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## Yonkers Approves Zoning For Old Carpet Mills To Be Reborn As Tourist Spot



Carol Reif 05/17/2016



Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano announces the renaming of the Alexander Smith Carpet Mills as the Carpet Mills Arts District last year. The city has just approved zoning which will allow its warehouses to be converted

**YONKERS, N.Y. -- Hoping to follow in the footsteps of such tony tourist spots as SOHO and Williamsburg, Yonkers has given the thumbs-up to an old factory complex's rebirth as art galleries, restaurants, retail stores, and more.**

The new Carpet Mills Arts District stretches from Lake Avenue on the north to Ashburton Avenue on the south and Nepperhan Avenue on the west to Saw Mill River Road on the east.

Last week, the city approved a zoning change that will allow the vacant warehouses in the district to be converted into commercial operations and event spaces.

The city sees the project not only bringing in new tenants, but generating jobs and more sales tax revenue.

Improving the old building will also, it said, increase their potential as homes for even bigger businesses, such as a medical office or school.

"This area is an undiscovered gem about to explode with art and retail establishments," said Randolph Rose, president of R.J. Rose Realty and a member of the Owners' Coalition.

The coalition of building owners is working to bring the project to fruition, she said.

It recently got a \$500,000 grant from a regional economic council through the Empire State Development Grants Program.

The grant money will be used, Rose said, to improve the exterior of the buildings, signs, lighting, entrance ways and landscaping.

“Yonkers is establishing itself as a destination city for artists to live, work and exhibit, and people are taking notice,” said Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano.

The former Alexander Smith Carpet Mills buildings, which once housed thousands of workers, have so much history and “authentic, raw space,” the mayor added, that they are bound to “become a community for industrial creatives.”

According to Janet T. Langsam, chief executive officer of ArtsWestchester, the arts and cultural sector of the national economy is a \$699 billion industry.

In Westchester alone, she said, arts and culture generate \$156 million in economic impact.

Yonkers’ “investment in the arts is not only a good idea, it's a good business proposition,” Langsam added.

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