Tom Tobin, Staff writer 1:37 p.m. EST March 3, 2014

File photo.(Photo: Michael Blann Getty Images)

Seneca Gaming Corp. said Monday it has acquired 32 acres in the town of Henrietta as a potential site for a gaming casino.

The property is on Clay Road near Interstate 390, Jefferson Road and East Henrietta Road, already a busy sector in town.

"Now that we have acquired property, we will begin the process of engaging the community and its leaders in a dialogue on how a potential Seneca development could fit within and benefit Henrietta and the surrounding area," said Kevin Seneca, chairman of the Seneca Gaming Corp. board of directors, in a statement.

Seneca Gaming president and CEO Cathy Walker said the corporation bought the land from Uniland Development Co. for $2.7 million. Uniland is located in Amherst, Erie County, according to property tax records.

There has been discussion for years about the Seneca Nation of Indians opening a casino in the Rochester area. There are no current approvals from the state or federal governments for a Rochester-area casino.

The gaming corporation said the site, once developed, would have a casino, a hotel, restaurants and other retail. The corporation said a casino development would create 2,000 jobs at the casino complex and 2,400 construction jobs.

The casino could draw as many as 3.5 million visitors a year to the Clay Road site, according to the corporation.

The tribe already operates the Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel in Salamanca, the Seneca Buffalo Creek Casino in downtown Buffalo and Seneca Niagara Casino & Hotel in the Niagara Falls Territory in Niagara Falls, N.Y.

Seneca Gaming spokesperson Phil Pantano said Monday that the Senecas' compact with the state likely would have to be amended to allow a fourth Seneca casino complex in western New York.

According to its statement Monday, the Senecas have exclusive rights "to provide Class III casino gaming in New York state from State Route 14 in Ontario County west to the Pennsylvania state lines.

Under the 2002 compact, the Indian nation shares a portion of its revenues with the state.

In a referendum last year, New York voters approved the opening of up to seven state-approved casinos in New York. Gov. Andrew Cuomo said the initial plan is to approve four casinos in upstate New York, though none is slated for the Rochester area.

Rochester developer and shopping mall owner Thomas Wilmot has made public plans for a casino complex in Tyre, Seneca County, which, if approved, would be the upstate casino set aside for the Southern Tier.

The Oneida Nation already operates the Turning Stone Resort Casino in Verona, Oneida

County.

"Given the strength and importance of the Rochester market to the western region of the state, we believe we can expand our success into the Rochester area," Kevin Seneca said in Monday's statement about the land sale.

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