

LONG ISLAND **TOWNS** Only in Newsday

## Babylon zoning plan could add more than 1,000 homes along Route 110 corridor

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The town is considering a new zoning district for a stretch of East Farmingdale that ultimately could mean the addition of more than 1,000 residential units. NewsdayTV's Virginia Huie reports. Credit: Newsday/Photojournalist: John Paraskevas & Drew Singh

**By Denise M. Bonilla**[denise.bonilla@newsday.com](mailto:denise.bonilla@newsday.com)[denisebonilla](#) Updated January 16, 2026

The Town of Babylon is proposing the creation of an overlay zoning district in East Farmingdale that could lead to the construction of more than 1,000 residential units in what's now a shopping center parking lot and on nearby properties, potentially transforming part of the Route 110 corridor.

The overlay district would encompass five properties totaling 112 acres on the east side of Route 110 near Conklin Street. It would run north past Picone Boulevard and south to the southern property line of the Airport Plaza shopping center. The properties are now zoned light industrial, but under the overlay district, buildings with hundreds of residential units, such as apartments and townhomes, could be built on site.

"This is the culmination of several years of fits and starts" of attempts to redevelop the area, Babylon Town Supervisor Rich Schaffer said.

## New zoning plan

- Would allow for multi-residence and mixed-use housing.
- Minimum lot size is 10 acres.
- Maximum of 40 residential units per acre or 32 units per acre if mixed use.
- Buildings heights can reach five stories but must comply with Republic Airport's runway protection zone height limitations.
- Twenty percent of the units must be deemed affordable housing.

Schaffer estimated there would be "under 1,400 units" built, but an environmental review process would determine how many units can be constructed.

One of the five properties is owned by the Long Island Power Authority, and one, just to the north of Conklin Street, is owned by the state Department of Transportation. Gov. Kathy Hochul announced last month the latter property, which is believed to be contaminated from an aircraft painting and plating company that was on the site until the late 1980s, will be cleaned up and used as a foundation for nearly 500 townhomes and apartments.

According to the town, the site farthest north is used for several industrial businesses, including a concrete recycling company, and is owned by JPD United Inc. The southernmost sites are where the Showcase Cinema de Lux movie theater sits, which records indicate is owned by Paramount Skydance, and Airport Plaza, just north of [Republic Airport](#), owned by Kimco Realty Corp. None of the owners of those three parcels responded to requests for comment.

If approved by the town board, the overlay district would be a first for Babylon. While any housing proposals would still need town planning board approval, the district would allow the owners to have housing complexes on their property without seeking rezoning.

## Past efforts have fallen short

The overlay district proposal, which town officials said is in its infancy stage, is the latest in what has been [a series of plans](#) for the area proposed in the last two decades. Among them was a 2005 "vision plan" that called for about 41 acres of new mixed-use development.

In 2010, the town commissioned a transit-oriented development report exploring potential use of 120 acres. That report led to a proposal for rezoning nearly 109 acres to allow for dense, mixed-use buildings potentially rising more than 60 feet and containing nearly 2,700 apartments.

There was a loud outcry from residents, and in 2018, the town scrapped those plans. A town board resolution passed at that time to "take no further action" stated "large scale residential development and the potential associated traffic volumes ... is incongruous with existing light industrial uses and the existing airport use" in the area.

Schaffer said officials took the pushback from 2018 "that it was too large" into consideration when coming up with the overlay district, which refocuses on areas east of Route 110 away from homes.

"We felt we had an opportunity to hear them, make it smaller and also piggyback on the state finally saying it wanted to deal with an issue that hasn't been dealt with for 30 years," Schaffer said.

The new plan addresses two outstanding issues, the supervisor said: the need to clean up and develop the contaminated state site and the need to address [the housing crisis on Long Island](#).

"This is a main corridor for the Island and there's a lot of opportunity that over the last 40 years has been wasted," Schaffer said. "It's been kind of a hodgepodge."



There's plenty of parking available at Showcase Cinema de Lux movie theater.  
Credit: Newsday/Thomas A. Ferrara

### **Less need for parking**

Babylon officials said reductions in the number of people who go to the movies, as well as to retail shopping centers, has led to less need for parking.

The underlying zoning that exists on the properties will remain in place, town senior planner Matt Esposito said, but the overlay district will allow for multiple residences and mixed-use — such as retail with apartments above — on those underused parking spaces. Right now, mixed-use is largely associated with downtown areas, Esposito said. Allowing these “fill-in” housing complexes will help meet housing needs while also creating more foot traffic for businesses, he said.

“We’re trying to strengthen our existing assets — the movie theater and shopping center — but those need customers,” Esposito said.

The overlay district will allow for 40 residential units per acre or 32 units per acre if mixed-use, with a required minimum lot size of 10 acres.

Buildings can rise as high as five stories but must comply with Republic Airport’s runway protection zone height limitations. Twenty percent of the units must be deemed affordable housing. Each property might have additional requirements and restrictions depending on the housing proposal location, said Kevin Bonner, Babylon's deputy chief of staff.

The town is also requiring that for each unit of housing being built, \$3,000 must be placed by the developer into a community benefits fund earmarked for East Farmingdale.

"It's to make sure that any strain on resources, especially traffic, we have a fund to start with," Bonner said.

### Testing the waters

Town officials, feeling the overlay district is more palatable to residents, last month tested the waters with presentations to civic associations and the Farmingdale Chamber of Commerce. At the meetings, it was revealed Kimco Realty Corp. is proposing a rental apartment complex partly on its property and partly on that owned by Paramount Skydance, situated between the movie theater and a Stew Leonard's grocery store.

Kimco spokeswoman Jennifer Maisch declined to answer questions about the housing proposal, but town officials said the 10.7-acre lot size would allow for up to 372 units under the overlay district rules.

Farmingdale Chamber of Commerce president Joseph Garcia said online shopping has made things challenging for brick-and-mortar businesses. There is now an "ocean of empty asphalt" in Airport Plaza that doesn't generate any economic activity, he said, but small businesses continue to thrive in downtown areas. Garcia said allowing housing and a new customer base through the overlay district is exciting. "The best way to help support small businesses, quite frankly, is to have more people live in the areas where they

operate," he said.



Farmingdale Chamber of Commerce president Joseph Garcia amid what he refers to as “ocean of empty asphalt” in Airport Plaza.

Garcia said having affordable housing near businesses also helps those who work there.

“Employees need a place to live, and small businesses may not pay as high as jobs in Manhattan, or telework,” he said. “You might be willing to work for a less-competitive wage if your job is 3½ minutes from your house ... so it does help small businesses create some competitive advantages in the hiring and labor market.”

The town will first have to start a State Environmental Quality Review Act study on the overlay district and its impact if properties are built out to maximum scale. Bonner said the review will simultaneously study the state property housing proposal as well as the one by Kimco. That process, which Bonner said will likely start next month, could take nine to 12 months, including public hearings.

The overlay district then must be approved by the town board. Any proposed projects would then go through the same process as others elsewhere in the town, such as planning board site plan approval and zoning board approval for any variances, Bonner said.

### **Traffic worries**

East Farmingdale civic leader Nancy Cypser said she and her members are concerned about the tax impact should developers seek tax breaks through the town Industrial Development Agency. She said they are also worried about increased traffic at the already-congested Conklin/Route 110 intersection.

“It’s a bad intersection, especially at rush hour,” she said. “Somebody just needs to say at some point, ‘We’ve got to make a park, a green space, because we can’t add anything else here.’ ”



East Farmingdale civic leader Nancy Cypser has concerns about an impact on tax collections and traffic. Credit: Newsday/Drew Singh

Cypser noted the town last year approved Acadia Republic Farmingdale LLC's plan to [build a trucking logistics and storage yard](#), along with two warehouses, across from the proposed overlay area, on the west side of Route 110. She said any impact study for the overlay district needs to include outside areas such as that site.

Cypser said with the popularity of streaming services, she feared the movie theater parcel is vulnerable. Because the property is zoned industrial, more warehouses could come in, she said, which residents oppose — so adding housing may prevent that from happening.

"I think that the town is doing the best that they can to try and figure out what to do with this basically white elephant that they've got here," she said.

*NewsdayTV's Virginia Huie contributed to this story.*



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