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The vision

The plan for the revitalization of the Glen Cove shoreline, anchored by three 10-story buildings, includes a 250-suite hotel, office and retail space and boat launches.



SOURCE: RFR GLEN ISLE PARTNERS LLC

NEWSDAY

Answers due on shore project

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Developer readies environmental data on long-stalled Glen Cove site

BY NOMMAN MERCHANT

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For years, Glen Cove has wanted to turn a former Superfund cleanup site near its shoreline — a largely deserted strip blighted by weeds and abandoned factories — into a bustling residential and commercial area.

A proposal to redevelop the land along Glen Cove Creek would add rental units and condominiums, a hotel, space

for offices and retail stores, and parks and walkways for the public. The proposed development, known as Glen Isle, has the support of Mayor Ralph Suzzzi and the city's community and industrial development agencies, which already own most of the land.

Working through issues

But five years after a developer first presented the plan, the shovels aren't close to hitting the ground. The current developer, RXR Glen Isle Partners, and city planning officials continue to work through myriad issues involved in such a large-scale project, which has drawn skepticism for its size and reach even as it is touted as having the potential to transform the city.

RXR drawings depict a striking transformation along Glen Cove Creek: three 10-story brick-and-glass buildings topped with trees, rising above nearby Hempstead Harbor. Green space would connect the waterfront with Glen Cove's downtown.

"The project has reached the stage at which the developer is preparing detailed responses to questions posed by Glen Cove, various agencies and community groups about the project's environmental impact. Once the city accepts RXR's responses, it will prepare a final environmental impact statement, which is expected to be released by the end of August, said Kelly Morris, who heads the city's community and industrial

development agencies.

The 56-acre plan for Glen Isle calls for 860 housing units, a 250-suite hotel, 50,000 square feet of office space, 25,000 square feet of retail space and 85 boat slips. Many of the housing units would be split between two buildings, with a hotel in the third.

Adding to tax rolls

Construction would also include about 19 acres of public space, according to an RXR site plan, with parks, a restored beach and an esplanade connecting different sections. Such public amenities would be built gradually alongside the residential and commercial structures, said Matt Frank, executive vice president of development and design at RXR Realty. "It's all done part

and parcel with the development," he said in an interview.

Suzzzi said the waterfront project would eventually add to the cash-strapped city's tax rolls and make good use of land abandoned by industrial companies. "It really opens up an isolated and polluted piece of land for everyone," he said. "We're not going to replace it with tungsten factories," which were among the former businesses on the site. "We'll continue to build on it with what fits in."

But many say Glen Isle would strain city services and the environment and is still too big in relation to its surroundings — in 2008, the plan's four 16-story buildings were reduced to three small-

See GLEN COVE on G19

Environmental data due on Glen Cove development plan

GLEN COVE from G20

er structures.

"There's no question that the [public] amenities will serve the community, and some of them will be very good," said Carol DiPaolo of the Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor. "But we would hope that the goal of everyone would be to end up with something in harmony with the local character of the communities."

High-density development

DiPaolo said the buildings could pave the way for other large-scale projects near the water.

"Over the last 15 years, there's really been a dramatic turnaround on Hempstead Harbor," she said. "We don't want to see all of those improvements really wasted . . . in terms of the risks associated with high-density development."

She also questioned RXR's estimates of how much traffic and pollution the project would create. "We feel it has not been considered fully," she said.

DiPaolo said she'd like to see the size of the project reduced even more, something Frank said he doesn't foresee.

Frank estimates that if the project wins approval, completion would take seven to 10 years after groundbreaking. Still to be determined is what parts would be built first and which public amenities would accompany them. And with the ongoing recession and tight credit markets, some components might wait until they can be built "to the market's needs," Frank said.

"You're not going to build the hotel until the hotel market returns, until there's a need for the facility in the area, and until the markets recover enough to finance it," he said.