

Simone projects could spur local development

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A well-respected developer is leasing space for three projects near Westchester Square, Pelham Bay, and Morris Park that could spark the start of a massive economic renaissance.

In 2010, Simone Development continued to lease space at its flagship Hutchinson Metro Center at 1200-50 Waters Place, as well as in Westchester Square at 2510 Westchester Avenue, which was once a Verizon call-center. In addition, plans are in the works for the former Old London baking plant at 1776 Eastchester Road, which was fully vacated when the company moved all of its operations out-of-state in December 2010.

Recently leases were signed for well over 225,000 square feet of medical space in The Hutchinson Metro Center, including Montefiore Medical Center's orthopedic specialties depart-

ment, Calvary Hospital's administrative offices and an expansion of a lease by Beth Abraham's Comprehensive Care Management Program.

The backup 911 Call Center, which the city is constructing behind the Hutchinson Metro Center, should bring even more enhancements to the sprawling 42-acre complex, said Joseph Kelleher, executive director of the Hutchinson Metro Center for Simone Development.

"The call center, aside from providing the city with a facility that it badly needs, adds 300 to 400 employees to our already exiting population of employees," Kelleher said. "That will enhance overall economic development in the surrounding area, with many of them shopping in the area. In addition, it should enhance security. The Hutchinson Metro Center already has 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week security, but having the call

center here will really take security in the area to a whole other level."

One additional benefit that the Call Center will likely bring, Kelleher said, was the extension of the Bx 21 bus route, that will eventually come down Marconi Street, which will be the access road for both the call center and the Hutchinson Metro Center. Surface mass transit is something that the Metro Center could use, with the nearest bus route being on Waters Place.

"Bringing the Bx 21 down Marconi Street will enhance access to the Hutchinson Metro Center for visitors coming to see doctors at the Metro Center, and for students at Mercy College," Kelleher said.

"We are also continuing to work with Councilman Jimmy Vacca and the Department of Transportation to discuss the agency's findings to create access to the Hutchinson Metro Center coming off the Hutchinson



Photo courtesy of Simone Development

The renovated building at 2510 Westchester Avenue, complete with a new plate glass facade, is already 80% occupied.

River Parkway."

In Westchester Square, Kelleher said that Simone Development has totally renovated what had been a rather institutional looking call center. They installed a brand new facade, as well as

plate-glass windows.

"The building is in a great location, literally at the foot of the steps to Westchester Square," Kelleher stated. "The building is about 80% occupied, so we are running low on space.

It is the first sign of major improvement that is taking place in Westchester Square. This is especially important given the B.I.D. effort, and we are proud to be first."