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**RECOVERY FOR ALL OF US: MAYOR DE BLASIO AND COMMISSIONER SILVER
MARK BEGINNING OF CONSTRUCTION ON FOUR BROOKLYN PARKS**

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio and NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, today announced the beginning of construction on four capital projects in Brooklyn, representing a more than \$31 million investment to improve greenspace and open access in the borough. These projects include the construction of a brand-new park in Greenpoint; reconstructing a popular playground in Ocean Hill and adding a skate park; revitalizing and reconstructing a recently renamed park in honor of the Black experience; and a Community Parks Initiative site that has not seen investment in decades. These projects are four of more than 800 completed under Commissioner Silver’s leadership, advancing the City’s mission to build a more equitable 21st century park system.

“A Recovery for all of Us means increasing access to parks in historically underserved neighborhoods and creating greener, healthier communities,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “These four Brooklyn parks will bring joy to and serve New Yorkers for generations to come.”

“Increasing access to open space and improving parkland is integral to building healthy communities. These four projects set to begin work in Brooklyn reflect our effort to continuously invest in our neighborhoods and offer New Yorkers much needed respite and recreation,” said **Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP**. “As Commissioner, I’ve prioritized working to ensure that all New Yorkers have access to quality parks, and it’s outstanding to see these underused spaces transformed into community assets. I’m excited that these projects are underway and look forward to the views at the overlook at 50 Kent; the new skate park at Callahan Kelly Playground; reconstructing the Susan Smith McKinney Steward Park so that it will be worthy of bearing McKinney’s name, and bringing a revamped playground to Williamsburg.”

50 Kent

50 Kent in Bushwick Inlet Park is a brand-new park coming to Northern Brooklyn. Upon completion, the \$7.7 million park will include features for passive and active recreation including new seating areas, gathering area, expansive lawns, an overlook with picturesque views of the City, and water play features to help keep cool during the summer months. This site is one of the cornerstones of the development of Bushwick Inlet Park. It was acquired by the City in 2007 and underwent remediation conducted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

Callahan Kelly Playground Reconstruction

Callahan Kelly Playground is a beloved community park in the heart of Ocean Hill. This project will reconstruct the playground, spray shower, perimeter sidewalks and walls, basketball courts, adult fitness equipment and sitting areas. In addition, this project will construct a brand-new skate park and will feature new park entrances. City funding for the project totals over \$18 million.

This park, bounded by Fulton and Truxton Streets, Van Sinderen Avenue, and the Eastern Parkway Extension, was named for two local soldiers who died in World War I, William E. Callahan and Edward E. Kelly. Callahan, who lived nearby at 98 Hinsdale Street, was a Corporal in Company L of the 305th Infantry and was killed in action at the Battle of the Argonne on October 2, 1918. Kelly, who also lived only blocks away at 1330 Herkimer Street, was a Private in Company G of the 23rd Infantry, and later the 106th Infantry, and was killed in action at the Battle of Dickie Bush Farm on September 2, 1918. Kelly and Callahan were two of the more than 116,000 American men killed in World War I.

Susan Smith McKinney Steward Park Reconstruction

Formerly Bridge Park II, Susan Smith McKinney Steward Park was officially renamed last December as part of Parks' efforts to honor the Black experience. This project will reconstruct the play equipment, swings, and spray shower and construct a new adult fitness area, a multi-purpose synthetic turf field with a performance stage, benches, fences, drainage, water supply and add new plantings. The reconstruction is privately funded in the amount of \$7.5 million by Watchtower. Susan Smith McKinney was the first African-American woman in New York State to receive a license to practice medicine. She was born, raised, lived, and practiced in Brooklyn.

La Guardia Playground Phase II

This \$4.76 million renovation will be completed through the Community Parks Initiative (CPI), the City's first-ever parks equity initiative, funded by Mayor Bill de Blasio. The project will reconstruct the children's play area (northern parcel) at La Guardia Playground and include new play equipment, seating, landscaping, and a spray shower. Phase I of this CPI project was completed in fall 2020 and reconstructed the sports courts and plaza in the southern parcel of the park.

CPI, launched by Mayor de Blasio in October 2014, is a multi-faceted investment in the smaller public parks that are located in New York City's densely populated and growing neighborhoods where there are higher-than-average concentrations of poverty.

"As a longtime advocate for green space in New York City, I am thrilled that Mayor de Blasio and NYC Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner Silver have announced four new parks in Brooklyn. During the past year of social distancing, with the closure of the city's theaters, businesses, and museums, New York City's parks have become even more important. They provide necessary relief to the millions of New Yorkers spending their days working from home in small apartments. They are an outlet for socialization that we would not otherwise have during this incredibly trying time. Ensuring that our parks are safe and accessible is integral to the well-being of our city," said **Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney**.

“Green spaces are critical for wellbeing, for children to play and as a gathering point for the community,” said **Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez**. “These new projects will go a long way in bringing park equity to places like North Brooklyn and throughout the borough. I applaud the City and Mayor de Blasio for making these investments a reality.”

"For years, North Brooklyn has been asking: where's our park? With this historic investment at 50 Kent, we're one giant step closer to making the full Bushwick Inlet Park a reality. Open space to gather, rest and play is essential to building healthier, greener communities and I commend Mayor de Blasio and Commissioner Silver for their commitment to these values—not only in Greenpoint and Williamsburg but across our great city,” said **Assembly Member Emily Gallagher**.

As a child, I have fond memories of the bustling handball court at Callahan Kelly Park, that we affectionately call – ‘Kelly Kelly Park.’ Over the years the park has been plagued with non-working lights that left a very vibrant park dismal. As we all recover from this past year, the open, outdoor, green spaces are most certainly welcome. I applaud the mayor on his initiative for revitalization of our parks, and specifically of Callahan Kelly Park in the 55th Assembly District. This needed upgrade continues the legacy of Ocean – Hill Brownsville, as a neighborhood where residents can live, play, and raise a family,” said **Assembly Member Latrice Walker**.

“It’s great to see our Parks capital projects getting underway again. Both of the long-awaited projects in District 33 will add much needed open space for people to use. Thanks to everyone who helped make these projects possible,” said **Council Member Stephen Levin**.

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