

# Queens Borough President Recommendation

**APPLICATION:** Willets Point Phase II Mapping Actions  
**COMMUNITY BOARD:** Q07

## **DOCKET DESCRIPTION**

**ULURP #240058 MMQ – IN THE MATTER OF** an application submitted by the New York City Economic Development Corporation, Queens Development Group, LLC, and CFG Stadium Group, LLC, pursuant to Sections 197-c and 199 of the New York City Charter and Section 5-430 et seq. of the New York City Administrative Code, for an amendment to the City Map involving:

1. the establishment of 38th Avenue, 39th Avenue, 126th Lane, and a portion of Willets Point Boulevard within an area generally bounded by Van Wyck Expressway Extension, Roosevelt Avenue, Seaver Way, and Northern Boulevard;
2. the elimination, discontinuance and closing of 36th Avenue between Seaver Way and 127th Street;
3. the elimination, discontinuance, and closing of streets within an area generally bounded by 127th Street, Northern Boulevard, Van Wyck Expressway Extension, and Roosevelt Avenue;
4. the raising of grades within streets generally bounded by Northern Boulevard, 127th Street, Willets Point Boulevard, 38th Avenue, and Seaver Way;
5. the adjustment of grades and block dimensions necessitated thereby; and
6. any acquisition or disposition of real properties related thereto,

in Community District 7, Borough of Queens, in accordance with Maps No. 5038, and 5039, dated September 26, 2023 and Map No. 5040, dated September 28, 2023, and all signed by the Borough President. (Related ULURP #s 240092 ZSQ, 240094 ZSQ, 240095 ZSQ, and N240093 ZRQ).

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

A Public Hearing was held by the Queens Borough President in the Borough President's Conference Room at 120-55 Queens Boulevard, Kew Gardens NY 11424 as well as via Zoom webinar and livestreamed on [www.queensbp.org](http://www.queensbp.org) on Thursday, December 13, 2023 at 9:30 A.M. pursuant to Section 82(5) of the New York City Charter and was duly advertised in the manner specified in Section 197-c (i) of the New York City Charter. The applicant made a presentation. There were twenty-four (24) speakers. The hearing was closed.

## **CONSIDERATION**

Subsequent to a review of the application and consideration of testimony received at the public hearing, the following issues and impacts have been identified:

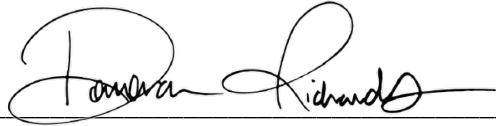
- The Applicant is proposing several City Map Changes in an area approximately bounded by Roosevelt Avenue to the south, Seaver Way to the west, Northern Blvd to the north, and 127<sup>th</sup> Street to the west (the "Project Area"). These actions would facilitate Phase I and Phase II Developments of the Special Willets Point District;
- Other applications (ULURP #s 240092 ZSQ, 240094 ZSQ, 240095 ZSQ, and N240093 ZRQ) concurrently field with lead application propose multiple land use actions related to the Project Area. These actions include a Special Permit pursuant to ZR 124-60 (Special Permit to Modify Use or Bulk Regulations), a Special Permit pursuant to ZR 74-41 (Arena, Stadium or Trade Exposition of Greater than 2,500 seats), Special Permit pursuant to 74-802 (Transient Hotel in a Commercial District), and Zoning Text Amendments to ZR 124-60, 124-05, 124-31, and 124-40;
- The Proposed Development of Phase II includes the Triangle Lot, Stadium Lot, T-Parcel Lot and the Northern Lot, (the "Development Sites"). The Proposed Development on these four parcels include: 1,400 affordable units (1.3 million SF), a 250-room hotel (215,000 SF), 80,000 of commercial SF for local retail, a 25,000-seat soccer stadium (500,000 SF), 500 accessory parking spaces, and 2.8 acres of publicly-accessible open space;
- In the 1940s, automobile-related uses populated the Willets Point area until the 2000s, when plans of redevelopment began to take shape. In 2002, the City created the Downtown Flushing Task Force which became the starting point for the Willets Point Development Plan. This Development Plan was approved in 2008 (creating the "Special Willets Point District"), and the Final Generic Environmental Impact Statement (FGEIS) was accepted in 2011. In 2012, the Queens Development Group ("QDG") was awarded a Request for Proposal (RFP) to develop an initial 23-acre portion of Willets Point. Between 2012 and 2021, due to NY State Court of Appeals intervention, the development plan was changed and is now known as the "New Phase 1," which includes 887,000 residential SF (1,100 affordable units), 5,000 community facility SF, 323-space parking garage, one acre of publicly accessible open space, and a 650-seat school;

- The current Development Sites are all currently vacant and are undergoing environmental remediation through either the NY State Brownfield Clean Up Program or by NYC Office of Environmental Remediation's E-designation Rules. On December 12, 2023, in a meeting with the development team, the Applicant confirmed that all city-owned properties of Willets Point were enrolled in the Brownfield Clean Up program. Some parcels that were privately-owned were not enrolled in the State program, but instead received E-designations that also required environmental remediation;
- Community Board 7 (CB7) held a Public Hearing and voted to approve this application package with a vote of thirty-seven (37) in approval, two (2) in opposition and zero (0) abstentions. CB's official conditions included:
  - A new police precinct within CB7;
  - NYCFC obtained a written agreement from Mets and NYC Parks Department prior to expiration of the ULURP that they be allowed to park 4,000 vehicles on game dates;
  - No games during game days for other major sporting events (UTSA, Mets, etc.); and
  - Hotel not be converted to a homeless or migrant shelter;
- At the Borough President's Land Use Public Hearing, the Applicant gave a presentation of the Proposed Developments, proposed partnerships and the environmental impacts of the Proposed Development. The Applicant Team highlighted the following points: the overall residential SF has increased by 700-800 units since the first 2008 rezoning took place; over 50% of housing in Phase 1 is meant for low-income families (that is, families making at or below 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI)), and that Phase 2 will more or less mirror Phase 1; the New York City Football Club (NYCFC) has been looking for a permanent home for the last decade; the proposed Stadium would be privately-funded and 100% built with union labor, which translates roughly to 4,000 construction jobs, hundreds of union jobs within stadium operations, and a 35% MWBE procurement goal; the proposed Stadium would include community use and access including 31,000 SF of programmable space available for community use on non-event days, a Community Activation Fund to offset event-related costs, and NYCFC's nonprofit organization "City in the Community" (CITC) headquartered in the stadium, which currently has 25+ school and Community-Based Organization (CBO) partners in Queens; and the Proposed Development's sustainable attributes such as all-electric housing (aside from gas-powered emergency generators), rooftop solar panels, goal of zero waste by 2040, and flood-proofed buildings. The Borough President raised multiple questions, to which the Applicant responded in kind:
  - Social service providers for the formerly homeless units in Phase 1, to which the Applicant confirmed they had two groups (Women in Need and Breaking Ground) lined up for Phase 1 housing, and confirmed they will identify social service providers for Phase 2 units;
  - Union labor within and timeline of the 220 SARA units in Phase 1, to which the Applicant replied they would be built using the prevailing wage, and they have identified a 10-month timeline;
  - Partnering with culturally-appropriate CBOs who would help local residents fill out Housing Connect applications (also known as NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development's "Housing Ambassadors" Program), to which the Applicant replied they would do so during lease-up;
  - Increasing the amount of the proposed Community Activation Fund (based on the lack of property taxes or PILOT), to which the Applicant said they would explore;
  - Local hiring minimum percentage within the community, to which the Applicant said they would also explore;
  - Publicly accessible open space, to which the Applicant replied most of the proposed open space would be for passive use; and
  - Sustainable design elements such as rooftop solar or composting, to which the Applicant replied they intended to do both;
- During the public testimony portion of the Borough President's hearing, a total of twenty-four (24) speakers testified on this project with twenty-two (22) speakers in favor and two (2) against the project. Those who testified in favor of the project felt it would be an economic boon for the surrounding area, and the NYCFC Stadium would be a net community benefit to soccer fans and residents alike. Those who testified against the project felt it would create overflow problems into Flushing Bay, and that the stadium would only benefit tourists and sit vacant outside its 25-game allowance per year;
- The Borough President's Office has received fourteen (14) letters of written testimony and correspondence regarding this project, with four (4) letters in support and ten (10) letters in opposition.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the above consideration, I hereby recommend approval of this application with the following conditions:

- The Applicant team should work with NYC and NYSDOT to explore the following traffic or infrastructure changes:
  - Establish a merging lane/ramp from east-bound Northern Boulevard towards the 127 Street entrance (similar to the Northern Boulevard / Seaver Way intersection);
  - Establish a new entrance and exit ramp from the Van Wyck Expressway (North and South directions) at exits 13 N and 14 S towards existing service road at the Willets Point 129 Street location;
  - Increase the width of 127 Street from existing 70 feet to 80 feet; and
- The Applicant Team must meet conditions set forth in my Willets Point Phase II Recommendation.



**PRESIDENT, BOROUGH OF QUEENS**

01/10/2024

**DATE**