

Syosset Central School District

Dr. Thomas L. Rogers
Superintendent of Schools

Board of Education

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April 26, 2018

Dear Syosset Resident,

The Town of Oyster Bay is reviewing an application to create a mixed-use development on a 93-acre parcel located on the northeast corner of Robbins Lane and the Long Island Expressway service road (the current Town of Oyster Bay Highway Department and former Cerro Wire properties). In order to allow public comment on the developer's proposal, the Town of Oyster Bay will conduct its meeting on May 1 at 6 p.m. in the Syosset High School auditorium. The Town's meeting will be open to the public.

The proposed development includes:

- 625 units of residential housing ranging from 1 to 3 bedrooms;
- A mix of retail shopping, office space, restaurants, a hotel, a theater, and an approximately 30-acre park.

In November 2016, the developer outlined its plans in a public presentation to the Syosset Board of Education. Subsequently, the Board engaged its own enrollment consultant to project the increased district enrollment resulting from the proposed project.

On March 27, 2018, the Town accepted the developer's "Draft Environmental Impact Statement" (DEIS) as complete which then initiated a public comment period. The DEIS details the developer's assessment of the impact on the surrounding area, including the school district. The public comment period concludes on June 4, 2018, and the school district is actively engaged in the process of preparing written comments for submission to the Town.

In advance of these formal comments, we want to keep you informed of our preliminary review and the process we will follow to prepare our written comments as outlined by the school attorney at the public Board of Education meetings in January and April of 2018:

- **Enrollment Impact:** the developer projects an enrollment increase of 243 students. The school district's current projection of 355 students (October 2017) is significantly higher.
- **Financial Impact:** A project of this scope will impact school district costs and revenues:
 1. Facilities – The school district does not have sufficient space, specifically at the elementary level to house the additional students, and would have to consider expansion to accommodate the growth;
 2. Operating Expenses – The school district anticipates increased operating costs to serve the additional students.
 3. Revenue – While new development should result in additional taxable property, it is unclear how much new revenue would flow to the school district because of the State's property tax cap and/or if those taxes are abated through the PILOT (Payments in Lieu of Taxes) process.

- **Construction Activities and Impact:** According to the developer, construction could occur over the course of 5 years. This protracted period of construction has the potential to disturb the neighboring South Grove Elementary School. We are evaluating the adequacy of the developer's proposed plans to mitigate dust, noise, and traffic during construction, as well as any protections planned in the event that contaminants are disturbed and the impact that these actions may have on the school district.
- **Environmental Safety** – Although not within the school district's purview or expertise, given the scale of this project and the property's historical context, we would want assurances that the project would not expose students, staff, and residents to environmental hazards. An independent evaluation of the site and potential risks would therefore be an important next step.

To prepare our formal comments, we have asked our consultants and representatives to review applicable sections of the DEIS, including the traffic studies and construction activities sections. We are updating our enrollment projections and we will be reviewing the developer's potential tax revenue projections with State and County representatives. Residents interested in following our efforts can find a dedicated page on the District website:

www.syossetschools.org/district/syosset_park_study

The ultimate decision on this project rests with the Town of Oyster Bay.

While the Board has no formal approval role, we believe we have an obligation to thoroughly outline the implications of this proposed development to the school district and to keep the public informed of our efforts. We will be analyzing this not just as Board trustees, but more importantly as fellow residents, parents, and taxpayers with a shared concern for safety, fiscal responsibility, and quality of life in order to represent the best interests of the school district and community. The Board and administration are determined to follow a methodical process to ensure we've considered all aspects of this project before expressing our views to the Town.

For the Board:

Dr. Michael Cohen, President	Mr. Andrew Feldman, Trustee
Ms. Tracy Frankel, Vice President	Mr. Rob Gershon, Trustee
Ms. Carol Cheng, Trustee	Ms. Anna Levitan, Trustee
Mr. Christopher Di Filippo, Trustee	Ms. Susan Parker, Trustee

Sincerely,



Dr. Thomas Rogers, Superintendent