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MAYOR DE BLASIO, COMMUNITY OFFICIALS, AND QUEENS DEVELOPMENT GROUP BREAK GROUND ON ENVIRONMENTAL CLEANUP OF WILLETS POINT

City takes major step towards advancing equitable and sustainable vision for Willets Point

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today joined Council Member Francisco Moya, Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), New York City Department of Environmental Protection, New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), School Construction Authority (SCA), Council Member Vallone, Council Member Koo, and the Queens Development Group (QDG) to celebrate the start of environmental cleanup for the first phase of development in Willets Point.

This announcement builds on the Administration’s [agreement](#) with QDG and Council Member Moya to build 100 percent affordable homes on the first 6 acres of development of Willets Point for all New Yorkers.

“A recovery for all of us is happening right here in Queens,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “Willets Point represents the best of our comeback - new units of affordable housing, more school seats for our children, adding public space and detailed infrastructure improvements. The environmental remediation is an important step in this revitalization, and I’m thrilled to be here today to celebrate.”

“By reimagining and revitalizing 23 acres for the Queens community, Willets Point represents this administration’s commitment to equity, affordability, and place-making,” said **Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Vicki Been**. “Today, we announce the groundbreaking of a community that will one day soon encompass 1,100 affordable homes, a 650-seat school, and one acre of open space. Thanks to the Mayor, our city and state electeds, and community members who fought for an equitable way forward through Your Home NYC.”

“We’re thrilled to take a major step towards advancing the administration’s investments in Western Queens,” said **Rachel Loeb, President and CEO of New York City Economic Development Corporation**. “By starting our environmental cleanup process, we are paving the way to deliver affordable housing, open space, a public school, infrastructure improvements, retail and community space. We are proud to join Mayor de Blasio, our city partners, elected officials, and QDG to provide these much-needed community benefits for New Yorkers.”

“The environmental cleanup is a critical step in the first phase of the Willets Point project. The first thing I did when I took office in the City Council was work to create a true path towards bringing affordable housing. And now the road to 100% affordable housing with 1,100 units and a 650-seat new school is becoming a reality right here in District 21 Queens. I am incredibly proud to lead this work with the Mayor’s Office, NYEDC, my colleagues in the City Council and the task force to build on the work to address the housing crisis and overcrowding in schools. This is historic,” said **Council Member Francisco Moya, Chair of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises**.

"We could not be more excited to take this significant first step toward revitalizing Willets Point and realizing its remarkable potential," said **Queens Borough President Donovan Richards Jr.** "Between more than 1,100 affordable housing units, a new 650-seat public school, new infrastructure, open space and substantial job creation, the first phase will be a victory that brings transformative, positive change to our borough."

The City’s investment will deliver 1,100 affordable homes in three buildings, including homes for seniors – an increase of 225 affordable homes from the original development proposal. Remediation and construction of Phase 1 will also generate economic growth through more than 800 construction jobs and nearly 200 permanent jobs.

The plan also includes: a new [650-seat standalone public school](#) – a 44% increase in seats from the announcement in 2018 one acre of new public open space new roads, sidewalks, and bike lane improvements new water and sewer infrastructure neighborhood retail and community facility space.

The City, NYCEDC and QDG have agreed to fund and implement the environmental cleanup – also known as remediation – of all 23-acres of publicly-owned land in Willets Point, starting with the first six acres. The environmental cleanup will remove the contaminated soil and replace it with clean fill. In addition, the new residential buildings, streets, and school will be raised above the flood plain. Remediation will continue until 2023.

“We have to be bold with the City's remaining public sites, and Willets Point exemplifies the Administration's vision for equitable development anchored by deeply affordable housing,” said **HPD Commissioner Louise Carroll**. “Today, the City begins to lay the foundation for a dynamic mixed-use development that pairs desperately needed affordable and senior housing with a new school, vibrant open space, ground-floor retail, jobs, and infrastructure that the neighborhood needs to thrive. I want to thank Mayor de Blasio for his vision, along with the Borough President Donovan Richards, and City Council Members Peter Koo, Francisco Moya, and Paul Vallone, as well as, all our government partners for working together to unlock the potential of this critical public site.

“We are proud to be part of Mayor de Blasio’s vision for the transformation of Willets Point, an area that has long been a less-than-welcoming place,” said **NYC DOT Commissioner Hank Gutman**. “This project will rebuild the pockmarked streets, too often without sidewalks, while also constructing new curbs and drains. EDC has shown great leadership in coordinating its agency partners, and we thank them, Queens elected officials and local community groups for

the support for all of us to move forward together to create a new neighborhood that connects Citi Field, Flushing Meadows Corona Park, and Downtown Flushing.”

“It’s always exciting to see a visionary, transformative plan for affordable homes, jobs, open space and school seats be turned into action. With this groundbreaking, Willets Point is on its way to becoming an affordable, accessible, resilient and vibrant neighborhood for all New Yorkers,” said **Department of City Planning Director Marisa Lago**.

“The SCA is excited about the opportunity to partner with our City Agency colleagues to create new school capacity as part of the Willets Point redevelopment project,” **NYC School Construction President and CEO Nina Kubota** said. “A project of this nature is truly emblematic of the SCA’s ongoing efforts to identify new and creative ways to bring the City’s students the facilities they need. This collaborative approach to redevelopment will dramatically improve the quality of life for our residents, improve capacity in one of our most overcrowded school districts and drive business growth in our communities.”

“We are proud to be a part of the revitalization of Willets Point,” said **Glenn Goldstein, Partner, Queens Development Group and EVP Related Companies**. “This site has been in desperate need of remediation for generations, and this is a crucial step forward for Queens that will bring jobs while enabling the construction of key infrastructure and affordable housing.”

“I commend the de Blasio Administration for re-prioritizing the safe and swift remediation of Willets Point that has been plaguing the community of Queens for a century, said **State Senator Jessica Ramos**. “This important step will build up and revitalize the neighborhood and local economy and the construction of much needed affordable housing units will help so many of more of our neighbors stay housed.”

"Willets Point presents us with a unique opportunity to create affordable housing and public space with sustainability at the forefront," said **Assembly Member Daniel Rosenthal**. "Despite the setbacks created by the pandemic, I join my colleagues and the community in celebrating the project finally resuming. We look forward to Willets Point becoming a safe and affordable home for hundreds of families".

“I applaud the City, NYCEDC, and QDG on starting the transformation of Willets Point in with a focus on environmental sustainability and economic accessibility with a full scale cleanup and increased commitment to affordable housing” said **Council Member Vallone**. “This area has for too long been neglected and will now stand as a model for responsible neighborhood development by taking into consideration the needs of residents with a school and other necessary public services, and the impacts of climate change by raising the area above the new floodplain height.”

"The reimagining of Willets Point has been a longtime dream of New Yorkers, and we are finally beginning to see that dream become reality," said **Council Member Peter Koo**. “The permanent state of disrepair in Willets Point needs to end, and with this environmental cleanup for the first phase of development, we will realize a host of new amenities that will support and enhance our communities for generations to come."

"As a member of the Willets Point Task Force, I was proud to work together with other community organizations, community board members, and elected officials to envision a brighter future for Willets Point," said **Julissa Bisono, Co-Director of Organizing at Make the Road New York**. "I'm thrilled that the Phase One ground-breaking is starting today, with a commitment to environmental remediation, truly affordable housing, school construction, and new open public space."

"This long-awaited groundbreaking is testament to the dedication of all the players involved since Day 1 said," **Thomas J. Grech, President & CEO of the Queens Chamber of Commerce**. "This remediation will jump start development in this critical area of Queens; further cementing Willets Point as a gateway to affordable housing, entertainment and parks; all great opportunities to live, work and play."

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