



Lynbrook movie theater expansion plan gets IDA tax breaks

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EXTERIOR CONCEPT
REGAL CINEMAS & RPX - LYNBROOK, NY
VIEW #2



An artist rendering of the proposed \$32 million multiplex that Regal Entertainment Group plans to build in Lynbrook. Photo Credit: Blumenfeld Development Group

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A proposed \$32 million project to replace a nearly 100-year-old Lynbrook movie theater in the village's downtown has been approved for tax benefits by the Nassau County Industrial Development Agency.

The project -- approved by Lynbrook officials in May but facing objections from owners of a nearby independent movie house -- calls for the replacement of the current six-screen theater at 321 Merrick Rd. Regal Entertainment Group plans to build an 80,000-square-foot multiplex in its place, complete with plush recliner seats and 13 screens.

The new theater is being developed for Regal by Syosset-based Blumenfeld Development Group and the Prusik Group of Manhattan.

Benefits approved by the IDA Tuesday night include a sales tax exemption of up to \$567,000 on the purchase of construction materials and equipment; a mortgage recording tax exemption of more than \$284,000; and a 20-year payment-in-lieu-of-taxes agreement that freezes taxes for the first two years and then raises them incrementally for the remainder of the term.

Demolition of the old theater and construction of the new one will take about two years, said David Blumenfeld, vice president of the development company.



The United Artists movie theater at 321 Merrick Rd. in Lynbrook in a Google Street View image from 2012. Photo Credit: Google

"This project is incredibly important to the economic revitalization of the downtown area of the Village of Lynbrook," IDA executive director Joseph J. Kearney said Tuesday. "It is unusual, frankly, to see the support from the village government, the village chamber of commerce, the village residents, and in particular, the school district."

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Not all are on board with the plan though.

Anne Stampfel, co-owner of Malverne Cinema, located 1 1/2 miles from the Lynbrook theater, said the project's IDA approval will hurt her small business, which shows independent and foreign films.

"They're leaning on the taxpayers of this county to help them do this project, which will . . . hurt me tremendously," Stampfel said Wednesday evening after learning of the approval.

After the January closing of Sunrise Multiplex Cinemas in Valley Stream and the loss of one multiplex in Rockville Centre, the new theater will serve a larger

territory. While retail operations like the theater are ineligible for IDA benefits under state law, the Regal proposal is being granted benefits through a "tourist destination" exemption.

Business



Before taking a final vote on the project, IDA chairman Timothy Williams talked about Stampfel's concerns. "I think it's important that we always consider the mom and pops," Williams said, before adding a contingency that Regal management make a good-faith effort to reach out to the Malverne business. "I'm not saying anything has to come out of that discussion . . . You never know what will come out of a cup of coffee," he said.

Stampfel said she would be open to a discussion but is doubtful of a positive outcome. "I would definitely go to the table, but I don't know what they're going to bring to the table," she said.