

# Suffolk lawmakers to approve key sewer expansion



Rendering of Ronkonkoma Hub

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The Suffolk County Legislature is expected to approve the long-awaited sewer expansion project Tuesday that will serve the Ronkonkoma Hub, the Village of Islandia and other areas around Long Island MacArthur Airport.

The \$26.37 million sewer project had been held up for nearly a year by Islandia officials who wanted guarantees and compensation for allowing some of the expansion's sewer pipes to be installed under its roads.

Eventually, the county negotiated an agreement that gives the village 200,000 gallons per day of the project's 1.5 million gallons of daily capacity.

The \$650 million Ronkonkoma Hub project, which aims to redevelop some 50 acres around the Ronkonkoma Long Island Rail Road station and was the main impetus for the sewer expansion, will be able to use 400,000 gallons a day. The bulk of the daily capacity of the new system, about 900,000 gallons, will be available to the airport and its surrounding commercial industrial area.

"This is not just a connection for the Ronkonkoma Hub, but a regionally important project that will allow for the long overdue connection of MacArthur airport and the surrounding area," Peter Scully, deputy county executive for administration, said via email. "This is a major regional improvement and a top priority for the Town of Islip and the MacArthur Business Alliance."

East Setauket-based Tritec, the master developer for the Ronkonkoma Hub, will foot most of the bill for the new sewer project. Tritec will pay about \$19 million in capital contributions and connection fees, according to county documents. A \$4 million grant from the Empire State Development Corp. will further offset the county's costs for the expansion.

Once approved by the legislature, the project will be put out to bid, according to John Cameron of Woodbury-based Cameron Engineering, which is designing the expansion of the county's Sewer District No. 3. The project includes a new pumping station that will be built on property provided by Tritec at no cost to the county.

Tritec principal Bob Coughlan said that after the sewer expansion project is approved, construction is likely to begin on the first phase of the Ronkonkoma Hub redevelopment in May or June. That first phase will be six buildings on the east side of the project area that will hold 489 rental apartments. The project's second phase consists of 65,000 square feet of retail stores, 60,000 square feet of office space, 260 rental apartments and three parking garages of three stories each that will add 650 parking spaces.