



# Construction NEWS

## Legoland Project in Orange Wins Key Zoning OK

By JOHN JORDAN

GOSHEN, NY—The \$500-million LEGOLAND New York project proposed by Merlin Entertainments secured key approvals by a 4-1 vote of the Goshen Town Board recently that put the development ever closer to breaking ground.

The Town Board approved amendments to the town’s comprehensive plan and zoning law as well as the adoption of Local Law No. 5 that would allow a theme park use in the town of Goshen.

One of the few remaining hurdles for the project will be to secure site plan approval from the Town of Goshen. Merlin Entertainments has stated that it would like to begin construction later this year or early in 2018 pending approvals, and open the theme park complex in 2019.

“We are thrilled to be moving forward with the next steps for the LEGOLAND New



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York project,” said Phil Royle, LEGOLAND New York’s head of project & community relations. “If successful, we hope that LEGOLAND New York will become a valued and trusted neighbor to people who live and work here and who own a business here in the future. We are committed

to making a long-lasting, positive difference in Goshen and surrounding communities.”

The proposal for the LEGOLAND New York resort includes a theme park with more than 50 rides, shows and attractions and a 250-room LEGOLAND Hotel. The theme park will be geared toward

families with children aged two to 12 and is expected to attract between 1.5 million and 2.5 million visitors each year.

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tion jobs and 500 full-time jobs and 300 part-time jobs once operational.

Maureen Halahan, president and CEO of the Orange County Partnership, said of the Town Board’s approval vote, “It has been a pleasure to work with the Town of Goshen and I applaud them for their vision and diligence. Bringing Legoland into Orange County will increase future opportunities to attract major industry and tourist destinations.”

Merlin Entertainments had originally sought to build the project on the former Letchworth Village property in Haverstraw in Rockland County, but abandoned that plan after being spurned early on by local officials.

In December 2016, LEGOLAND New York was awarded \$3 million in funding commitments from New York State’s Consolidated Funding Application program. Previously the project secured \$3.1

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million in committed CFA funding in 2014 and another \$1 million in 2015. It should be noted that the \$7.1 million in CFA funding commitments for the project thus far have yet to be funded and forwarded to Merlin since the project has not secured approvals as yet from the Town of Goshen. The project may also secure additional funding from this year's round of CFA awards that will be announced later this year.

To mitigate expected traffic impacts on adjoining Route 17, Merlin Entertainments has proposed approximately \$40 million in infrastructure improvements, including the construction of a new Exit 125, which would lead traffic directly into the theme park.

Opponents of the project, represented by local attorney Michael Sussman, have previously told CONSTRUCTION NEWS that they intend to file suit to block construction of the project if and when the project secures all necessary approvals. Mr. Sussman reiterated that position in a recent article in the *Middletown Times-Herald Record*.

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