

LONG ISLAND / NASSAU

Las Vegas Sands' \$4B Nassau casino proposal takes next step



Las Vegas Sands has submitted a land-use application to the Town of Hempstead for zoning changes that would allow a casino at the site of the Nassau Coliseum. Credit: The Sands Corp.

By Candice Ferrette

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Las Vegas Sands' proposed \$4 billion casino-resort at the site of the Nassau Coliseum would require a zoning change that creates a new hospitality district in Uniondale, according to land-use plans the company filed with the Town of Hempstead Thursday.

The application — a major step in the process for the Nevada-based company's proposal — seeks to integrate the 72-acre "Nassau Hub" with nearby property that houses the Long Island Marriott hotel.

Current zoning does not permit a casino at the Coliseum site. Sands also could need zoning changes related to height, setbacks and parking.

The application also kick-starts the state's environmental review, commonly known as SEQR, that will include a formal scoping process, a draft environmental impact statement and a final statement that would need approval from the town.

Sands' land-use application shows more details about the size of the proposed development. It would include a 3.7 million-square-foot structure with the following:

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- Two hotels with 1,670 rooms, a spa, fitness center and indoor and outdoor pools
- A casino with 393,726 square feet of entertainment space
- Food and beverage service that would take up 147,929 square feet
- Meeting space of 213,000 square feet
- A 4,500-seat live performance venue
- 60,000 square feet of "public attraction" space
- Three parking garages
- Various support and utility spaces

Hempstead Town spokesman Greg Blower said the application "will be subject to a thorough review."

"The town's assessment will include issues such as noise, traffic, parking, air pollution, and the ability of our infrastructure to handle the sewage generated at the site, as well as the impacts of the project on our sole source aquifer," Blower said. "The Town Board will consider all the aforementioned issues while focusing on the health and safety of residents, along with the preservation of our suburban quality of life. The review will be conducted with full transparency including public hearings."

Hempstead Town Supervisor Don Clavin, a Republican who is running for reelection in November, did not respond to multiple requests for comment and has not taken a public stance on the project.

Sands officials declined to comment.

The 20-page application seeks to merge the Coliseum and Marriott properties to create a new, "Mitchel Field Integrated Resort District."

"The application will facilitate Petitioner's multibillion-dollar investment and pave the way for the transformative redevelopment of the Premises into a state-of-the-art flagship hospitality, entertainment and casino venue on Long Island," the filing said.

Sands closed last month on a 99-year lease for the Coliseum site, two months after the Nassau County Legislature approved transferring the lease to the company. In return, the county received a one-time, lump sum payment of \$54 million.

The development depends on winning one of three state gaming licenses to operate a commercial casino in the downstate region. The licenses allow Vegas-style gambling with traditional table games such as poker and blackjack.

More than 10 entities have announced plans to bid on a downstate license. State gaming commission officials have said they expect to award them in 2024 or 2025.

Beyond the town approvals, Sands would need support from a local five-member community advisory committee and a state site selection panel.



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Candice Ferrette covers Nassau County government and politics on Long Island. She has been a reporter at Newsday since 2011.

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AN OPEN LETTER CONCERNING THE PROPOSAL FOR A CASINO IN THE NASSAU HUB

We, Trustees of Hofstra University, oppose Las Vegas Sands Corporation's proposal to build a casino in the area surrounding the Nassau Coliseum on Hempstead Turnpike in Nassau County, Long Island. This area is known as the Nassau Hub.

Hofstra has been at its current site for almost 90 years. It has grown from a liberal arts college to a university of over 10,000 students with 180 undergraduate and 190 graduate programs. The University has grown in stature because of its academic programs, including but not limited to those provided by The Lawrence Herbert School of Communication; Frank G. Zarb School of Business; Maurice A. Deane School of Law; Peter S. Kalikow School of Government, Public Policy and International Affairs; Fred DeMatteis School of Engineering and Applied Science; and Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell. Hofstra University employs approximately 2,500 people and is an economic driver for the town, county, and state. The campus is a nationally recognized arboretum and is the only university to have hosted three consecutive U.S. presidential debates.

Hofstra has a long legacy of giving back to the community through programs and activities, including those provided by the Joan and Arnold Saltzman Community Services Center, Center for Civic Engagement, The National Center for Suburban Studies at Hofstra University, and Hofstra Cultural Center. Hofstra undergraduates tutor students in the neighboring public schools and libraries, provide tax assistance to our neighbors in nearby underserved communities, and host public school groups on campus for visits to its museum and for events like Model United Nations and History Day. Hofstra's NCAA Division I student-athletes donate thousands of hours to service in the community each year.

Hofstra students comprise approximately one quarter of the nearly 40,000 students, ranging from preschoolers to graduate students, who attend school either contiguous or in proximity to the Nassau Hub.

The Nassau Hub is an entirely inappropriate location for a casino. It is surrounded by educational institutions from preschool through graduate school, and a diversity of suburban communities that should not be exposed to the increased traffic congestion, crime, economic harm to local businesses, and other negative impacts that a casino development would likely bring. There are other locations in and around New York City to site a casino that are not in such proximity to multiple educational institutions where so many young people live and learn.

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