

# \$32M Hilton Garden Inn approved for Port Washington

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A \$32 million Hilton Garden Inn has received local planning approval to be built in Port Washington, the first branded hotel in northwestern Nassau County.

The 165-room hotel is scheduled to break ground in October and is expected to be completed in early 2017, said Paul Amoruso of Melville Hospitality, one of the developers.

The hotel, at 3 Harbor Park Dr., will take the place of an abandoned sports facility in the Harbor View Corporate Park, which houses the headquarters for consumer research firm NPD Group and filtration systems maker Pall Corp., one of the largest publicly traded companies on Long Island.

"One of the strong points of this property is we'll get nice corporate demand generated, coupled with social business between all the golf courses in the area," said Amoruso, who has developed and owns several hotels locally -- including the Hilton Garden Inn and Homewood Suites, both in Plainview.

Amoruso is aiming for the client base to be 60 percent business travelers and 40 percent leisure. The final site plan approval for the Hilton Garden Inn was granted last week by the Town of North Hempstead, and Amoruso said he is in the process of securing building permits.

The hotel has also applied for tax assistance from the Nassau County Industrial Development Agency. Amoruso said he expects it will create 70 permanent jobs and 350 temporary construction jobs.

Joe Kearney, the executive director of the Nassau IDA, said the project is not scheduled to go before the board yet, but he thought the hotel will be well received.

"I know in the past, for a lot of business up there, hotel accommodations weren't convenient," he said.

The new Hilton Garden Inn may, however, draw corporate customers away from other nearby hotels if the number of companies on Long Island remains static, said Mike Johnston, a principal at Plainview-based Concorde Hotel Group, a hospitality-focused consultancy.

"All the hotels are just taking customers from each other, unfortunately," he said.

Four hotels opened in Long Island in 2013. None are scheduled to open this year -- a rare occurrence, Johnston said.