

Suffolk approves Ronkonkoma development pact

By: [David Winzelberg](#) June 5, 2018



Rendering of proposed Ronkonkoma arena development / Photo courtesy of Cameron Engineering

The Suffolk County Legislature voted Tuesday to approve a memorandum of agreement for redeveloping about 86 acres of municipal-owned property on the south side of the Ronkonkoma Long Island Rail Road station.

The MOA was approved 14-3 with 1 abstention.

A development team headed by Jones Lang LaSalle will become the master developer for the project that would transform the site, now mostly used for commuter parking, into a mix of entertainment, hospitality and medical research uses.

The JLL team, which includes a Chicago-based investment group called Ronkonkoma Vision Project, Woodbury-based Cameron Engineering, Crawford Architects and venue management company Spectra, was selected by the county and the Town of Islip in April after answering a request for qualifications to reimagine the site located between the LIRR station and MacArthur Airport.

The development group has initially proposed a \$1 billion concept that would create an arena, a convention center, 360,000 square feet of office space (including an 80,000-square-foot medical research facility), a 500-room hotel and 90,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space. The total project as first pitched would create 1.69 million square feet of development.



Ronkonkoma LIRR parking lot to be redeveloped / Photo by David Winzelberg

The development site includes about 40 acres of county-owned parking lot currently leased to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, a 6-acre town-owned parcel just east of the parking lot and a 40-acre Islip-owned compost site south of Railroad Avenue.

According to the MOA, the development team for the south side will have eight months to come up with a final plan and “complete due diligence activities with respect to the feasibility” of the project, including “financial, market, construction, environmental, property ownership, and other aspects of the project.” If the developer decides to go forward with the plan, the term of the MOA can be extended for six more months.

Redevelopment of the property has been supported by the Ronkonkoma Civic Association which conducted a visioning of the site with the Regional Plan Association that began in 2016. The redevelopment on the south side of the LIRR station is aimed at complementing the ongoing Ronkonkoma Hub project, where Tritec Real Estate is bringing 1,450 residential units, 195,000 square feet of retail space and 360,000 square feet of office and commercial space to about 50 acres on the north side of the train station.

Long Island Association Vice President Matthew Cohen sent a letter of support for the proposed development to the Suffolk Legislature before the Tuesday vote.

“With development on the north side of the Long Island Rail Road tracks and renewed efforts to enhance the LIRR station and realize the full economic potential of the airport, the south side of the Ronkonkoma Hub could be a transformative project for the entire region...thus the LIA supports the continued study of Jones Lang LaSalle’s proposal for the south side of the LIRR tracks in order to determine what the market will support there,” Cohen wrote.