



THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
NEW YORK, NY 10007

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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO AND QUEENS OFFICIALS BREAK GROUND ON
HUNTER'S POINT SOUTH PHASE II**

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Well, this is a really exciting day. We are proud to be here, because today New York City takes another important step to addressing our affordability crisis and to addressing our inequality crisis. This is how we actually change people's lives – by creating more housing, and particularly by creating a lot more affordable housing. This is what the people need.

And what I hear from people all over the city is the biggest issue on their minds is being able to stay in the city they love, being able to stay in the neighborhood they love, being able to afford a place to live. That's what I hear everywhere I go – number one issue on people's minds.

And what they want to see from all of us in government is big solutions. Well, I'll tell you it doesn't get bigger than Hunter's Point South. This is an extraordinary new development.

[Applause]

When this is completed, it will have a total of almost 5,000 apartments – 5,000 apartments, which will make a huge difference in the lives of people in this community.

And, in terms of Phase II, which we celebrate today, which is going to have almost 3,000 apartments in it, at least 60 percent – 60 percent of these apartments will be affordable for hardworking, middle-class New Yorkers – 60 percent. That's what we need to see more of – huge number of affordable units for middle class families.

This is a really important – this will make it the largest affordable housing development to be built in New York City since the 1970s – right here. The biggest – the biggest amount of new affordable housing to be created in this city in 40 years will happen right here in Queens. And it is the largest new construction project under our Housing New York plan, our affordable housing plan.

I just want to say something quickly about this – you know, you could ask yourself the question – how is it the biggest in 40 years? What happened in between? We know about places that were built in the past – Stuy Town and Peter Cooper Village in Manhattan long ago in the 1970s, Starrett City in Brooklyn, and Co-op City in the Bronx – but after that it stopped. We didn't get those really big new affordable housing developments – for one reason, there wasn't land.

There wasn't land that was available and affordable enough to build affordable housing on a huge scale. Well, here, the city of New York solved that problem by taking what had been industrial land but then wasn't being used – which really had turned into a wasteland – instead of that, taking that land, investing a lot of public money to get that land to be usable again so we could create affordable housing.

So we basically reclaimed the land, land that wasn't going to any positive use – we brought it back so we could create affordable housing the way we used to, on a big scale, because that's what people need.

I'm very, very proud of this effort, and so many people here I want to thank who have been a part of it.

I want to thank, from my administration, Eric Enderlin, the Deputy Commissioner for Development at HPD; and Mitchell Silver, our Department of Parks and Recreation Commissioner – and he's happy because of the new park that's going to be here.

I want to thank and welcome our partners – and if I miss anyone, please tell me – Rob Basch, from the Hunter's Point South Park Conservancy.

[Applause]

I want to thank – and we have special guests here – from the Academy for Careers in Television and Film and from P.S./I.S. 78Q – I want to thank all of you for being with us here today – thank you. And your principal and your teachers, thank you.

Did I miss anyone here? Who'd I miss? Did I miss anyone? Did I miss anyone?

Unknown: [inaudible]

Mayor: Paula from HDC – I'm sorry. Anyone else? Okay.

So a lot of folks worked hard to get us to this day.

Now, let me just give you a moment of context, because what's been happening around this site is part of why this is so important here today. And I've heard this from folks who live in Long Island City – people who've been here a long time and people who represent the area. This is a community that has been very, very attractive – a lot of people have wanted to live here. And that's a good thing, except it's put a lot of pressure on the folks who have lived here for decades.

So folks started to be priced out. And we, again, have seen this in many communities in our city – that this is a real challenge we have to face – people priced out of their own communities because New York City has been succeeding in many ways, because it's a place that people want to be, because the real estate market is strong. Well, that's been a double-edged sword, because it has meant displacement for some of our families. And that's something we have to work to fix.

People watched luxury towers being built. They saw luxury towers that they knew weren't for them. So they started to worry – would this be a neighborhood just for wealthy people? And our answer is to develop new housing for working people, for middle-class people that'll make a difference in their lives.

When these towers here go up, the people within them will look like all of Queens – they'll be people of all walks of life, people of all different incomes. You'll see a lot of people living here who are the backbone of this city – the teachers, the nurses, the first responders, who we depend on every day, who need an affordable place to live.

So what this really means is we are building an entirely new neighborhood here – a whole new neighborhood of this great city being built right where we stand today – and that's because the city and our partners took back this land and decided we could build a whole new community.

This project began under Mayor Bloomberg. I want to thank him and his whole team who got it started.

And it's already, in some of the other parts of the community, has brought in new streets, and schools, and retail, and businesses, and parks – all this has started.

Now we're going to continue the momentum. We're putting \$99 million dollars into this effort – \$99 million dollars.

[Applause]

And that's going to allow us to do all the basics – the water, the utilities, everything, the infrastructure, and something that's going to be absolutely wonderful, an 11-acre waterfront park that the whole community will enjoy –

[Applause]

– and as I mentioned, almost 3,000 apartments, and on top of that, 100,000 square feet of retail space and community facilities. And you know what they say on those late-night television ads? But wait, there's more? There will also be a connection right here to our new citywide ferry system, coming soon to this whole city. So this community will have a lot of ways to get around.

When it comes to affordability, we know so many people in this city are struggling. This number is very striking – 56 percent of the people in this city – well over half – spend 30 percent or more of their income just to keep a roof over their heads. For those people, we are here today, because we will create 1,740 affordable apartments for people who need them in this city – and that's going to make a big difference.

We're very, very proud of what's happening here. We look forward to many great days along the way as this new community blossoms before our eyes.

I'm going to say a couple words in Spanish, then we have some people who are going to speak – we know it's cold, so we'll do it quick.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that, I'd like to introduce a woman who's done so much to help move this project forward, and we're depending on her to see it to completion – the President of the New York City Economic Development Corporation, Maria Torres Springer.

[Applause]

[...]

Mayor: Alright, let's go break some ground!

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