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CENTRAL NY NEWS

Onondaga County to spend \$27M on land for companies that supply Micron or other industry

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Rendering shows a semiconductor complex proposed by Micron Technology Inc. and related supply chain companies in Clay. in-Architects



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Syracuse, N.Y. – Onondaga County lawmakers today approved a measure to spend \$33 million from the county's rainy-day fund, \$27 million of which will be used to acquire shovel-ready sites to recruit new businesses to the area.

The resolution passed on a strict party-line vote, with all 12 Republicans in support and five Democrats voting no.

Much of the \$27 million is likely to be spent in the northern suburbs, close to where Micron Technology plans to build four semiconductor manufacturing plants that will employ up to 9,000 people and spawn up to 40,000 more jobs.

County Executive Ryan McMahon has said the county will buy and prepare sites that could house companies that supply Micron or other advanced manufacturers. The county will loan the money to the Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency, which will acquire the property.

OCIDA will repay the loan if county officials require it, lawmakers said.

In addition to the \$27 million, today's resolution directs \$5 million to the county's O-CHIP program, which provides grants for housing development. The program typically gives up to \$5,000 per housing unit but can provide more for regionally significant developments.

Another \$1 million will be used by the county to purchase new computers and upgrade its information technology.

Democrats said they opposed the spending measure because there was too much uncertainty about how the \$27 million for site development would be spent and who would benefit.

Legislator Nodesia Hernandez, the Democratic floor leader, said the \$5 million of additional spending on housing was "a step in the right direction," but insufficient.

"When compared to the proposed \$27 million to purchase land for hypothetical business to come, we're forgetting the people that we serve," Hernandez said.

But Republicans argued that the county should maximize the potential growth from Micron and other expanding companies.

"If we do not act, we risk stalling momentum. But if we do act boldly and wisely, we're helping write a new chapter in Onondaga County, a chapter of innovation, of jobs and of hope," said Legislator Mark Olson, R-Manlius. "In 10, 20 and 50 years, our children (and)

grandchildren will look back on this moment and say, that's when we built the future of Onondaga County."

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The \$27 million requested by OCIDA comes after the agency has already spent or obligated \$45 million on the Micron site in Clay and the related "science and technology" park across the street.

OCIDA plans to repay the loan using fees it collects from supporting development projects. However, there is no fixed term for repayment. The county executive would have the option to delay or forego repayment, depending on whether there are ongoing opportunities to invest the money in development.

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