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The buzz in Fairfield County for business owners and executives - by Marie Maia

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Business owners and executives are continually looking for ways and means to increase their company's revenues, expand their service offerings, multiply market sectors, and/or improve market penetration; and when looking for a center of economic activity, we can always sense the excitement stirring in Fairfield County and Westchester. Take Stamford and Bridgeport for example.

In Stamford with its waterfront and Metro North connection, there are projects in various stages of development from conceptual to final planning – in hospitality, infrastructure, transit-oriented mixed use, residential, corporate, non-profit, and more. The Deco plans include 107 units residential, 5,000 s/f of retail, and underground parking, Washington Blvd. cleared regulatory hurdles in its 14-story office, retail, and parking development, and a marina is envisioned in conjunction with housing on Southfield Ave. In addition, thousands of new residential housing units are planned in multiple developments in the city, Serendipity Labs and Henkel Consumer Goods are both conceiving corporate office projects, the developers of the Atlantic Street hotel continue to work with the city on site plan approvals and design, the municipality will improve some parks, recreation, water pollution control, and intersections, and the Boys and Girls Club hopes to better serve the community with their robust expansion plans.

Bridgeport is also percolating with economic activities. Highlights include sweeping regional impact projects such as the proposed new commuter rail Barnum Station and the Bridgeport Harbor power facility; the redevelopment of Poli Palace, Majestic Theater, and Savoy Hotel; the Warner Company Factory redevelopment into a mixed use residential, retail, and parking; and a new, state-of-the-art, urban campus for New Beginnings Family Academy. Three conceptual residential initiatives appeared in industry-insider publications: Main Street Residential Towers, the YMCA affordable housing rehabilitation, and the phase 3 Golden Hill residential development. Smaller projects within Bridgeport include a medical office building, numerous national and local restaurants with a brewery, scattered retail developments, and a new 2-story Family Vision Center. The city has plans to build a pedestrian bridge, improve signaling on some city streets, and expand their Transit Authority facilities and the Hampton Inn at Steelpointe Harbor is still in conceptual stages of development.

Similar development is brewing in other Fairfield County and Westchester County cities and towns.

With all this activity in Fairfield and Westchester Counties, Construction Institute and SMPS-NY Westchester Affiliate are hosting a panel format program, Mayors' Perspective: Strengthening the Growth of Westchester and Fairfield Counties, that will address business opportunities and trends in Fairfield and Westchester Counties. The mayors of Stamford, Norwalk, Yonkers, and White Plains will be joined on stage by their economic advisers to discuss their perspective and their plans in light of the current economic, political and social trends that are shaping the appearance of their cities. Moderated by Michael Ayles, FAIA, NCARB, principal, Antinozzi Associates Architecture & Interiors, the panel will address their challenges and how the AEC industry can partner with them for the common good.

The program is September 26 on the UConn campus in Stamford for those who wish to build their businesses, hear from and meet key regional players, and be seen as engaged professionals. To register, go to www.construction.org, Programs and Events, and scroll down to Mayors' Forum.

Isn't it wonderful that we live and work in an area that is humming with economic activity?

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