

# OurView

## Raceway, development projects bode well for Yonkers

That Yankees sweep of the Boston Red Sox last week has us thinking baseball this late in the summer. And to use some baseball imagery, Yonkers is loading the bases with a trio of projects that promises to score thousands of new jobs and millions of dollars in badly needed taxes for the Hudson River city's economy.

Headed for home is the \$225 million transformation of Yonkers Raceway into a video gaming machine venue.

The project's first phase opens Sept. 20, when the raceway welcomes back those horses and drivers and everything else connected with harness racing. When completed in December, the new Empire City at Yonkers Raceway will offer up to 5,500 video gaming machines — 2,000 more could soon follow — harness racing and simulcasting, as well as several restaurants, bars and an entertainment venue.

"By the end of this year we will be the third-largest video gaming machine facility that there is in the world," raceway President Timothy J. Rooney declares.

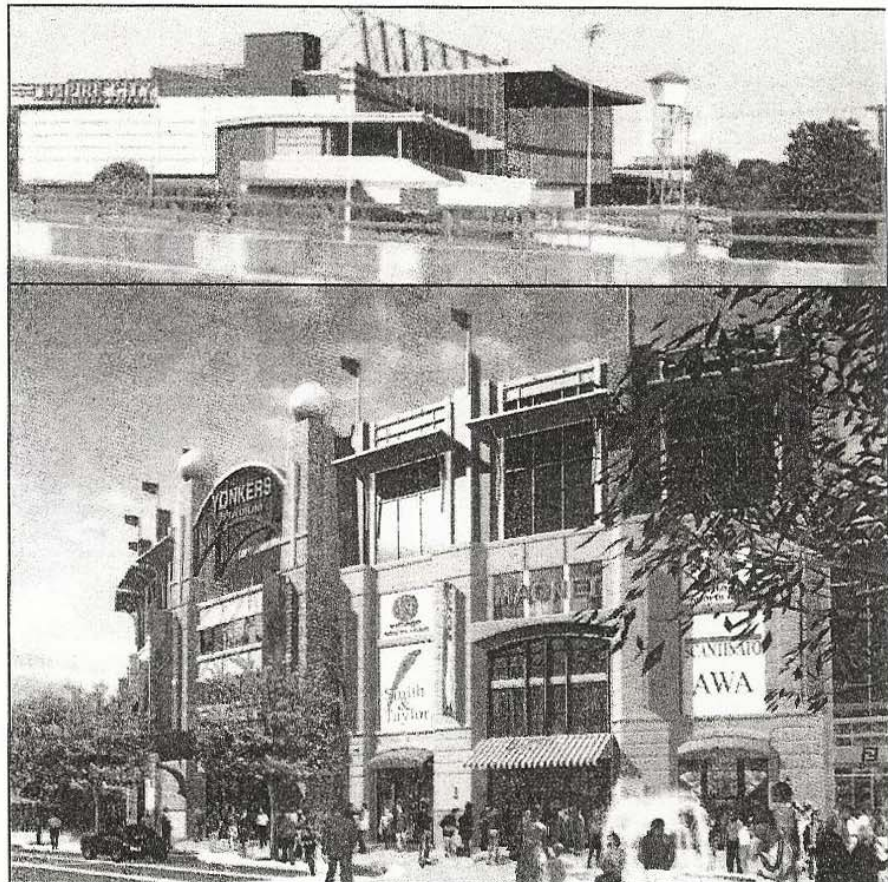
You can learn much more about the project and get to know the man behind the project, Timothy J. Rooney, by reading our exclusive report starting on the front page.

### THE DEAL ON RIDGE HILL

In scoring position is the \$600 million Ridge Hill Village campus proposed for the 81-acre Ridge Hill by Forest City Ratner Cos. The Brooklyn developer has proposed building 1.3 million square feet of retail space; 1,000 housing units, 13.5 percent of which would be reserved for affordable housing; a 175-room hotel and conference center; and entertainment venues.

Having backtracked from his earlier opposition to Ridge Hill Village, City Council President Chuck Schorr Lesnick is well under way with crafting a deal designed to address longstanding traffic and quality-of-life objections the project has generated from worried neighbors and others.

The deal offers one exciting prospect — that of recreational boating on the former Grassy Sprain Reservoir. Sarah Lawrence College and the Yonkers Rowing and Paddle Club envision sharing a boathouse near the reservoir.



Lesnick has hardly lined up the proverbial ducks yet. County Executive Andrew J. Spano opposes the park swap, and it's hard to imagine the county Board of Legislators bucking him. County support is crucial to lining up the state legislative support needed to dedicate the parkland being swapped.

### SFC REACHES FIRST BASE

Rounding out the baseball metaphor, Louis R. Cappelli and two partners will be reaching first base in October when they submit site plans for the first phase of that \$3 billion extreme makeover they have planned for the city's commercial areas. A draft environmental report will follow in November.

Cappelli, Baltimore-based Struever Bros. Eccles & Rouse Inc. and Fidelco Realty Group of Millburn, N.J., envision a 1.7 million-square-foot complex in the 10-acre "Chicken Island" section of downtown. Plans by Struever Cappelli Fidelco L.L.C. call for a "River

Park Center" to include a 6,500-seat minor-league ballpark, 800 apartments, 450,000 square feet of retail space, a 15-screen, 85,000-square-foot movie theater, 5,000 square feet of restaurants and 175,000 square feet of office space.

That's just the half of phase one. SFC also plans an additional 150,000 square feet of office space; a 150-key hotel, possibly a Marriott Residence Inn; and an as-yet-undisclosed number of new apartments on waterfront parcels H and I.

So far SFC has navigated Yonkers' treacherous politics with aplomb, winning even a few supporters for its concepts vocal enough to say so at a recent Scenic Hudson forum. SFC will have to show in its formal submission what it has so far promised — that it will be sensitive to public concerns about building heights and waterfront access.

Whether it does will go a long way to answering whether SFC's project will be the home run Yonkers so badly needs.