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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS CALLS INTO WNYC NEW YORK PUBLIC
RADIO**

Sean Carlson: It's All Things Considered on WNYC and I'm Sean Carlson. (Audio plays.) That is the sound of soccer fans inside the Queens Museum cheering Mayor Eric Adams earlier today. The mayor announced plans for one of the city's biggest economic development projects in years — a 25,000 seat soccer stadium at Willets Point, Queens. It'll be paired with 2,500 units of affordable housing and a hotel. The estimated cost of the project, \$780 million. City officials say they expect the development to generate more than 6 billion in economic impact over the next 30 years. Joining us now to talk about the plan is Mayor Eric Adams, himself. Hey, mayor. Good afternoon.

Mayor Eric Adams: Thank you very much. Good to speak with you.

Carlson: Willets Point is something that New Yorkers have been hearing about for a long time. Your predecessor, Mayor de Blasio, jump-started the housing portion of this plan, but can you tell us more about how your administration finalized it and how you landed on the idea of a soccer stadium?

Mayor Adams: Well, it was a combination, and others have tried, as you indicated, but it was clear we wanted to get everyone in the room and sit down. How could we use that space? We had a willing councilman that was very clear he wanted educational opportunities and he wanted to have a soccer stadium that won't be on the taxpayers' dime. And it was because of those discussions we reached a good ending point today and we got all of those entities.

Carlson: So speaking of the financing of it, it is a private-public partnership and it involves a lot of players here. It includes the New York City Football Club and, the developer on the Hudson Yards project, Related Companies. The city is chipping in financing here, and this is on city-owned land. So we wanted to ask you, in exchange for that, what are we getting from the developers here? And are they promising anything to benefit the community?

Mayor Adams: Everyone is giving in. Number one, jobs. This development will be 100 percent union jobs, and good wages that mean bolstering our middle class. And then when you look at the jobs that are going to materialize after the development, jobs such as the hotel — the hotel workers would be gainfully employed. Jobs — who work inside the stadium. And so this is a real

win-win contribution and everyone came to the table with the same energy that is going to be about a good public-private partnership to actually land this plane.

Carlson: Is there actually a community benefits agreement that you've reached with them, similar to what happened with the new Yankee Stadium, to give back to the community in terms of scholarships and things like that?

Mayor Adams: Yeah, there's going to be many benefits agreements around the public space, the parks that you look at it. When you look at a lot of basic community benefit agreements with just a handshake, it's not as solid as having everything concretized. It's a formal agreement to make sure all of these jobs are union jobs, to make sure that the hotel is union, to make sure that what the actual course factors are involved — the private entity paying for the stadium. We wanted to make sure instead of just a local community benefit agreement, like we saw in other projects, we wanted to be firm on what was expected, and all of this is part of the actual written agreement.

Carlson: So as we mentioned, and as you have said, this is a huge economic redevelopment project. It's got a lot of components. When you think about your mayoralty, how important was it for you to get something like this of this magnitude done in your first year?

Mayor Adams: It's crucial because it continues to set the three words that are important to this administration, let's get stuff done, and you do that by creating partnerships. We saw what happened in the Bronx with the Bruckner Project. We were able to get to a place where the local Council person... we are now moving forward to land a very important project in Queens, Innovation QNS. These projects send the right message that we could have affordable housing and have the innovation and the new buildings that we need as a city as it continues to develop this city.

Carlson: This plan still has to go through the city's land use approval process. There are other stakeholders here who have something to say about it. WNYC's Elizabeth Kim, she spoke with some autobody mechanics this morning and they've been working at Willets Points for decades. We have tape of one of them. Arturo Olaya say that they feel betrayed by the de Blasio administration. Here's what he said.

(Audio plays.)

Arturo Olaya: The before administration, they didn't make the things right. They make a trick. That's not the point. The point is now we have a new administration, we have a good mayor, then we want to talk with the mayor about what he is his solution for us.

(Audio ends.)

Carlson: So mayor, what do you say to that, to Mr. Olaya and other folks who might have to relocate? Is the city going to help them do that?

Mayor Adams: Well, number one, the local councilman and I... I'm going to do a walkthrough, engaging in a conversation with those over there. And number two, the city and the previous administration allocated \$6.5 million to assist those businesses who were there. And we all know

in the city, when you move to do real development of this magnitude, we are building an entirely new community in that area. There are going to be some, a small number of people, who believe it could have been done differently. We understand that and we respect that, and we want to find a place that their whole and they feel as though they were heard and we responded to that. But this is a real win. I know that community well. I grew up in Queens. I remembered the blighted condition. I remember how dangerous it was to walk down the blocks late at night. So we didn't win the World Series, but darn it, we're going create a world class community in that area.

Carlson: Well, speaking of things that this project could create, Flushing's Main Street in that intersection, it's not too far from there. And I can imagine somebody living there saying, "Oh my God, there's a stadium coming here. The traffic is going to be out of control." This is one of the busiest places in the city outside of Manhattan. So are we doing anything as a city to prepare for that inevitable spike in traffic when this thing is built?

Mayor Adams: Yeah, well, we do an excellent job during the Mets game. People always felt that it was going to be disruptive when we built the Arthur Ashe Stadium, but we are going to build and ensure that our subway system and our public transportation system is a first class system. We want to encourage people to use that number seven line. It drops you right off at your doorstep. That is the goal. A clean, safe subway system really takes away some of the traffic problems.

Carlson: You mentioned that the Council member for the area is onboard, Francisco Moya. Can you tell us when this is going to happen? When are we going to see shovels in the ground?

Mayor Adams: 2023, a year earlier than what was expected, is when we going to see the housing portion in the ground, and then we're going to continue until we get the job completely done. But the construction for the 100 percent affordable 1,100 units would begin in 2023.

Carlson: Don't hate us for asking this, but it is no secret that you are a diehard Mets and Brooklyn Nets fan. But what is your knowledge of soccer? How many matches have you been to in your day and who is your favorite soccer player?

Mayor Adams: Well, you know what, I'm a throwback guy. I'm still a person that remembered the excitement that Pele used to bring to the game. That kick that he would do, how he handled the field, I just remember him. He started my love of soccer. And I think soccer is something that is going to be really inviting to a lot of New Yorkers. And when you see soccer explode in America, the game is going to explode even more across the globe. It all starts and ends here in New York City when it comes down to sports.

Carlson: So we'll see you at a game then?

Mayor Adams: Yes, you will.

Carlson: That's New York City Mayor Eric Adams. Thanks so much for coming on, mayor.

Mayor Adams: Take care.

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