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## Lighthouse plans filed

By David Winzelberg

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As workmen hoisted the RexCorp Plaza Christmas tree, Scott Rechler and Charles Wang put their \$2 billion mixed-used Lighthouse project in the hands of the Town of Hempstead.

Smiling from behind a large conference table surrounded by renderings of condos, shops, and a brand new arena for the New York Islanders, Rechler said the group was filing with the town 13 months ahead of Nassau County's 2009 deadline in the development plan agreement. And he expects the town won't drag out the permitting and re-zoning process on a plan of this scale and uniqueness.

"This project is getting the attention it needs," Rechler said. "We should be in and out of there in 18 months." If all goes according to plan, construction could start in 2009.

The newest incarnation of the Lighthouse plan allows more consideration for automobile traffic, a concern raised by the group's steering committee, according to RexCorp vice president Matt Frank. Thousands of parking spaces are now slated to sit below or partially below ground level throughout the 150-acre site, providing easy access for residents, shoppers and visitors.

The Lighthouse group has proposed 2,300 units of housing that will include about 20 percent for next generation residents. Along with housing, the plan calls for a million square feet of office space, 500,000 square feet of retail space, a transformed Coliseum that can hold up to 20,000 fans for concerts, an indoor sports complex with ice rinks, basketball courts and a health club, a 30-plus story hotel with luxury condos, 250,000 square feet of conference and convention space, and a park.

Rechler said the Lighthouse project would be a green one and the largest LEEDs certified development ever on Long Island. It is also very much a public/private partnership, as the county owns 77 acres of the Uniondale site. The finished project is expected to generate \$60 million a year in property tax revenue, 16,000 construction jobs and thousands of permanent jobs.

Traffic flow within and outside of the Lighthouse site is the next hurdle that developers and engineers will have to overcome. Rechler said he is pushing for some type of trolley system to transport people within the complex and possibly to railroad stations nearby.

Although the new design for the Coliseum should survive the approvals process, the rest of the plans, designed by DDG and the Spector Group, could morph quite a bit depending on input from the town, Rechler said.

In preparation for the new project, a \$40 million renovation of the Long Island Marriott is already underway, featuring new rooms, lobby, conference areas and a new façade.

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