

## BUSINESS

## Southern chicken chain Bojangles plans Long Island return with new restaurant in Farmingville

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North Carolina-based Bojangles is planning a reentry to the New York market, with a new restaurant in Farmingville. Credit: Business Wire

By **Tory N. Parrish**

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Bojangles' big expansion push will include the Southern chicken chain's return to New York — and a Long Island restaurant is part of the plan.

Jericho resident Habib Hashimi, through his company, Hashimi Holding Corp., signed a franchise deal with Bojangles Restaurants Inc. in August to open 20 of the fast-food eateries in the metro area.

His first Bojangles on Long Island is planned for the 3000 block of North Ocean Avenue in Farmingville, and he hopes to open it next summer.

A location in Brooklyn's East Flatbush neighborhood, which he plans to open by the end of this year, will be the first in the New York market, he said.

Bojangles had a brief presence in the New York market, including a restaurant in Hempstead, in the 1980s. The Bojangles of today has a different model and menu than the chain did in the past that will bring longevity in New York this go-around, said Hashimi, 27.

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"I just want [Bojangles] to come to New York the right way. I want to build a strong team. I want to build a strong culture," he said.

With 850 restaurants, Charlotte, North Carolina-based Bojangles Inc. is one of the fastest-growing chicken chains in the United States, and the private equity firms backing the company have helped drive growth, David Henkes, senior principal at Technomic, a Chicago-based restaurant industry research firm, wrote in an email.

Bojangles has expanded into major markets with new franchise agreements in New York, New Jersey, Las Vegas, Cincinnati, Ohio and California, company spokeswoman Katie Combs said in an email.

### Presenting plans

Hashimi gained restaurant experience managing and opening a few Popeyes chicken restaurants in Brooklyn for his father's company, Hashimi Management Corp., a franchisee that also operates Popeyes and Dairy Queen shops throughout New York and Connecticut, he said.

New Popeyes openings are stymied in Brooklyn because the area is oversaturated with the restaurants, Hashimi said.

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"So, I started to look at other brands. And I got in touch with the Bojangles team. And I clicked with them," he said.

The Farmingville property where the Bojangles restaurant is planned is an approximately 15-acre site that includes a vacant 35,053-square-foot building that was constructed in 2023 for an Amazon Fresh supermarket. But early this year, the grocer canceled its plan to open a store there.

The 2,806-square-foot Bojangles and a 3,315-square-foot Panera Bread, both with drive-thrus, would be freestanding restaurants in front of the building originally intended for Amazon Fresh, if the Town of Brookhaven grants construction approvals.

On Wednesday, the town's board of zoning appeals heard requests for variances, which are deviations from current zoning requirements, from the owners of the Farmingville property.

The owners, North Block Ventures LLC and its subsidiary, NBV II LLC, in Westbury, are seeking permission from the board to reduce the required minimum side yard setback from 50 feet to 32.3 feet for the Bojangles restaurant.

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They also are seeking permission to add additional signs to the drive-thru at Panera.

The board did not make a decision on the requests Wednesday.

The project proposal also must pass several other hurdles, including a review by the town planning department followed by a public hearing and vote by the planning board, expected in early 2026, according to Brookhaven spokesman Drew Scott. The town board will then set a public hearing and vote, possibly next summer, Scott said.

Both Bojangles and Panera have signed leases for the yet-to-be-constructed buildings, said Art Garritano, a member of North Block Ventures and NBV.

### **'Bullish plans'**

Founded in 1977, Bojangles is a Southern chain known for its chicken sandwiches; fried chicken; and Bo-Berry biscuits, which are made from scratch with blueberries and topped with icing.

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Bojangles has been sold several times, most recently in January 2019, when it was bought by two Manhattan-based private equity firms, Durational Capital Management LP and The Jordan Company, L.P., which took the publicly traded chain private.

Former McDonald's executive Jose Armario was named Bojangles' chief executive the same month.

In recent years, Bojangles has been pushing growth into new markets, with its restaurant numbers recently reaching 850 locations in 20 states, including more than 50 eateries that have opened in the last two years and 30 that have opened this year, said Combs, who added that 20 more will open by the end of this year.

With more than 200 restaurants in the pipeline over the next few years, Bojangles has "bullish plans to continue to grow beyond our Southeastern footprint in the coming years," she said.

Bojangles has been opening restaurants in non-traditional places, like travel centers, which has helped its average unit sales, Henkes said.

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"But they've also focused on operational improvements," he said, adding that Bojangles' consumer ratings on many attributes, such as order accuracy, food taste and quality, are higher than the competitive average.

Most Bojangles restaurants, 68%, are franchises, while the rest are company-owned locations, Combs said.



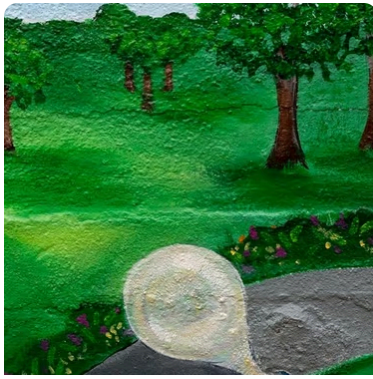
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Tory N. Parrish covers retail and small business for Newsday. She has worked at the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review and Observer-Dispatch in Utica, N.Y.

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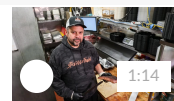
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