County Tuesday night endorsed a multimillion-dollar retail and housing development plan in Farmingdale that advocates say will revitalize the area's downtown.

The Nassau County Industrial Development Agency approved the plan, which gives Bartone Properties of Farmingdale, 20 years' worth of tax breaks for a \$38 million transit-oriented, mixed-use development project.

The developers will make payments in lieu of taxes starting with \$201,000 in the first year and increasing to about \$1.9 million by the 20th year.

Ralph Ekstrand, mayor of Farmingdale Village, described the plan as the "centerpiece of our transit-oriented development" and "the start of revitalized building" in the village.

A vote on the project, to be called The Plaza at Farmingdale, was postponed four times by the IDA. Last week, the Farmingdale Village board passed a resolution urging the IDA to act.

Bartone Properties, in a partnership with TDI, of Irving, Texas, will develop two complexes -- one across the street, another adjacent to the Long Island Rail Road Station in Farmingdale. The larger one contains 115 apartments and 13,200 square feet of retail space; across the street, another mixed-use building calls for 6,200 square feet of retail space and 39 apartments.

Bartone has said construction will begin in the next two months and take 18 months to complete. It is expected to add at least 100 construction jobs and 10 full-time jobs, mostly retail positions, he said.

The developers said they hope to draw young professionals and empty nesters. Rents for the units will be priced from \$2,000 to more than \$3,000 a month, Bartone said. Ten percent of the units are reserved for affordable or workforce housing, he said.

The IDA's executive director, Joseph J. Kearney, said, "The need for housing to keep young people in Nassau and on Long Island is critical."

County Executive Edward Mangano issued a statement of support, adding that the project would "generate economic activity throughout eastern Nassau County and the Route 110 Corridor."

Ekstrand said the project will "take dilapidated warehouses and turn them into drop-dead gorgeous rental units."

"Transit-oriented development, developing and increasing density," he added, "that's the future of Long Island."

