

Willets Point | Task Force Meeting 01

SUBJECT: Summary of the First Meeting of the Willets Point Task Force
DATE: June 22, 2018
TIME: Noon – 2:00pm
LOCATION: Queens Borough Hall

Purpose

This Task Force will work to identify community priorities and produce recommendations for the 61-acre Special Willets Point District (SWPD), which will be used to frame strategy and negotiations for future phases of development of the SWPD

Outline

The first Task Force meeting was focused on:

- 1) Identifying the goals and agreeing on process
- 2) Providing an overview of the Special Willets Point District and history:
 - a. Site Context
 - b. Neighborhood History
 - c. Previous Planning Efforts Through Today
 - d. 2011 Willets Point Design Guidelines
 - e. 2008 Vision & ULURP-Approved Program
 - f. Key Considerations of the SWPD
 - g. Project Status Update
 - h. Phase 1A Project Update
- 3) Provided a venue for discussion along the key planning principles

Summary of Discussion

During the discussion the Task Force members provided feedback on their priorities, vision and ideas for the future of Willets Point. Below are notes from the brainstorm that reflect priorities, ideas, and recommendations from individual Task Force members.

1. Transit-Oriented Development

- Ramp on Van Wyck – increase access; desire for parallel construction (sequencing); Concern re: traffic/transportation and mitigation; Impact to area already dense – streets, ramps need improvements; Vehicle traffic congestion relief (only Northern Blvd at Roosevelt serves area)
- Increase 7 train/LIRR capacity (transit commuter, hub, Port Washington line, AirTrain); LIRR+MTA fare parity; Multi-modal; AirTrain; Bus connection to 7 train; LIRR/bus connection
- Ferry service via Flushing Bay; ferry service citywide (to city destinations)
- Destination (Citi Field); Legacy
- Need coordination with RPA draft recommendations for transportation, efficiencies, and regional connectivity to alleviate traffic (especially impacting Flushing)
- Bridge Flushing to site, pedestrian and/or vehicular (DEC/Protected area)
- Address existing infrastructure needs while developing new areas: street repair, traffic impact (minimizing impact), need on & off ramp to expressway, school campus, police substation expansion, openspace/ball fields; City services (police, fire, health); Review of municipal services/necessities of the area (retail, grocery, pharmacy, DSNY, schools, health care, emergency, ER, St. Vincent's)
- Parking spaces (Met games) not to be part of transportation preclusion DCP/ZQA
- Gray infrastructure, sewage capacity; Sanitation services

2. A Connected Neighborhood

- Waterfront connection
- Connectivity to downtown Flushing (pedestrian bridges)
- Cultural events and programming

3. High-Density, Mixed-Use District

- Live, work, play
 - Real community gathering spaces (seniors, youth, recreational/cultural)
 - Balance of different AMI units, as well as intergenerational – grandparents/grandchildren (childproof, safe utilities); Corona example of senior housing with youth programming
 - Self-contained retail
 - Affordable housing; Affordable housing for CB7; CB set-aside/preference; Define “affordable” and “subsidized” spaces and put plan in place to keep them that way
 - Remediation (sewer infrastructure; sequencing coordinated)
 - Unique cultural assets + affordable space live/work + school (e.g. Charles River Boston / recreational); issue of becoming shallower and running out of water; long-term control plan DEP/DEC, raw sewage, retention tanks
 - Youth/seniors population: housing/center; activities; cultural
 - Movie theater
- 4. Linked Network of Streetscapes & Open Spaces**
- Connectivity over creek to downtown Flushing; Connections to Flushing
 - Community use of open spaces (gardens, farmers markets, sport facilities, playgrounds)
 - Public art commissions
 - Recreation spaces for senior and youth
- 5. Sustainable Water Management**
- Remediate Flushing Creek (new sewage capacity); Continued cleanup of Flushing Bay + Creek; Sewage treatments & management (keep Flushing creek clean!); Clean up the bay! Remediation
 - Water turbines example in Astoria
 - Green / water / soil permeable / resiliency
- 6. An Energy Efficient District**
- Windmill power
 - Totally off-grid
 - Solar intensive
- 7. Green Architecture**
- LEED
 - Recycling (minimal waste), solar energy, plant life
 - Define what “green” means
 - Addressing flooding issues
- 8. Healthy Environment**
- Farmers markets
 - Green roofs
 - Affordable quality food
 - Air quality
 - Active waterfront/recreational use; Waterfront access; Recreational activities (health/wellness programs)
 - Clean up Flushing Creek/Bay (see Boston example); issue: it’s becoming shallower
- 9. Others**
- Education: Public high school/middle school, K-8, K-6. what are the requirements? 1 high school/17 acres + campus; Tech hub, specialized HS + CTE → local preference for high school; DOE overcrowding before & after 5,000 units; Adult learning center (basic skills, ESL, resume bldg., etc.); Youth center (after school programs, etc.); Day care + UPK/3k; Daycare
 - Convention Center: Future convention center (next phase); Unconventional convention center
 - Soccer: facilities, community benefits, accessible to public, brings revenues + economic development, stadium or recreational fields, World Cup opportunity, size, # of sports in 6 acres, Orlando MLS 25k seat, all division tier 10-15k
 - Affordable artist workspace: Affordable workspace (below market rate) for artists/cultural workers (does a better job than Spaceworks, etc.); Designated units for artists/low income cultural workers

- MISC: RFP issued for area