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THE BOTTOM LINE

By [Jason Molinet](#) [Email the author](#) November 29, 2011

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Toxic Cleanup Another Step Forward

Glen Cove's waterfront revitalization moves closer to reality with latest Brownfield cleanup.

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About this column: Regional Editor Jason Molinet weighs in on the people and issues which make Long Island great.

Related Topics: [Gladsky Marine](#), [Glen Cove Economy](#), [Kelly Morris](#), [Michael Posillico](#), [Peter Scully](#), [RXR Glen Isle Waterfront Revitalization](#), [Ralph Suozzi](#), and [brownfields](#)



Mayor [Ralph Suozzi](#) ignored the rain as he walked an empty lot along Glen Cove Creek on Tuesday. He was busy detailing exactly how significant this parcel, once home to Gladsky Marine, is to the redevelopment of the Glen Cove waterfront.

It's a wide-open tract, and even on this overcast morning you could see all the way to the future Suozzi was selling.

That vision is lined with residential housing, parks, a marina and sidewalks that lead downtown and to an increased tax base that buoys the City in a rising economic tide. It's called the [RXR Glen Isle](#) Waterfront Revitalization project, and it has been a decade in the making.

"They plan on having a shovel in the ground by the third quarter of next year," Suozzi said of the massive build. "That's really good news. We're on the cusp of reaching the development effort we've all been trying to attain. Beside helping the environment, it's putting the site back into productive use."

[RXR Glen Isle's master plan](#) calls for 860 residential units, 250-room hotel, office and retail space, marina and up to 30 percent of the grounds dedicated to open space. The Gladsky Marine parcel is just one piece of a complex 52-acre puzzle.

When you consider what this property once was – part of a cluster of Superfund sites deemed among the most toxic in the nation – it's no small miracle that the ground has been churned and the adjoining creek decontaminated.

"It was one of the most highly contaminated industrial areas in New York state," said Kelly Morris of Glen Cove's Community Development Agency.

"Before this land became idle two decades ago, it was at the heart of the industrial revolution of this nation," Suozzi said. "It was home to 1,000 jobs and industrial production that contaminated the land, air and water around us."

How bad was it? Residents who spent formative years here nicknamed nearby Hempstead Harbor Beach "[Toxic Beach.](#)" Nassau has [23 Superfund sites](#) listed, including three in Glen Cove.

If the City didn't step in to begin the process of cleaning up the decades old industrial sludge, this otherwise prime real estate would weigh down Glen Cove for years to come.

"Those efforts are always successful where you have strong local leadership – local government officials who are committed to a process – and are willing to stick with it," DEC Regional Director Peter Scully said. "These projects take years. That's what we're seeing here in Glen Cove: Years and years

of hard work coming to fruition.”

According to Morris, the Gladsky site is the next to last [Brownfield](#) in the redevelopment project. Topsoil has been removed, the creek dredged and contaminants hauled away. Funding for the restoration was provided in part by the EPA, state DEC and Nassau County.

The entire project has cost an estimated \$100 million, according to the City. Thanks to that public investment and force of will, the toughest task is nearly complete. Now the City can step aside to allow for private development to happen.

“It’s a massive cleanup, a complicated cleanup with contaminated materials, ranging from the radioactive to petroleum,” said Michael J. Posillico, principal of Posillico Group, which is behind RXR Glen Isle. “It was different parcels and different owners. We came in when everything was starting to get stitched together. Our expertise was in trying to map out what could be built here.”

The vision is one all of Long Island can get behind. With a \$1 billion pricetag, it’s one the entire region will be watching closely.

“The City itself has put a lot on the line,” Scully said. “You don’t get anything for nothing these days. And I think the City government realized in order to see this area redeveloped to the standards and vision they seek would take some investment. And it’s an investment well made.”

Call Suozzi’s walk before the TV cameras Tuesday a victory lap of sorts because it’s been a marathon just to get to this point. Not a single trace of this new waterfront community is visible yet.

But to people who had the vision all along, Glen Cove’s future has never been more clear.

“When we heal the land we heal everything around us,” Suozzi said. “It’s good for Glen Cove.”

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4:00pm on Wednesday, November 30, 2011

850 waterfront residences! Sounds like a gold mine to me. The public foots the toxic waste cleanup bill and some developer takes all the profit.



[Jason Molinet](#)

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@TheGreek Agreed. But no private firm would ever undertake the project to reclaim the land. If the City didn’t make this move, the land would sit undeveloped -- and represent a hazard -- for another decade or more.

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