

News

Yonkers Carpet Mills Arts District (CMAD) poised to become major destination thanks to approved zoning

Post Date: 05/10/2016 3:55 PM



Yonkers, NY—May 10, 2016 — On Tuesday, May 10, 2016, zoning was officially approved and signed off on by the City of Yonkers to allow the first floor of the Carpet Mills Arts District (CMAD), in Yonkers,

NY, to build out the current vacant, commercialized warehouses that occupied the area into retail store fronts. The approved retail zoning will help allow this historic and artistic area to become a major retail and tourist destination for the city of Yonkers. CMAD 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.

The open store fronts will give space to potential business owners and entrepreneurs to open shops like restaurants and retail establishments, amusements, sports, boutiques, dry cleaners, event space, retail home furnishing stores, art galleries and more. Retail is the first step in improving an area. The City of Yonkers hopes to follow in the footsteps of areas that are now flourishing with art galleries and retail spaces, such as SOHO, Williamsburg, Hoboken, Beacon and Hudson. Additionally, the rezoning project of CMAD will bring in new types of tenants, which will mean more jobs, more sales taxes, upgrades to the area, improvements to the appearance of buildings and the potential for bigger businesses, such as a medical office or a school.

In April 2015, the area, consisting of the former Alexander Smith Carpet Mills, was formally named the Carpet Mills Arts District (CMAD), a milestone that further validated a growing community within Yonkers. Over the years, a group of area building owners, known as the Owners' Coalition, worked toward a change in zoning that would allow for ground-level retail options like restaurants and specialty shops. The group has developed a creative site improvement vision for the district, which promises to solidify and enhance the district's identity in the arts and creative industries—naturally drawing higher end businesses, tenants and patrons to the area.

“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 City of Yonkers voted 100% in favor of this project. The regional economic council also recently gave us a \$500,000 grant to start the process going. Everyone loves the idea.”

The \$500,000 capital grant from the Empire State Development Grants Program is to help revitalize and further the development and renovation of the CMAD area. The funding will be used for exterior improvements to the buildings, including arts destination signage, lighting, entrance ways and landscaping improvements.

“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. “There is so much history and authentic, raw space in the Alexander Smith Carpet Mills buildings -- which once housed over 8,000 industrial workers -- that it lends itself to becoming a community for industrial creatives. Yonkers has become home to an emerging arts scene, and creating an arts district at the once thriving Carpet Mills site is the next step in telling our story.”

“In cities across the Country, the arts are driving tourism, boosting the economy, revitalizing urban centers and incentivizing prosperity. In fact, the arts and cultural sector nationally is a \$699 billion industry which in Westchester generates \$156 million in economic impact. The City of Yonkers' investment in the arts is not only a good idea, it's a good business proposition,” said Janet T. Langsam, CEO, ArtsWestchester.

“The formula is a simple, yet sublime as $E=MC^2$. In our version of that formula, we take ‘C’ for Commerce and combine it with ‘M’ which stands for Music/the Arts/Crafts/Industrial Coops, etc. and add the force multiplier effect of social interaction (the squared part) and what you get is a whole of ‘E’ equals energy,” said Stephen Wagner, a board member at the Yonkers Committee for Smart Development. “The kind of energy that can catalyze serious urban transformation and job creation that can make people who stopped believing things would ever change, become believers.”

CMAD will be the catalyst in creating a new arts area within a fantastic city which recognizes the

5/12/2016 City of Yonkers, NY : News : Yonkers Carpet Mills Arts District (CMAD) poised to become major destination thanks to approved zoning importance of art. As one council member stated in a speech the night zoning was approved: "This a no brainer."



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