

## Former EnCap site purchase is finally a done deal, will become industrial complex

Developers finalized a purchasing process four years in the making Friday to transform the former 718-acre EnCap site, once a landfill in southern Bergen County, into a six-building industrial complex for e-commerce.

Russo Development and Forsgate Industrial Partners intend to upgrade the Kingsland Tract, newly dubbed Kingsland Meadowlands. The [developers won the bid in 2015](#).

The first building at Kingsland Meadowlands is expected to be finished in late 2021. The site spans parts of North Arlington, Lyndhurst and Rutherford.



An aerial view of the Kingsland Tract to be redeveloped in Bergen County. (Photo: Courtesy of Russo Development)

The former landfills that make up the Kingsland site were part of the failed \$1 billion development undertaken by EnCap Golf Holdings of Florida. The project, which was to include luxury housing, golf courses and hotels, faltered when the company filed for bankruptcy protection in 2008 after spending more than \$50 million of a promised \$100 million in public financing.

Shortly after Forsgate and Russo Development won the Kingsland bid in 2015, they put out a joint press release that said their preliminary plans included distribution facilities, data centers, solar farms, extensive landscaping, environmentally friendly building design and infrastructure improvements. Those mixed uses comply with the state redevelopment plan for the land, The Record previously reported.

Back in November 2007 Donald Trump agreed to take over EnCap's landfill cleanup for \$5 million a year and other financial perks, but plans for the site never panned out.

"The golf course resort previously envisioned for this site could never have created the economic activity and career opportunities appropriate for the Meadowlands' highly skilled employment pool," said Jim Kirkos, president of the Meadowlands Chamber, in a release.

Lyndhurst Mayor Robert Giangeruso said the development will change the site from a disappointment and burden to a source of pride.

But not everyone praised the news.

Don Torino, head of the Bergen County Audubon Society, expressed concern about endangered birds that nest on the dormant landfills.

Torino said Savannah sparrows and grasshopper sparrows nest "in good numbers" on the landfills. Both are listed as "threatened species" by the state Department of Environmental Protection. Northern harriers, which are endangered, have been observed nesting there and winter there, Torino said.

"American kestrels another threatened species depend on the area for migration," he said. "Peregrine falcons hunt there. We can go on and on."

The developers expressed excitement over the location of the site.

"Kingsland Meadowlands is not only an opportunity to create a new standard for logistics e-commerce users in the world's premier economic region, it is the long-awaited result of decades of effort to reclaim the usefulness of a great piece of property," said Alex Klatskin, general partner of Forsgate Industrial Partners.

The Meadowlands is one of the strongest markets for industrial and warehouse developments, said Edward Russo, CEO of Russo Development.

The tract is made up of seven landfills that underwent a \$150 million capping project following the collapse of the infamous EnCap golf resort and housing complex project in 2007.

Exposed trash was covered by tons of soil. Portions of the larger landfills were stabilized. Contaminated water, called leachate, was redirected to the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission's plant instead of seeping into the marshes, the Hackensack River and nearby creeks.

[A redevelopment plan issued by the former Meadowlands Commission in 2011](#) had called for a mixture of developments at the garbage heaps but barred any plans for housing following the EnCap implosion.

Commercial development was allowed in the more stable landfills, like a group of three smaller landfills in Rutherford.

Parts of the larger Kingsland and Avon landfills in Lyndhurst were deemed to be too unstable for commercial use but could be the future home to a large array of solar panels. Development was barred on other parts of the two landfills, according to the plan.