

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITION AND
CONCESSIONS

----- X

September 25, 2017
Start: 1:28 p.m.
Recess: 3:19 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm,
16th Fl.

B E F O R E:
RAFAEL SALAMANCA, JR.
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Darlene Mealy
Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Andrew Cohen
Mark Treyger

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Jordan Press
Executive Director
Development & Planning
Government Affairs Unit
Housing Preservation and Development

Nadja Ratcliffe
Director of Homeownership Programs
Office of Development
Housing Preservation and Development

Sal D'Avola
Executive Director
Neighborhood Restore and Restored Homes

Cecilia Kushner
Senior Vice President
NYC Economic Development Corporation

Nick Molinari
Chief of Planning and Neighborhood
Development
NYC Parks

Josue Sanchez
Representative
L&M Development Partners

John Weed
Assistant Executive Director
Bronxworks

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Annie Tirschwell
Representative
Type A Projects

Lisa So
Representative
Marvel Architects

Rocky Bucano
Executive Director
Universal Hip Hop Museum

Joyce Hogi
President
Bronx Council for Environmental Quality

John Tyler Falcone
Senior Associate
Workforce and Economic Development
JobsFirstNYC

Paul Philps
District Manager
Community Board 4

John Howard Algarin
Chairperson
Parks Committee
Community Board 4

Jill Crawford
Type A Project

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS AND
2 CONCESSIONS

4

2 [sound check]

3 [pause]

4 [gavel]

5 CHAIR COHEN: Alright, good afternoon.

6 I'm Council Member Andrew Cohen, acting Chair of the
7 Subcommittee on Planning, Dispositions and
8 Concessions. Welcome everybody to today's hearing.

9 Today we will hold hearings on several NYCHA Small
10 Homes Rehab applications -- the Hope Homes Cluster
11 and the Lower Concourse North Rezoning application.

12 We will be voting on the Small Homes applications,
13 the Hope Homes applications and the other items were
14 laid over from our last meeting.

15 The first hearing will be on LU 739-742,
16 the NYCHA Small Homes Rehab application. In these
17 applications, HPD is seeking a UDAAP project approval
18 and property tax exemption for numerous properties in
19 Queens and one in Brooklyn. These applications are
20 located in the district of Council Members Cornegy,
21 Ulrich; Miller in Council District 28.

22 The approval would facilitate the
23 rehabilitation of 24 one- to four-family homes that
24 would be sold to prices affordable to families making
25

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS AND
2 CONCESSIONS

5

3 120% of AMI or less. I am now opening the hearing on
4 LU 739-742, the NYCHA Small Homes application.

5 JORDAN PRESS: Good afternoon, my name is
6 Jordan Press; I'm Executive Director for Development
7 and Planning in HPD's Government Affairs Unit.

8 Land Use No. 739, 740 and 741 consist of
9 23 single-family homes located in Queens Council
10 Districts 27, 28 and 32 and is known as Southeastern
11 Queens Small Homes NYCHA-run Cluster II.

12 Land Use No. 739 consists of three NYCHA
13 properties located at 89-24 168th Street; 210-33
14 113th Street; 102-47 187th Street; and one City-owned
15 site located at 110-60 Wood Street in Council
16 District 27.

17 Land Use No. 740 consists of 16 NYCHA
18 properties located at 116-02 139th Street; 117-31
19 135th Street; 129-23 135th Street; 129-41 135th
20 Street; 129-59 135th Street; 130-15 135th Street;
21 130-16 149th Street; 131-15 Sutter Avenue; 133-16 Van
22 Wyck Expressway; 133-18 134th Street; 147-06 Sutter
23 Avenue; 107-34 Princeton Street; 111-14 169th Street;
24 115-41 147th Street; 150-22 118th Street; 167-08
25 110th Avenue; and two City-owned properties located

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS AND
2 CONCESSIONS

6

3 at 114-47 Inwood Street and 145-36 111th Avenue in
4 Council District 28.

5 Land Use No. 741 is located at 103-16
6 Plattwood Avenue in Council District 32.

7 Each NYCHA home was foreclosed upon as a
8 result of the default on a HUD/FHA mortgage over 20
9 years ago; the homes were turned over to NYCHA by HUD
10 to operate as part of their public housing portfolio.
11 Over time the homes became vacant and are currently
12 in dire need of rehabilitation. NYCHA, with approval
13 from HUD, selected the sponsor to convey the
14 properties to and each will undergo gut
15 rehabilitation through HPD's Small Homes Rehab
16 program, which is an affordable home ownership
17 program for one- to four-family homes. The three
18 City-owned homes will be clustered with the portfolio
19 and all of the homes will be rehabilitated to meet
20 Enterprise Green Communities Certification. Upon
21 completion of the work, the sponsor will convey the
22 properties to low- to moderate-income families
23 earning up to 120% of AMI under program guidelines.
24 The sponsor has committed to conducting marketing
25 outreach events where the homes are located in order

3 to reach as many potential local applicants as
4 possible.

5 And Mr. Chair, did you say we're
6 including Land Use 742 in this round right now?
7 [background comment] Okay. [background comment,
8 laughter]. I'd be happy to include that now, before
9 any questions.

10 So Land Use No. 742 consists of an
11 amendment to a previously approved project located at
12 580 Lafayette Avenue in Brooklyn Council District 36.

13 On July 25, 2012, the City Council
14 approved Resolution No. 1461, facilitating the
15 transfer and approval of UDAAP and Article XI tax
16 benefits under the Third Party Transfer Program
17 Brooklyn, In Rem Action No. 51.

18 Subsequently, on August 8, 2012, the
19 property was conveyed to the sponsor, Neighborhood
20 Restore Housing Development Fund Corporation, for
21 redevelopment. Currently the sponsor is proposing to
22 transfer title of the property to an affiliated
23 entity known as Restoring Urban Neighborhoods, which
24 will rehabilitate 580 Lafayette Avenue, also under
25 the Small Homes Rehab NYCHA program. Under the
amended project, the sponsor will convert the

3 property into three family homeownership buildings
4 instead of four family rentals, as previously
5 approved. Upon completion, the homes will also be
6 marketed to a qualified purchaser earning no more
7 than 120% of AMI in accordance with the program.

8 In order to facilitate Land Use Nos. 739,
9 740, 741, and 742, HPD is before the Planning
10 Subcommittee seeking disposition approval for 114-47
11 Inwood Street; 145-36 11th Avenue; 110-60 Wood
12 Street; as well as UDAAP tax benefits for all 23
13 properties, including Land Use No. 742. Thank you.

14 CHAIR COHEN: Thank you. I just want to
15 sort of understand what's happening at large. HUD
16 gave the property to NYCHA; NYCHA's conveying the
17 property to not-for-profits who are going to rehab
18 them and then through an HPD program we're gonna
19 convey them to eligible purchasers who will
20 apparently, earn up to 120% of AMI.

21 JORDAN PRESS: And we're also the
22 authorized entity to request the UDAAP tax benefits
23 as well. That's correct... [crosstalk]

24 CHAIR COHEN: That's why... ultimately,
25 that's why we're here, for the... the tax benefit is
part of the package.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS AND
CONCESSIONS

9

2 JORDAN PRESS: And the disposition, yes.

3 CHAIR COHEN: And the disposition?

4 JORDAN PRESS: Yes.

5 CHAIR COHEN: But NYCHA is the... NYCHA
6 owns the property?

7 [background comments]

8 JORDAN PRESS: The three City-owned
9 properties NYCHA owns... [crosstalk]

10 CHAIR COHEN: Okay. Could... I'm sorry;
11 could you put your name on the... [crosstalk]

12 JORDAN PRESS: Yeah.

13 NADJA RATCLIFFE: Nadja Ratcliffe... Nadja
14 Ratcliffe, Director of Homeownership Programs in
15 Development at HPD.

16 CHAIR COHEN: So 23 of the homes are
17 owned by NYCHA and 3 are owned by the City?

18 NADJA RATCLIFFE: Twenty are owned by
19 NYCHA; 3 are owned by the City.

20 CHAIR COHEN: Okay. But there's... Are
21 there 24 homes or 23 homes?

22 NADJA RATCLIFFE: **[inaudible]** TPT.

23 JORDAN PRESS: And then... which is also...
24 So it's 20 plus 3, plus 1.

25 CHAIR COHEN: Plus 1.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS AND
CONCESSIONS

10

2 JORDAN PRESS: Yeah and... [interpose]

3 CHAIR COHEN: I know Jordan may have said
4 all of this, but I'm just trying to make... [crosstalk]

5 JORDAN PRESS: that... that's okay; they're
6 all **[inaudible]**...

7 CHAIR COHEN: I'm trying to prove that
8 uh... or disprove that I understood what he's saying.
9 [laugh]

10 JORDAN PRESS: So 20 plus 3 [background
11 comments] and then plus an additional one, which is
12 coming from the Third Party Transfer...

13 CHAIR COHEN: Okay.

14 JORDAN PRESS: program.

15 CHAIR COHEN: Do you know what the
16 breakdown is of one-family, two-family, three-family,
17 and four-family?

18 JORDAN PRESS: I believe these are all...
19 these are all one-family?

20 NADJA RATCLIFFE: All two-family, except
21 for one three-family.

22 CHAIR COHEN: All twos...

23 NADJA RATCLIFFE: Except for the last
24 TPT; that'll be a three-family.

25

2 CHAIR COHEN: That'll be a three-family.
3 Okay. Is that... [interpose]

4 JORDAN PRESS: We're... We're... We're going
5 to ask the sponsor, Sal D'Avola, to introduce himself
6 and provide clarity...

7 CHAIR COHEN: Welcome.

8 JORDAN PRESS: as he always can do.

9 [background comments]

10 SAL D'AVOLA: Sal D'Avola, Executive
11 Director of Neighborhood Restore and Restored Homes;
12 we're the nonprofit that's gonna take title to these
13 properties.

14 The NYCHA houses are all single-family;
15 the HPD ones are all single-family; the Third Party
16 Transfer one at 580 Lafayette is currently a four-
17 family that we're converting to a three-family.

18 CHAIR COHEN: So 23 ones and 1 four?

19 NADJA RATCLIFFE: Correct.

20 [background comments]

21 CHAIR COHEN: 'Kay.

22 JORDAN PRESS: Which will become a three.

23 CHAIR COHEN: Which will become a three.

24 That's good, 'cause anecdotally, I have concerns
25 about the people's ability to manage the multi-

2 families, but I guess in this case that's not really
3 an issue; the three-family you'll make sure... make
4 extra effort to make sure that that ends up in the
5 hands of someone who can manage a three-family house.

6 SAL D'AVOLA: Yeah, all of our homeowners
7 will go through homeownership training; they'll all
8 be required to do that before they qualify to
9 purchase the homes and one of the classes that is
10 offered is landlord training for the multi-family
11 properties.

12 CHAIR COHEN: How long is the tax break
13 for? What is the duration of the tax benefit?

14 [background comments]

15 NADJA RATCLIFFE: Twenty years.

16 CHAIR COHEN: Twenty years. And you've
17 explained this at hearings before and maybe I
18 understood, but I'm gonna try to understand one more
19 time. If someone... I'm an eligible, qualified
20 purchaser; I purchase the home; at 10 years I decide
21 I wanna move; what happens?

22 NADJA RATCLIFFE: There will be some
23 level of subsidy... There'd be some level of subsidy
24 that would have to be repaid back to the City, but as

2 far as the tax exemption, it would go to the next
3 owner who resides in the home.

4 CHAIR COHEN: The tax exemption is sort
5 of a... you get that benefit in the year you get it and
6 that just...

7 NADJA RATCLIFFE: It'll stay with the
8 property as long as it's owner-occupied. [background
9 comment] That's the key; it has to be owner-
10 occupied.

11 CHAIR COHEN: But what about the HPD..
12 Besides the tax benefit, what else is HPD giving
13 these... what else in the subsidy?

14 NADJA RATCLIFFE: We provide funding for
15 the construction so that we can keep the house prices
16 low.

17 CHAIR COHEN: You're financing the
18 rehabilitation?

19 NADJA RATCLIFFE: Yes. A portion of it,
20 yes.

21 SAL D'AVOLA: Along with private
22 financing. There's a facility that we have; we will
23 be getting construction financing from a private
24 lender and there will also be additional subsidy from
25 HPD in the deal and we will also be applying for

2 State Affordable Housing Corporation subsidy. Each
3 homeowner will have an enforcement note and mortgage
4 that's tied to it when they purchase the home; the
5 enforcement note and mortgage will actually lay out
6 the terms under which the homeowners will be
7 obligated to remain in the properties, and if, in
8 your instance, if someone were to sell the home
9 within 10 years, depending on the enforcement note
10 and mortgage, there probably will be some recapture
11 of funding that was put into the deal. So the money
12 would come back and HPD and the State would have to
13 approved the sale of that property because the
14 enforcement note and mortgage will probably be -- I
15 think it's 20 years..

16 NADJA RATCLIFFE: Right.

17 SAL D'AVOLA: is what the enforcement
18 note and mortgage is. So for the period of 20 years,
19 any refinancing or any sale of that property would
20 have to come back to the City of New York and the
21 City of New York would have to approve that
22 subsequent sale, and it's at that point when they
23 would look at the documents and determine how much
24 would be recaptured, in terms of subsidy.

25 [background comment]

2 CHAIR COHEN: Can the purchaser sell it
3 for any amount that they want to; is there...

4 SAL D'AVOLA: The enforcement note and
5 mortgage that we are talking to the City about -- and
6 we've done one cluster of these houses already; we
7 are actually in the process of completing 19 NYCHA
8 homes, so the assumption is is that those enforcement
9 notes and mortgages will be the same for the second
10 cluster. There are nuances in the enforcement note
11 and mortgage that are tied to the affordability on
12 the subsequent purchaser. A portion of these homes
13 we are selling cannot exceed 80% of AMI and a portion
14 of these homes cannot exceed 120% of AMI; it's a
15 50/50 split essentially in the homes. On subsequent
16 resale of these properties, if one of the homes was
17 sold to someone who was below 80% of AMI, let's say;
18 when they go to sell the home within the recapture
19 period, if they sell it to someone who is also below
20 80% of AMI; then they are not required to actually
21 repay those subsidies; those subsidies will transfer
22 to that subsequent homeowner.

23 CHAIR COHEN: If I qualify, do I put
24 money down? I mean, is there...

3 SAL D'AVOLA: Yes, there's a... it's a
4 mortgage; I mean they are affordable housing
5 mortgages, there are lenders that have community
6 lending products for this population of people, but
7 there will be a requirement of at least 5% down.

8 CHAIR COHEN: Five percent. But you're
9 gonna put the whole package together; once we
10 identify an eligible purchaser...

11 SAL D'AVOLA: We will abide by HPD's
12 marketing guidelines. So HPD has a set of marketing
13 guidelines and they have a plan; we will work out a
14 plan on how we identify purchasers to this -- it will
15 be a lottery; through that lottery we will then have
16 certain preference categories that are laid out by
17 HPD in the marketing plan; we will then interview all
18 of these purchasers, interested purchasers and we
19 will qualify them and then they eventually will have
20 to get a mortgage, and so they will also be
21 underwritten by a lender who's gonna look at that to
22 make sure that they can afford that mortgage.

23 CHAIR COHEN: Is the lender someone
24 you're gonna work with too or they could...

25 SAL D'AVOLA: Yes, we have a pool of
lenders that have this community lending product

2 that's available to these purchasers, and so we
3 recommend to interested purchasers three or four
4 different lenders to talk to about this.

5 CHAIR COHEN: So the ultimate price of
6 the home is gonna a function of all of the programs
7 more so than whatever the market might bear for these
8 homes?

9 SAL D'AVOLA: These will all be below
10 market.

11 CHAIR COHEN: Okay. We've been joined by
12 Council Member Treyger; I was gonna ask Council
13 Member Treyger if you have any questions.

14 [background comment] I know that myself and Council
15 Member Treyger though are big fans of programs that
16 ultimately give people an opportunity for
17 homeownership and that is what we're doing today, so
18 I am very pleased. So I'm now going to ask if
19 there's members of the public who wish to testify?
20 That's what I'm gonna do; I'm gonna ask if there's
21 members of the public who wish to testify? Seeing
22 none. Alright.

23 I'm now gonna close the public hearing on
24 LU 739-742 and I'm gonna go on to our next hearing,
25 which will be on Preconsidered LU -- the Hope Homes

3 Cluster Tax Exemption application. In this
4 application, HPD is seeking approval of an amendment
5 to a previously approved tax exemption for several
6 properties in The Speaker's district in Manhattan.
7 The amendment will extend the term of the exemption
8 from 10 years to 20 years. I am now opening the
9 public hearing on the Hope Homes Cluster application.
10 Mr. Press.

11 JORDAN PRESS: Thank you. This
12 preconsidered item consists of an amendment to a
13 previously approved project in our HPD's Neighborhood
14 Homes Program known as the Hope Homes Cluster.

15 On June 28, 2001, Resolution No. 1987,
16 the City Council approved the disposition of 14
17 properties, all within the Borough of Manhattan. Of
18 the 14 buildings, 4 are in Council District 9 and 10
19 are in Council District 8. More specifically, the
20 locations are: Block 1644, Lot 65; Block 1749, Lot
21 16; Block 1750, Lots 57 and 58; Block 1751, Lot 50;
22 Block 1783, Lots 109 and 110; Block 1785, Lot 8;
23 Block 1796, Lots 41 and 21; Block 1806, Lots 37 and
24 111; Block 1807, Lot 113; and Block 1796, Lot 4.

25 The original approval allowed for the
redevelopment of the properties into two-, three- and

3 four-family homes, which HPD conveyed on May 13,
4 2002. Upon completion of the rehabilitation, the
5 sponsor began selling the buildings to homebuyers,
6 which occurred between 2004 and 2006. As part of the
7 original project approval, each property received
8 UDAAP tax benefits for a period of 10 years which
9 have now expired. The program also had an owner-
10 occupancy requirement. Once that obligation was met,
11 the owner was free to sell the property with few
12 restrictions.

13 It has been brought to HPD's attention
14 that the homebuyers were originally given information
15 indicating that the UDAAP tax benefits were to be
16 granted for a period of 20 years rather than 10
17 years. To date, many owners are still in occupancy
18 and are experiencing hardship due to the
19 implementation of real property taxes, given that the
20 10-year tax exemption has expired. After very
21 careful consideration, HPD is before the Planning
22 Subcommittee seeking to extend the UDAAP tax benefits
23 for an additional 10 years, for a total of 20 years
24 under UDAAP statutes. The exemption will effectively
25 pick up where the original 10-year period ended. It
should be noted that under UDAAP statutes, during the

3 last 10 years of the exemption phase the benefits
4 will decrease in equal annual amounts of 10% until
5 full taxes are due.

6 Also, as a requirement of HPD's
7 homeownership programs, eligible property owners will
8 be required to document owner occupancy by entering
9 into a regulatory agreement for the duration of the
10 extended tax benefit.

11 This request has the support of Speaker
12 Mark-Viverito and Council Member Bill Perkins. Thank
13 you.

14 CHAIR COHEN: You know first I'll say
15 something nice about HPD -- **[inaudible]** once in a
16 while -- but it does seem that HPD is really going
17 that extra mile to try to work something out with
18 people who have in good faith entered into this
19 program, purchased these homes; whether it was
20 miscommunication or whatever happened, to try to come
21 up with a resolution that is fair and equitable, so I
22 do think that HPD deserves credit for that.

23 JORDAN PRESS: Thank you. The statute
24 does allow for 20 years; I'm a little bit unclear as
25 to why it was only done for 10, but this was the
homeowners' expectation and after, again, very

3 careful consideration, we believe this is the right
4 thing to do.

5 CHAIR COHEN: I'm just curious; I haven't
6 conducted a real estate closing in a long time, but
7 wouldn't a title search have told the owners that
8 they had a 10-year tax exemption versus a 20-year tax
9 exemption?

10 JORDAN PRESS: I don't know that it would
11 have been the title search; the 10-year exemption was
12 attached to the resolution that the Council passed;
13 DOF is then responsible for implementing that tax
14 exemption. I think it's fair to say that a very
15 diligent attorney on behalf of the purchasers may
16 have caught that, but our property tax system is
17 quite arcane in the City and I can understand how it
18 could've been missed.

19 CHAIR COHEN: Yeah, I can too I guess,
20 but it sort of just circles back to my initial
21 concern that it's important that we really offer a
22 deep level of support to people who you don't have a
23 tradition of being homeowners of how complicated a
24 transaction that they're entering into and I mean
25 this is clearly -- if you thought you had a 20-year
tax exemption and you had a 10-year tax exemption;

3 that is, you know, thousands and thousands and
4 thousands of dollars that you didn't anticipate; it's
5 important that we... and again, I think HPD really
6 seems to have stepped up to the plate to try to solve
7 the problem, but again, trying to make sure that
8 people who are purchasing these homes really know
9 what they're purchasing.

10 JORDAN PRESS: We will take the praise
11 and leave the room **[inaudible]** [laughter].

12 CHAIR COHEN: Excellent. Alright.
13 [background comments] Alright, I'm gonna go back to
14 where I **[inaudible]** here; I'm not gonna do that. I'm
15 gonna do our last hearing today; it will be on
16 LU 747-750, the Lower Concourse North Rezoning.

17 The application submitted by the New York
18 City Economic Development Corporation seeks approval
19 of a disposition of City-owned property, zoning map
20 amendment, text amendment, and special permit. These
21 approvals would facilitate the development of the
22 site located on the Harlem River, just north of the
23 145th Street Bridge in the Bronx. The proposed
24 development would include over 1,000 units of housing
25 and a mix of retail, office and community facility
leases, and a significant amount of publicly

3 accessible open space. The development site is
4 located in The Speaker's district and she was
5 planning to be here today, but the hurricane and
6 crisis in Puerto Rico have pulled her away. In her
7 absence she has asked me to read a brief statement.

8 From The Speaker:

9 "At almost five acres, the Lower
10 Concourse North site is one of the few large plots of
11 City-owned land in the South Bronx and has remained
12 undeveloped for over 20 years, so a site of this size
13 requires us to make sure we are doing everything we
14 can to achieve a variety of policy goals.

15 We know that open space has been a key
16 issue for this project from the start. There has
17 been a lot of confusion and miscommunication about
18 the plans for the site, which makes it even more
19 critical that this project deliver high-quality,
20 publicly accessible open space for the community,
21 which includes waterfront access and an extension to
22 Mill Pond Park.

23 Affordable housing is another core
24 concern, with 600 units planned for Phase 1 and up to
25 400 units in Phase 2. We need to ensure that these
units will reach a deep level of affordability

3 including units at 30% and 40% of AMI not just for
4 Phase 1, but also in Phase 2.

5 The schools in the adjacent district are
6 overcrowded and this project will only increase those
7 challenges, so we need to ensure that we are building
8 school seats as we are building housing.

9 These are all significant and serious
10 concerns and I look forward to continuing the
11 dialogue to see if we can address these issues in the
12 limited amount of time we have."

13 I am now opening the hearing on LU 747-
14 750, the Lower Concourse North Rezoning. If you guys
15 could introduce yourself, please.

16 CECILIA KUSHNER: Good afternoon, Council
17 Member Cohen and Council Member Treyger. My name is
18 Cecilia Kushner; I'm the Senior Vice President of the
19 Economic Development Corporation. I'm joined here by
20 Nick Molinari from the Parks Department. Thank you
21 for the opportunity to discuss this very important
22 project.

23 As The Speaker mentioned in her remarks,
24 this project is a unique opportunity to develop one
25 of the last large vacant waterfront sites owned by
the City to deliver on multiple community and City

3 objectives in the South Bronx; namely, affordable
4 housing, high-quality waterfront open space and
5 cultural and community amenities.

6 I'm happy to be joined today by the
7 development team that was selected by EDC to develop
8 the site; it's a joint venture partnership between
9 L&M Development Partners and Type A Projects, which
10 is a woman-owned emerging developer. The development
11 team and many of their project partners are here
12 today to walk you through the details of the Bronx
13 Point projects; I don't wanna steal their thunder,
14 but I wanted to give some context to the work that
15 the City and EDC in particular have been doing in the
16 neighborhood so you understand how the Bronx Point
17 projects fit overall.

18 And before I begin, I also wanna thank
19 The Speaker's staff -- George Sarkissian and Rebecca
20 Crimmins, who have been instrumental in helping us
21 coming to today.

22 So the Bronx Point project is a key
23 component of the Lower Concourse investment plan,
24 which is a \$194 million infrastructure and open space
25 investment that was announced by the Mayor in the
26 2016 State of the City and which is currently being

3 implemented. To guide and prioritize this \$194
4 million allocation, EDC conducted investigative
5 analysis on the state of existing infrastructure and
6 through interactive workshops and community visioning
7 sessions worked closely with local residents in
8 Community Board 1 and 4 in the Bronx to identify the
9 four **[inaudible]** community priorities that are on the
10 slide behind me.

11 So the four priorities that the community
12 really drove home for us were, first, a desire for
13 development of mixed-income, affordable housing that
14 meets the needs of the people in the surrounding area
15 but also provides option for moderate- and middle-
16 income Bronx residents who wanna stay in the South
17 Bronx but struggle to find quality housing options.

18 The second goal was a strong desire for
19 more open space including opportunities to extend the
20 Harlem River waterfront greenway.

21 The third one was community facility uses
22 that benefit the local community including activities
23 for youth and cultural and educational space.

24 And the fourth one was access to jobs and
25 workforce development opportunities.

3 In response to these priorities, the City
4 has committed to a number of projects to use the \$194
5 million allocation, including the acquisition of
6 building of the new waterfront park that will be 2.3
7 acres that is at 144th Street. This is a park that
8 was mapped parkland during a 2009 City Planning
9 rezoning in the area, but it was never funded and
10 therefore the City never moved forward with actually
11 creating the park.

12 We also are working through a full-depth
13 reconstruction of Exterior Street which is the major
14 street under the Deegan Highway, including new sewers
15 and water line; the redesign of three very large and
16 dangerous intersections at 149th Street, 144th Street
17 and 138th Street.

18 The Bronx Point project in the Lower
19 Concourse North site, which is our third kind of
20 major investment, and finally, broadband
21 infrastructure to spur the area potential as a jobs
22 hub.

23 All of these investments are currently
24 under various stages of advancement, but broadly, to
25 update you, we aim to complete the street and sewer
26 infrastructure in 2021, secure the title for the park

3 at 144th Street by early next year and open the new
4 park in 2022.

5 Redevelopment of the Lower Concourse
6 North site into the Bronx Point redevelopment is
7 critical in realizing its overall vision for the
8 area. Historically an industrial site, the only
9 remaining **[inaudible]** building that was on the site
10 was demolished in the early 2000s; since then, the
11 site has remained vacant with its waterfront in
12 disrepair and activities only with temporary uses.
13 Over time, many ideas for this site were discussed
14 but were never funded, including using it for open
15 space, indoor recreational uses and even a velodrome
16 during the 2012 Olympic bid.

17 Lower Concourse North is one of the very
18 few remaining vacant City-owned parcels in this
19 neighborhood; its large size allows the City to
20 deliver on all of the goals that were established
21 through the community process that we held for the
22 last couple of years.

23 So these are the land use actions that
24 are in front of the City Council for approval. To
25 make sure that the site produces the best possible
design, we've crafted special rezoning requirements

3 as part of an extension of the new subdistrict in the
4 Special Harlem River District, which is to the south
5 of our site. Additional land use actions for the
6 project include disposition authority, a rezoning
7 from M2-1 to an R7-2 with a C2-5 overlay to allow for
8 a mixed-use development program, the mapping of MIH,
9 as well as the establishment of the Waterfront Access
10 Plan that guarantees quality waterfront open space.
11 And finally, we are also seeking a special permit to
12 waive requirements for parking spaces for units that
13 are above 80% of AMI to support the affordability
14 goal of the project as well as in recognition of the
15 transit access of the area and the existing large
16 supply of parking space directly across from our
17 site.

18 So just to conclude: since the mayoral
19 announcement of investment in the Lower Concourse
20 neighborhood we've been committed to work really
21 closely with the community to make the best of our
22 money and to make sure that the City delivers. The
23 Bronx Point is a really important project in this
24 endeavor for the City; as part of this process, we've
25 committed to form also a dedicated working group that
will meet with CB4; local stakeholders to provide

2 input and make sure that the implementation of both
3 the City's investment as well as the Bronx Point
4 project is done in pure collaboration. So with this
5 site and the **[inaudible]** \$194 million investment in
6 the area, we believe this improvement will be a
7 source of pride for residents and an opportunity to
8 address longstanding issues for continued engagement.

9 Thank you for your time. I can take any
10 questions or can wait for my colleague at Parks to
11 give his remarks and then we can take questions
12 together.

13 CHAIR COHEN: Yeah, I think I'd prefer
14 the testimony first.

15 CECILIA KUSHNER: Okay.

16 NICK MOLINARI: Good afternoon, Council
17 Member Cohen, members of the Subcommittee and other
18 members of the City Council. I am Nick Molinari,
19 Chief of Planning and Neighborhood Development at New
20 York City Parks. Thank you for providing me with an
21 opportunity to offer testimony on EDC's project at
22 Lower Concourse North.

23 Parks is committed to expanding
24 waterfront access along the Harlem River and
25 improving open space, and we have many projects that

3 work to accomplish this. Specifically, we worked to
4 complete Mill Pond Park, refurbished the historic
5 High Bridge, and completed a portion of Bridge Park
6 at the bridge's footing. We continue to work towards
7 completion and are also pursuing acquisition of the
8 Putnam Rail Line, which could create an important
9 greenway connection between the Harlem River
10 waterfront and Van Cortlandt Park and areas further
11 to the north. Partnering with Bronx Council for
12 Environmental Quality and New York State Department
13 of State, we completed the Harlem River Brownfield
14 Opportunity Area Report, which outlines a
15 comprehensive vision for the Bronx waterfront of the
16 Harlem River. To the south, we are also working
17 closely with EDC to acquire and develop a 2.3-acre
18 site as a waterfront park at 144th Street.

19 The Lower Concourse North project will
20 help us to achieve our goals of expanding waterfront
21 access and improving public open space along the
22 Harlem River. It will provide substantial, high-
23 quality open space and presents an opportunity to
24 provide amenities the community has been requesting,
25 and expands towards a more continuous waterfront
esplanade. The residential and commercial uses on

3 the site will also bring more eyes on the neighboring
4 Mill Pond Park, which we've found can help make
5 people feel safer.

6 While we believe this project will
7 accomplish many of the City's objectives, we also
8 understand that some member of the community feel
9 that this site is already parkland. I would like to
10 take the time now to address those concerns and
11 review the site's history.

12 In 2006, New York City Parks was assigned
13 jurisdiction of Piers 1 through 5, the area between
14 the Major Deegan Exit 6 Ramp and the 145th Street
15 Bridge. The mere assignment of those parcels to New
16 York City Parks did not dedicate them as parkland.
17 Although some may associate Pier 5 with the Yankee
18 Stadium and Gateway Center projects, a commitment to
19 create parkland at Pier 5 was not part of either
20 project.

21 In connection with the new Yankee
22 Stadium, a total of 22.42 acres of parkland was
23 alienated. Replacement parkland (a total 24.56
24 acres) was acquired and developed, including Piers 2
25 and 3, which were mapped as parkland.

3 Piers 4 and 5 are not mapped parkland.

4 Pier 4 was developed as open space in connection with
5 the Gateway Center development to the east of the
6 Major Deegan Expressway.

7 After New York City Parks was assigned
8 the Pier 5 property in 2006, the area remained vacant
9 and unimproved. As a sizable vacant site, it was
10 used in part by various entities for construction
11 staging, for a pilot demonstration capturing storm
12 water runoff, and for occasional circuses and
13 carnivals. Pier 5 has since been transferred to the
14 New York City Department of Small Business Services.

15 As the steward of parkland, Parks is
16 committed to creating and sustaining thriving parks
17 for all New Yorkers. We are avid protectors of this
18 incredibly important resource. Although Pier 5 has
19 been in Parks' portfolio, it is not mapped or
20 otherwise dedicated parkland, and Parks supports
21 EDC's proposal for the site as it delivers new open
22 space and expands waterfront access to the public.

23 I thank you for allowing me to testify
24 before you today and I'm happy to answer any
25 questions you may have.

2 CHAIR COHEN: Okay. I guess sort of the
3 predicate matter; you both mentioned the park at
4 144th Street and that that was... the City committed to
5 that in 2009?

6 CECILIA KUSHNER: The City mapped it
7 parkland as part of the Harlem River Special District
8 rezoning that was conducted and led by City Planning
9 at the time. So there was a land use action to map
10 it as parkland, but then the City needs to take the
11 action to actually put money in its budget to pay for
12 the acquisition of private property and realize the
13 development and the creation of a new park, which
14 this Administration has been doing through our
15 investments in the area.

16 CHAIR COHEN: But the 2009 commitment, we
17 still haven't acquired the land... [crosstalk]

18 CECILIA KUSHNER: We're in the process of
19 acquiring them. We're in the process of going
20 through the eminent domain process of these
21 properties.

22 CHAIR COHEN: It seems like it's taking a
23 long time; 2009 was a long time ago.

24 CECILIA KUSHNER: So nothing happened
25 between 2009 when it was mapped parkland and the

3 announcement in the State of the City in 2015 from
4 this Administration to fund the acquisition of the
5 private property. So since then we've moved forward;
6 we've had an eminent domain public hearing in the
7 winter of 2016; we're now going through the courts
8 and through all the process that is required by the
9 City to actually acquire private property under
10 legislation, and then by early probably February or
11 March the courts will actually give the City title
12 for these properties.

13 CHAIR COHEN: Are we using eminent domain
14 -- whoever the entity that owns the property now
15 doesn't wanna sell it?

16 CECILIA KUSHNER: There are three
17 different property owners, it's three different
18 properties; there is a wide variation of willingness
19 to sell and willingness to negotiate with the City, I
20 would say. But all property owners are waiting for
21 the full court process to take action prior to
22 negotiating with the City.

23 CHAIR COHEN: Okay. But you think the
24 acquisition phase will be completed..

25 CECILIA KUSHNER: Sure. Yeah, like the
site was... the three properties were mapped as

2 parkland, so the City needs to go through the
3 process, but the City is very confident... [crosstalk]

4 CHAIR COHEN: I'm sorry; did you say a
5 timeline for when you think that acquisition will be
6 completed?

7 CECILIA KUSHNER: Sure, sure. So we
8 think we will get title, which allows the City then
9 to kick in like design, by early next year, like
10 February or March we should be able to get title for
11 the three properties. Then we'll work with Parks
12 for... [crosstalk]

13 NICK MOLINARI: Yeah...

14 CECILIA KUSHNER: That's right.

15 NICK MOLINARI: if you go through the
16 eminent domain process, it can take a number of
17 years, but once you [inaudible] title, you can start
18 improving the property.

19 CECILIA KUSHNER: That's right, and that
20 allows the City to actually fund funding towards
21 creating the park.

22 CHAIR COHEN: Okay. I mean unfortunately
23 it still sounds like we're a ways away though before
24 people are enjoying a park.

25 CECILIA KUSHNER: Yeah...

3 CHAIR COHEN: Yeah, okay.

4 CECILIA KUSHNER: a few years away.

5 CHAIR COHEN: Okay. I guess also I just
6 have concern, you know not exactly in the project,
7 but is school capacity; [background comment] I think
8 that people are concerned -- you're talking about a
9 thousand units; how does this project fit into the
10 scheme of the current capacity; are you working with
11 SCA in terms of developing additional capacity, if
12 needed?

13 CECILIA KUSHNER: Sure. So for our
14 projects, in the final EIS, the environmental review
15 documents, we have a commitment letter for SCA and
16 EDC to monitor the project; that's the way we deal
17 with school impact for projects that will be
18 happening in the future; that allows the City to
19 really year by year have a better sense of like when
20 the project will be delivered, how many families are
21 expected in the project; how many school kids are
22 expected in the project so that the City can be a
23 little bit more granular about the future needs, so
24 that's how we're dealing with our projects. But it
25 is true that currently in the subdistrict in which
our project is located; absent our project, there is

2 a school need today. So we understand that doesn't
3 make sense from a planning perspective to plan for
4 future kids if you cannot serve existing kids, so
5 we're working really closely with SCA to try to find
6 a solution to the existing school need.

7 CHAIR COHEN: I mean just as a Bronx
8 council member, I can tell you that there's not
9 enough seats and the scale of this project would be a
10 real concern to me if there wasn't a real... a
11 meaningful commitment; not just a desire, but sort of
12 a plan to increase capacity in terms of seats..
13 [crosstalk]

14 CECILIA KUSHNER: Yeah; understood.

15 CHAIR COHEN: You know I am sort of
16 familiar with the site and it's not that easy to get
17 to.

18 CECILIA KUSHNER: Uhm-hm.

19 CHAIR COHEN: How is that gonna... How is
20 that ultimately gonna work, other than -- 'cause I
21 like to get off at 153rd Street and kind of barrel
22 down... [crosstalk]

23 CECILIA KUSHNER: And then make your way
24 down? Okay.

2 CHAIR COHEN: I come down the ramp and
3 then...

4 CECILIA KUSHNER: Yeah.

5 CHAIR COHEN: you go under to the market
6 there...

7 CECILIA KUSHNER: Yeah.

8 CHAIR COHEN: I... I guess you can... as you
9 come down there's a stop sign that there is not much
10 reason to stop at now, but I do...

11 CECILIA KUSHNER: Yeah.

12 CHAIR COHEN: but ultimately there would
13 be I guess traffic there; is that it?

14 CECILIA KUSHNER: Uhm yeah. So I think
15 you're completely correct that right now Exterior
16 Street, like under the Major Deegan, really is a
17 barrier to pedestrian safety and just to people
18 getting to the waterfront and being able to really
19 enjoy like Mill Pond Park, which is why part of like
20 the... a significant investment that is part of \$194
21 million allocation... [interpose]

22 CHAIR COHEN: This is south... like there's
23 a tennis bubble [sic] there; this is south of there?

24

25

2 CECILIA KUSHNER: Correct. Correct. You
3 have the tennis bubble, you have Mill Pond Park and
4 then our site is right next to... [crosstalk]

5 CHAIR COHEN: Right at...

6 CECILIA KUSHNER: right next to the
7 bridge, right next to... So the intersection that is
8 the one that would really lead to our park is the
9 149th Street intersection...

10 CHAIR COHEN: That's a crazy...

11 CECILIA KUSHNER: it's a very, very
12 dangerous intersection; each time our team goes
13 there, we always wonder whether or not we're gonna
14 make it across the street. Part of the \$194 million
15 investment that we're making is a complete redesign
16 of this intersection. So the three major
17 intersections that we're completely redesigning with
18 pedestrian safety and **[inaudible]** in mind are 149th
19 Street, 144th Street, which would be right at the
20 entrance of the new park, and 144th Street is the
21 only street that goes from the west side of the
22 neighborhood directly into the neighborhood, and
23 138th Street. So the idea is that people can
24 actually cross these streets safely getting to the
25 other side, where now, with Bronx Point and the new

2 park, there is actually a reason for folks to go and
3 cross the street.

4 CHAIR COHEN: There will be very little
5 access from the north though; right?

6 CECILIA KUSHNER: I mean you'll continue
7 to have -- How north is north?

8 CHAIR COHEN: North of 149th Street; I
9 don't know how you kinda get over there.

10 CECILIA KUSHNER: Oh. Yeah, I mean
11 there's like a... we're looking at like all of
12 transportation -- you're right; we need to like
13 strike a balance between pedestrian safety and the
14 traffic flow of the Major... [crosstalk]

15 CHAIR COHEN: I'm not even sure
16 pedestrians **[inaudible]**.

17 CECILIA KUSHNER: right? And so whether
18 or not like once you've taken care of 149th you need
19 other points to cross, like higher up on 150th and
20 like all the subsequent streets is something we're
21 also looking at.

22 CHAIR COHEN: When would those traffic
23 improvements be implemented?

24 CECILIA KUSHNER: Sure. So we're in
25 concept design right now and we have a designer; that

2 takes about 20 months to work with DOT for like the
3 exact kind of circulation design; the idea is that
4 it's implemented with a brand new intersection by
5 2021.

6 CHAIR COHEN: I'm not 100% sure what this
7 question means exactly, but I'm gonna ask it anyway.
8 A pedestrian circulation impact was identified in
9 your EIS to the subway at 149th and Grand Concourse;
10 can you explain how this is being addressed? I'm not
11 sure that you can understand what that question
12 means, but it... [interpose]

13 CECILIA KUSHNER: I think... I think I do;
14 I'll give... [crosstalk]

15 CHAIR COHEN: Okay.

16 CECILIA KUSHNER: **[inaudible]**. So in the
17 EIS that we did for the site, there is pedestrian
18 impact; it is mainly due to a residential building
19 that is on 149th Street that is putting its garbage
20 out in a way that is blocking pedestrian access to
21 the site, and that is the main reason why we have an
22 impact, so we're working with Sanitation to see who
23 their operation... [crosstalk]

24 CHAIR COHEN: Is that on the north side
25 of 149th?

2 CECILIA KUSHNER: I think so. Yeah.
3 Yeah. Yeah. So we're working with Sanitation to
4 resolve the issue.

5 CHAIR COHEN: I guess Hostos has most of
6 the property on the south... [crosstalk]

7 CECILIA KUSHNER: On the south; that's
8 right. That's right.

9 CHAIR COHEN: Okay. I have questions for
10 the developer. Mr. Treyger; do you have any
11 questions for this panel? Please.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you,
13 Mr. Chair. Just a couple of questions, and I think
14 the Chair alluded to it before, but just for
15 clarification. So a lot of times we go through these
16 actions and the illustrations look pretty cool and
17 things look very nice, but we have to be very upfront
18 and blunt and honest with residents about this and
19 manage their expectations, [background comment] so
20 you have not acquired all the properties yet that
21 we're talking about as far as future park; is that
22 correct; that's still in the process?

23 CECILIA KUSHNER: Sure. So for the 144th
24 Street park, which is not part of the actions that
25 are in front of City Council for hearing... [crosstalk]

2 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay.

3 CECILIA KUSHNER: they're just for
4 context of what the City is doing..

5 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay.

6 CECILIA KUSHNER: we are in the process
7 for eminent domain and the City is extremely
8 confident in its ability to be able to get title for
9 the three properties early next year.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: So forgive me;
11 I'm not... this is not my district, but as I'm trying
12 to understand this, are those parks close or nearby?

13 CECILIA KUSHNER: They're three blocks
14 south of the Bronx Point site for which we have a
15 hearing today.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay, alright.
17 But to be clear, you haven't yet acquired these
18 properties?

19 CECILIA KUSHNER: We're in the process of
20 acquiring them, correct.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Alright..
22 [interpose]

23 CECILIA KUSHNER: I wish the eminent
24 domain process was faster, trust me.

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay, I hear
3 you; I think there's a couple of those actions in
4 Coney Island as well.

5 CECILIA KUSHNER: That's right.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Now with regards
7 to the housing plans [background comment] for these
8 sites; the Chair alluded to a number of 1,000 units;
9 is that correct? What do... [interpose]

10 CECILIA KUSHNER: That's the maximum
11 capacity for the site, correct.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay. And is
13 there an AMI breakdown yet?

14 CECILIA KUSHNER: Yes and the development
15 team that's coming right after us... [interpose]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: They're gonna...
17 They're gonna... They're gonna discuss that...

18 [crosstalk]

19 CECILIA KUSHNER: correct -- will be able
20 to walk you through, yeah.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay. I also
22 didn't hear anything about local hiring.

23 CECILIA KUSHNER: They will do the same.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: That's gonna be...

25 [crosstalk]

2 CECILIA KUSHNER: That's right.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: But what is...
4 from your end though... [crosstalk]

5 CECILIA KUSHNER: Yeah.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: what... what can
7 be done from the City's perspective to build capacity
8 now... [interpose]

9 CECILIA KUSHNER: Sure.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: because
11 something that I'm already dealing with in my
12 district that I want to address I guess in a more
13 city-wide basis, is that whenever these projects come
14 down the pipe we hear about local hiring and then the
15 excuse is, well many residents lack the capacity
16 [background comments] to work in local hiring; since
17 these things are still a year or two or more away,
18 what are we doing now to build capacity at this very
19 moment...

20 CECILIA KUSHNER: Yeah.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: to help make
22 sure that there is local hiring?

23 CECILIA KUSHNER: No, you're totally
24 right; I mean we need two things to happen in the
25 development so there are jobs available and so that

2 developers are required to seek kind of local and
3 give equal opportunity to local folks for these jobs
4 and then local folks on the ground need to actually
5 be ready to take these jobs. Here I think like we --
6 and you're exactly right, it's a lot of capital
7 investment that the City is doing; this is a very
8 large project, so we began to work building capacity
9 on the ground; we have an organization here that's
10 gonna speak, JobsFirst; that's what they're doing is
11 organizing all local non-for-profit that works on
12 building capacity for local residents to get into job
13 training and be ready when jobs come online, and so
14 they are already beginning to build a network and
15 some capacity locally, so they can talk you through
16 that. The developer that was picked for the project
17 as well is working with Bronxworks, which is another
18 local organization that does a lot of capacity
19 building, and so they're fully integrating that
20 thinking into their work. So you'll have two
21 testimonies coming through that can talk to you in
22 detail about how we seek to do this in this project
23 and in this neighborhood.

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Yeah, because
3 we're talking about a significant investment...

4 [crosstalk]

5 CECILIA KUSHNER: That's right.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: \$194 million is
7 nothing to sneeze at... [crosstalk]

8 CECILIA KUSHNER: Sure. Yeah. Yeah.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: and we wanna
10 make sure that that creates an impact in the local
11 community; that it doesn't job benefit the
12 development team, but benefits certainly the
13 residents [background comment] who need help the
14 most... [crosstalk]

15 CECILIA KUSHNER: Local... Yeah, it's a key
16 goal of ours here, so we completely agree.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay, very good.
18 Thank you, Chair for the time.

19 CHAIR COHEN: I just have a few more
20 things that either I thought of or I missed it. One;
21 I just -- in terms of the -- you said the maximum
22 capacity for the site is 1,000 units, but it's your
23 intention to phase development. Why is that?

24 CECILIA KUSHNER: Why are we phasing
25 development?

2 CHAIR COHEN: Yeah.

3 CECILIA KUSHNER: Because 1,000 units is
4 just too large of a project even just to build. So
5 the way we're conceiving of the site here is in two
6 different phases; the large... look, the biggest one
7 would be Phase 1, which is like a little bit north of
8 600 units, and then Phase 2 will be the remaining
9 units.

10 CHAIR COHEN: But the project, it's
11 conceived of as one project... [interpose]

12 CECILIA KUSHNER: Right. Yeah.

13 CHAIR COHEN: similar levels of
14 affordability, similar...

15 CECILIA KUSHNER: We know... We have like
16 details on affordability and programming for Phase 1,
17 because it's the one that's actually gonna happen
18 now, so we can look at like HPD term sheets and fully
19 understand the level of subsidy that's necessary for
20 the City and be very specific and granular around the
21 affordability. Phase 2 is further in the future; it
22 needs to be -- we'll probably discuss like exact
23 programming and levels of affordability like once we
24 know that we are close to completion of Phase 1; by
25 then HPD may have new term sheets; the market will be

2 different in the area, so the City's goal is for
3 Phase 2 to maximize affordability and maximize the
4 number of units there, and we have the framework for
5 affordability, which is that at least 50% units be
6 below or at 80%, but we can't be as specific as we
7 can be in Phase 1.

8 CHAIR COHEN: I would just say, you know,
9 you're coming to us and you're asking us to exercise
10 our powers and you don't have the... you know, we're
11 only getting a half baked cake; I would be somewhat
12 concerned about that; that we would want some greater
13 clarity on what the totality of the project is in
14 Phase 2. Also, I'm curious about -- the project
15 envisions over two-and-a-third acres of open space;
16 who would have jurisdiction over the open space and
17 in light of the time it's taken to develop 144th,
18 what actions could be taken to make sure that the
19 open space in this project gets done, you know, early
20 on; that the community is not waiting... [interpose]

21 CECILIA KUSHNER: Sure. Sure.

22 CHAIR COHEN: another, you know, decade
23 plus to get access to [inaudible]... [crosstalk]

24 CECILIA KUSHNER: Yeah. Yeah. So it's
25 very different, 144th Street, we're actually

2 acquiring private property; here, this is like a
3 City-owned parcel that we completely own as-of-right.
4 All of the open space that's associated with the
5 entire project would be delivered at the same time
6 that Phase 1 is delivered. So in order for the
7 development team to get a certificate of occupancy by
8 DOB and to be able to open the building, they will
9 have to have delivered the open space. So the idea
10 is absolutely to make sure that like the open space
11 benefits are realized before or exactly at the same
12 time than the housing benefits, because we know this
13 is a really important topic for the community.

14 CHAIR COHEN: The developer is building
15 the open space?

16 CECILIA KUSHNER: Yes. Right? Yeah.
17 Yeah.

18 CHAIR COHEN: In terms of scoping what
19 the open space will look like, is there a process
20 envisioned that will... [interpose]

21 NICK MOLINARI: No; there'll be a public
22 process. So there are some renderings -- to Council
23 Member Treyger's question, there were some renderings
24 that were released, so those are conceptual
25 renderings; we will have a public process to see what

2 goes into the open space as far as the project. The
3 developer will also be contributing maintenance for
4 the open space as well.

5 CHAIR COHEN: The developer is going to...
6 [crosstalk]

7 NICK MOLINARI: Yeah.

8 CHAIR COHEN: to main... Is the developer
9 solely gonna maintain or?

10 [background comment]

11 NICK MOLINARI: They'll be contributing
12 to Parks to maintain [sic], for maintenance...

13 [crosstalk]

14 CECILIA KUSHNER: They're gonna pay Parks
15 to maintain it.

16 CHAIR COHEN: They're gonna pay Parks to
17 maintain it.

18 NICK MOLINARI: Yeah.

19 CHAIR COHEN: Okay. **[inaudible]**. Okay,
20 thank you very much.

21 CECILIA KUSHNER: Thank you.

22 CHAIR COHEN: Alright, so now we're gonna
23 call the next panel. [background comments]

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Josue Sanchez, Lisa
25 So, John Weed, and Rocky Bucano.

3 [background comments]

4 CHAIR COHEN: Thank you.

5 [background comments]

6 JOSUE SANCHEZ: Thank you, City Council
7 Members. Thank you, EDC, Parks Department, and also
8 members of The Speaker's Office. My name is Josue
9 Sanchez; I'm with L&M Development Partners, who in
10 partnership with Type A Projects make up the
11 development team for Bronx Point.

12 So we're thrilled; we're honored; it is a
13 true privilege to be here to discuss Bronx Point and
14 development at this extraordinary site. It's an
15 incredibly important location, a gateway location for
16 the Bronx and we look forward to creating a
17 development program that really catapults community-
18 enhancing projects for the area and particularly the
19 Bronx Harlem River waterfront.

20 So Bronx Point brings together City
21 partners as well as local community stakeholders to
22 really bring about exceptional, engaging open space;
23 we're looking to bring entertaining uses and
24 education-focused community spaces as well as
25 permanently affordable housing, all while really
pushing economic opportunity here and jobs for all.

3 So today you'll hear the story of Bronx
4 Point beginning to unfold. You'll hear from the
5 development team, L&M Development Partners and Type A
6 Projects. You'll also hear from Bronxworks, which is
7 our critical community partner who has been serving
8 the Bronx for over 40 years. You'll also hear from
9 Marvel Architects, the landscape architect who brings
10 over their experience from designing the adjacent
11 Mill Pond Park, and you'll also hear from Universal
12 Hip Hop Museum, which brings along a level of
13 excitement to the project, even though I think
14 everything's a little exciting. So we'll get started
15 and next you'll hear from John Weed from Bronx Point,
16 whom we support in community services programming.

17 JOHN WEED: Thank you. I'm John Weed,
18 Assistant Executive Director of Bronxworks and we are
19 proud to be a key member of this team. Bronxworks
20 has been working in the community for over 40 years
21 and we're already working with L&M on two different
22 projects, which have been very, really excellent. We
23 believe that this project will bring important
24 affordable housing, key open space and job
25 opportunities, and we think the site itself will
allow us to expand on our mission; we feed, shelter,

2 teach, and support and we will work with the team in
3 order to develop programs for the community. We know
4 that the community is more than just the 1,000 units,
5 so typically what we do is, we work with L&M on a
6 project and then we will open up our services to the
7 residents who live in the complex, plus the
8 surrounding community, and it could be youth
9 services, could be senior services; it could be
10 workforce development; we do all three of those types
11 of services and we've done those with L&M in other
12 projects. And we're also very excited to be partners
13 with the other exciting community activities that are
14 gonna be coming into the complex.

15 So once again, we are very proud to be
16 part of this and we believe it'll be a really great
17 project, based on our experience, you know working
18 with L&M and their team. So that's what I had to
19 say. Thank you.

20 [background comment]

21 JOSUE SANCHEZ: Next you'll hear from
22 Annie Tirschwell from Type A Projects. [background
23 comments]

24 ANNIE TIRSCHWELL: Okay, great. So first
25 I wanted to thank the City for including a preference

3 for emerging developers in this RFEI. Type A
4 Projects has been building community and school
5 spaces for the last 15 years; we've built a number of
6 schools in the Bronx, but without this preference I
7 don't think we'd be sitting at this table, despite a
8 long and respected relationship with developers, and
9 so we're very grateful for this inclusion, preference
10 in the RFEI, and respectfully, we believe that the
11 voices of women and minority businesses do impact the
12 responses and ultimately the fabric of our city, so I
13 wanted to start by saying thank you.

14 So it is with great excitement that we
15 too join L&M in responding to this RFEI; we also
16 believe that this site is a real gateway to the
17 Bronx; certainly not the only gateway to the Bronx,
18 but an important one. We think that its location and
19 size demand that this project take its role as a
20 catalyzing force to activate and further transform
21 the Bronx waterfront and the broader community and we
22 need to do this with great care and intention, but
23 activation from whom and stemming from what? We
24 believe that the RFEI correctly mandates that this be
25 a neighborhood-enhancing project. We believe that
that means it needs to be borne from and connect to

2 the existing fabric of the community and we believe
3 that this happens visually, physically, economically,
4 and culturally. The RFEI further demands that
5 respondents preserve and provide a rare commodity in
6 New York City, open space, so it's been a huge
7 priority in our response. The RFEI further goes on
8 to demand that we serve a diversity of uses and of
9 income levels. It also requires that this project be
10 an economic and jobs driver for the community. And
11 lastly, the RFEI sets forth that this project is both
12 feasible and implementable. Next slide, please.

13 So as Josue says, we're here today to
14 bring you Bronx Point. We hope that you find that
15 this response is responsive and respectful to the
16 community that we're being borne out of. Our project
17 partners will talk in more specificity, but we
18 believe that with this response we've activated
19 exterior streets and.. [interpose]

20 CHAIR COHEN: I'm sorry to interrupt you...
21 [crosstalk]

22 ANNIE TIRSCHWELL: It's alright.

23 CHAIR COHEN: could I ask you to just
24 hold your testimony for one second?

25 ANNIE TIRSCHWELL: Sure.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON PLANNING, DISPOSITIONS AND
CONCESSIONS

58

2 CHAIR COHEN: [background comment] I
3 will, but I'm gonna call the roll on the preceding
4 land use items... [interpose]

5 ANNIE TIRSCHWELL: Sure.

6 CHAIR COHEN: because my colleague is
7 chairing another committee meeting. So I'm gonna now
8 ask counsel to call the roll on Land Use 738-742;
9 LU 746 and Preconsidered LU -- the Hope and Homes
10 Cluster.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
12 Rodriguez.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Aye.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Cohen.

15 CHAIR COHEN: I vote aye.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member
17 Treyger.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Aye.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: By a vote of 3 in the
20 affirmative, 0 in the negative and 0 abstentions, the
21 measures are recommended for... submitted to the full
22 Land Use Committee.

23 CHAIR COHEN: I apologize for
24 interrupting your testimony. Also, could the whole
25

2 panel just identify themselves, [background comment]
3 just so we're making sure that we...

4 ANNIE TIRSCHWELL: Yes; I... I did not do
5 that. So I am Annie Tirschwell from Type A Projects.

6 LISA SO: I'm Lisa So from Marvel
7 Architects.

8 JOHN WEED: I'm John Weed from
9 Bronxworks.

10 ROCKY BUCANO: Rocky Bucano from the
11 Universal Hip Hop Museum.

12 CHAIR COHEN: Excellent. Is Lisa So
13 here?

14 LISA SO: That's... [background comment]
15 That's me.

16 CHAIR COHEN: Oh okay. Okay. Sorry. I
17 apologize... [crosstalk]

18 ANNIE TIRSCHWELL: **[inaudible]**...

19 CHAIR COHEN: please continue.

20 [laughter]

21 ANNIE TIRSCHWELL: Yeah, okay. So we
22 believe that this proposal, our proposal, that Bronx
23 Point activates exterior street and the waterfront
24 with uses that can enrich the community's access both
25 to open space and to the Harlem River and that we

2 provide spaces for neighborhood residents to commune
3 with each other and with nature. We believe that
4 we've created corridors of access to and through the
5 site; that our site is knitted to the neighborhood
6 physically and that rather than cutting the site off
7 and turning our back to the neighborhood, more
8 broadly we believe that this project pulls
9 neighborhood citizens down and through our site, down
10 and through to the water. We believe that we've
11 created a roster of culturally and environmentally
12 site-specific program that is borne out of and for
13 the Bronx that is borne out of and for the river. We
14 believe we've provided a balanced housing program
15 that is family friendly and meets a diversity of
16 needs and income levels. We believe we've created
17 pathways to economic development, with job creation,
18 job training and incubation to support local
19 businesses, and I think we've done so with a great
20 partnership of developers and community leaders.

21 So the next slide EDC has already shown;
22 as we can see, it's an incredibly large site really
23 amazingly situated, but dramatically underutilized.
24 More of the same.

2 So -- next slide -- So again, my partners
3 here are gonna run through the specifics of the
4 project, but as mentioned, this site, at its
5 potential, will provide up to 1,000 units of
6 permanently affordable housing and approximately
7 150,000 sq. ft. of commercial and community facility
8 space.

9 Our park and open space designers are
10 here today to walk you through the space plan, but it
11 will include an extension to Mill Pond Park, a new
12 waterfront esplanade, landscaped and planted open
13 space, a host of community center programming areas
14 for kids and adults alike, and all seamlessly
15 integrating into the existing Mill Pond Park.

16 Josue Sanchez will guide you through our
17 housing plan that includes, as we mentioned,
18 approximately 600 units of permanently affordable
19 housing. I'm gonna swing back around to talk to you
20 about our community facility partners and Rocky
21 Bucano, who is the Executive Director of the Hip Hop
22 Museum, will introduce you to their plans for the
23 long-awaited bricks and mortar location of their
24 program, which will serve Bronx Point, the Bronx and
25

2 the universe. [laughter] So I hand it over to Lisa
3 So.

4 LISA SO: Hi. Yes, again, I'm Lisa So
5 with Marvel Architects, and we had the opportunity 10
6 years ago to work with Parks and EDC to develop the
7 design for Mill Pond Park, so we're extremely excited
8 about the opportunity to extend Mill Pond Park and
9 really work it into the development of the Lower
10 Concourse.

11 So as we started looking at the planning,
12 when we were doing the competition, we really looked
13 at -- we wanted to open the site up as much as we
14 could and really make a visual and physical
15 connection between the neighborhood and the park, all
16 the way to the waterfront. We also wanted to
17 maximize -- and we've been talking a lot about open
18 space today; this is a really critical part of this
19 project, and we wanted to maximize that open space
20 and make a true seamless connection between Mill Pond
21 and the project, and so those were priorities as we
22 set forth. And so one of the things that we did in
23 the mapping of the building was we turned it to the
24 north and opened up the courtyard of the building
25 facing that north and then brought a grand stair that

2 allows this open space to really kind of climb up
3 into the building and really make it open to the
4 public. As we go to the next slide.

5 So as part of our original project of
6 Mill Pond Park, we had a lot of community engagement
7 that we went through; we had work sessions and public
8 presentations and we really heard from the community
9 what they wanted in the park, and so... [interpose]

10 CHAIR COHEN: Uh...

11 LISA SO: Yeah.

12 CHAIR COHEN: Just so I understand what
13 I'm looking at. Are these renderings Phase 1 and
14 Phase 2?

15 LISA SO: Correct.

16 CHAIR COHEN: Okay.

17 LISA SO: Yes.

18 ANNIE TIRSCHWELL: So just to be clear,
19 Phase 1 is the building uh...

20 LISA SO: It's the U-shaped building as
21 Phase 1 and then the... the...

22 ANNIE TIRSCHWELL: And the other one.

23 LISA SO: taller building, right, as
24 Phase 2.

3 So we had these community work sessions
4 and so we understand that that is a very critical
5 piece of this and that we really need to understand
6 what the community wants in this open space and we'll
7 have work sessions with the community and that will
8 really be part of our design process. And so when we
9 go to the next slide, we're really looking at the
10 goals that we set forth at the beginning of this
11 process, but we really understand that it will evolve
12 and as we understand what the community wants, then
13 we will incorporate that into the design.

14 So first and foremost, expanding publicly
15 accessible open space; second, really creating that
16 seamless connection with Mill Pond Park; we don't
17 really want that there be a line between what is Mill
18 Pond and what is part of this development. Mill Pond
19 has a continuous walking path; it's this bright red
20 path, and we're looking to continue that from the
21 park into the new development and really kind of
22 close the loop on that walking path. There's also
23 active and passive parts of Mill Pond Park and we're
24 looking to bring that in as well so that there'll be
25 animated active areas, but also just green areas and
landscaped areas. The esplanade will be a big part

3 of this waterfront development; it'll be a critical
4 role in the design, and then last but certainly not
5 least, Exterior Street is a big piece of this as
6 well, creating a public plaza that promotes the
7 safety along Exterior Street front and the building.

8 So really, connection to Mill Pond Park,
9 extending walking paths, the esplanade, this new
10 grand open stair, a children's playground would be
11 developed, planted seating areas; Exterior Street,
12 but also, publicly accessible restrooms will be part
13 of the program, and all of these things coming
14 together, understanding where they wanna be on the
15 site, will be the key to a successful park. Next
16 slide, Josue.

17 And really, we're looking to create an
18 animated open public space. The picture on the right
19 shows this grand stair that comes down into the
20 landscape and we see that as an opportunity to have
21 public presentations and public performances; it
22 really becomes an opportunity for that landscape to
23 engage in the building, and looking at basically
24 taking the green from the building front to the
25 waterfront. This is a picture of a playground; we're
looking to work with Bronx Children's Museum or local

3 artists to really develop what that playground could
4 be, but really creating an active, lively open space.

5 ANNIE TIRSCHWELL: And in developing our
6 response to the RFEI, we were very insistent upon
7 figuring out ways to connect our programming to
8 neighborhood and the natural environment, and so
9 obviously the river is something that we wanted to
10 key into and so because there is a train line that
11 runs in the river, it doesn't allow us access to the
12 water; we've partnered with two organizations to
13 provide both stewardship of the river and
14 environmental education to the local community; that
15 is CityScience, who is a STEM-based program; we're
16 gonna hear a testimony from them in a little bit, as
17 well as Billion Oyster Project, who's been working in
18 numerous areas throughout the City to reintroduce the
19 oyster population to New York Harbor as a resiliency
20 measure, and as much as that's important from a
21 resiliency measure, really they rely on the community
22 to be stewards of those stations and so it really
23 ties in both children and adults into caring for the
24 environmental sustainability of the neighborhood.

25 One thing I think that Lisa didn't mention is that as
part of this process we will be working to revision

3 the waterfront from a sustainability perspective --
4 actually, we have a slide on that coming up -- and so
5 working with these organizations will be part of that
6 process. And we're very excited to be including the
7 Bronx Children's Museum, at a minimum, in helping us
8 to design the playground space; they, as part of our
9 process, noted that there is no really active space
10 for children of early childhood age, and we're
11 excited to work with them and with Parks to
12 collaborate on a playground at the site.

13 Obviously we also spent a lot time
14 thinking about how this project can serve to activate
15 the waterfront, not just from an open space
16 perspective, but what commercial uses would really
17 bring people down to the water, and so we're excited
18 to include a movie theater as part of this project;
19 we're also very excited to include a food incubator
20 as part of this project. One of the first things
21 you'll notice on a beautiful day when you go down to
22 Mill Pond Park is the amount of food that's being
23 consumed and so we wanted to expand upon sort of the
24 tailgating that's happening in the neighborhood
25 already, but work with local food purveyors to
provide both food and jobs to the local community

3 around food and eating. And of course, we're
4 incredibly excited about the Universal Hip Hop
5 Museum.

6 ROCKY BUCANO: Thank you, Annie. My name
7 is Rocky Bucano; I'm the Executive Director of the
8 Universal Hip Hop Museum, and we are excited to be
9 part of this Bronx Point project; we've been
10 searching for a suitable location for the Universal
11 Hip Hop Museum for about four years; we had some
12 highs and some lows, but it wasn't until I got the
13 call from my boy over there, Josue Sanchez from L&M,
14 that the magic actually took place, because L&M and
15 Type A truly understood the vision that we had for
16 the museum and how the museum is a sense of community
17 empowerment. As you know, hip hop was born in the
18 Bronx 44 years ago, it started in the South Bronx by
19 a bunch of teenagers, and it has since become the
20 most popular art form in the entire planet and it's a
21 shame that you know hip hop hasn't been celebrated
22 and properly documented up until now and we take on
23 that responsibility; that's part of our mission is to
24 document, archive and celebrate the global history of
25 hip hop, but more importantly, the role of the Bronx

3 and how the Bronx played a role in making sure that
4 that evolution of hip hop became so popular.

5 Our partners that we had included in this
6 project -- we've been working with Microsoft over the
7 past year; we participated in an inclusive design and
8 visioning session with Microsoft and we went to four
9 different cities, we went to Los Angeles, we went to
10 Detroit, we went to Atlanta, and obviously, we
11 finished the design sessions here in New York, and
12 the purpose of those design sessions was to meet with
13 different people from the community, from teenagers
14 to elderly people, just to get a sense of what the
15 expectations would be for a Hip Hop Museum and what
16 they thought the Hip Hop Museum should be, in terms
17 of the overall experience and how it should engage
18 with community. So we had some great insights that
19 came out of those four different sessions from people
20 from different backgrounds from different cities
21 because we believe that the Universal Hip Hop Museum
22 will serve as a great cultural arts destination, a
23 new destination for tourism in New York City and
24 specifically for the Bronx. So we're excited about
25 that, we have partners with Google and we have Sony
Music just because obviously the music is gonna be a

3 big component of the museum, but we are also working
4 with local artists from break dances and the graffiti
5 artists, which are important elements of the culture,
6 to make sure that their work and their artistic
7 expression is also celebrated, and we also look at
8 the museum as being a source of an opportunity to
9 mentor kids to get their creativity, to get their
10 innovation skills and to give them an opportunity to
11 express themselves through the museum to find out how
12 they can place their creativity in today's modern
13 society.

14 JOSUE SANCHEZ: Thank you, Rocky. And
15 here you see a preliminary rendering, a night shot,
16 for the museum and the potential area for performance
17 space.

18 So I'll talk a little bit about housing,
19 which is also part of this project. [laughter] So
20 as EDC pointed out, Phase 1 is approximately 600
21 units -- studios, one-, two- and three-bedroom
22 apartments. Obviously affordable housing is a great
23 need for the City of New York and from the onset of
24 responding to this RFEI, making these units
25 permanently affordable housing was very important to
the entire team. So that's what you see here; the

3 team has committed to providing permanently
4 affordable housing for all those units. We're really
5 looking to serve a wide range of incomes, from 30% to
6 130% AMI, in accordance with how we just [sic]
7 mentioned; the City term sheets.

8 So here you see specific breakdowns on
9 the site and most of the units will be at low-income
10 tiers; you also have bands at the moderate and
11 middle-income tiers as well. There'll be many
12 amenities; one of the highlights of the amenities is
13 a central courtyard landscape area which we're
14 looking to program for active use in the central
15 courtyard and also have a viewpoint out to Mill Pond
16 Park.

17 And then just touching on Phase 2; as was
18 stated, this site is about 1,000 units all in, so a
19 little over 400 units we'll be including in Phase 2
20 as well.

21 Design and sustainability: We realize
22 it's a waterfront site, so we need to be cognizant of
23 the potential impact and dangers of doing so. One of
24 the things I'd like to point out is; from the early
25 stages of the project we're gonna remediate the site,
so we're looking to enter the Brownfield Cleanup

3 Program which will provide valuable resources to fund
4 the project, but also really remediate any potential
5 environmental issues with the site. As was stated,
6 the site has been vacant for a very long time and
7 we're looking to clean that up. Environmental
8 sustainability is very important to us; we're
9 obviously gonna comply with City programs such as
10 Enterprise Green Communities; we're also considering
11 LEED Gold and also, not listed here, but NYSERDA
12 Multifamily Performance Program is also a program
13 that we routinely adhere to in our projects.

14 Flood mitigation and shoreline resiliency
15 -- we're bringing on reputable firms, such as Langan
16 Engineering, to really make sure that our
17 environmental and engineering controls on the
18 waterfront are exceptional. We're not building a
19 cellar here; we're looking to put a boiler room on
20 the roof -- and these are just some of the examples
21 of the measures that we take to make sure that the
22 site is safe.

23 And as was stated, through all the
24 programming you see in this site, this is really an
25 active design project; whether you come in early, go
to the food and beverage hall, eat something, go to

3 watch a movie, hang out at the museum; maybe catch a
4 performance at night, it's really meant to move
5 people -- get on a bike -- I don't know; there's a
6 lot of things to do here and I hope that you can feel
7 that excitement from the programming that we've tried
8 to design here.

9 Economic Opportunity: So obviously we
10 thank the City for committing nearly \$200 million in
11 infrastructure here, so this project really
12 compliments that effort. This site, based on the
13 uses, especially with the Hip Hop Museum and the
14 movie theater as well, it's really gonna be a magnet
15 and draw people into the site and so we look forward
16 to really keep the area buzzing and keep the
17 pedestrian traffic in the area.

18 The food and beverage market, which is
19 really an incubator for local entrepreneurs, so we're
20 looking to push that as well, and obviously a project
21 of this magnitude -- there's gonna be over 1,000 jobs
22 here and so we're really excited about that.

23 MWBE commitment and local hiring -- you
24 know we share the same concerns here and one of the
25 things that we've taken -- learning lessons that
we've done -- Essex Crossing, which you're probably

2 familiar with with EDC -- and so we've learned a lot
3 in terms of community engagement. We have a
4 dedicated team to MWBE and local hiring, so we're
5 really looking forward to mobilize and really engage
6 the community on these issues. So we're looking here
7 to target 35% of MWBE contracts. As we engage the
8 community not only on park design; obviously
9 recruiting, outreach, job fairs, and workforce
10 development will be a part of this project so we can
11 provide jobs to everyone in the community, and we
12 look forward to doing that, not only with the
13 community, but the City of New York.

14 So I think we've said a lot; we just
15 wanna thank you all and this is really exciting;
16 we're thrilled to be here. Thank you.

17 CHAIR COHEN: Thank you for your
18 testimony; I do have some questions; I guess we'll
19 start back where we started before. In terms of the
20 access to the site, have you had any input or are you
21 working with DOT at least on what you think the
22 design for 149th, in particular, I guess, makes sense
23 to you; that everybody's working hand in glove to
24 make sure that there's safe and -- I think access is,

2 you know, fundamentally important to the success of
3 this site so.

4 ANNIE TIRSCHWELL: Well I think, yeah,
5 Josue went back to the mapping diagram; the way that
6 we've sort of delineated between Phase 1 and Phase 2
7 is to create pathways through the site. As you've
8 pointed out, you don't want people to have to go too
9 far north or south to be able to access the
10 waterfront or the open space. So it's important to
11 realize that this was a response to an RFEI and so we
12 have not yet started the dialogue with DOT, but as
13 stated, there will be a task force in addition to our
14 work with DOT through Chairman Di Barito's [sp?]
15 office, and so that's one of the first things we're
16 gonna dig into, but we have not yet formally been
17 awarded the site, but that is certainly a huge
18 priority of ours, getting people to and through.

19 CHAIR COHEN: I also -- not that I'm
20 criticizing Parks, but the fact that the development
21 of the open space is on your plate, I think that that
22 makes a lot of sense, but I also think that its
23 fundamental that there is delivery on the open space
24 in a timely fashion. I mean the example of 144th
25

3 Street is not unusual, unfortunately, in New York
4 City in terms of development and parks.

5 JOSUE SANCHEZ: Yeah, I think that's a
6 great point; I'm trying to find... yeah. So I think
7 what's very important to echo is that we won't be
8 allowed to TCO the building and have people move in
9 without development of the open space, so that's key;
10 no one wants to fill the building and have open space
11 lag behind; the development in its entirety will be
12 moving forward simultaneously. Phase 1 is not just
13 the building; Phase 1 is also the esplanade and the
14 open space, and I would also that we're not doing it
15 solely on our own; there will be several approval
16 steps along the way, working with the task force and
17 community stakeholders; there's also a public design
18 commission approval as part of this process, so even
19 though -- I don't feel like this is the development
20 team's effort; it's really a collective effort and
21 there's various parts, both public and private
22 involved.

23 CHAIR COHEN: Well I look forward to
24 watching it and [laughter] **[inaudible]**. I have a
25 question about Phase 2, but I guess as predicate,
because I have, I guess -- I don't know if concerned

3 is the right word, but do you have the capacity to --
4 if this was a single project, do you have the
5 capacity to develop Phase 1 and Phase 2
6 simultaneously?

7 JOSUE SANCHEZ: I think **[inaudible]**
8 question. The issue -- I think one of the struggles
9 we're having is one of the things we mentioned, one
10 of our objectives is for it to be feasible and
11 implementable and so I think there's some... as EDC
12 mentioned, there's some concern about putting on
13 those number of units in one shot and also this
14 project will impact the area greatly and it'll be... I
15 think it'll be beneficial to see the impact of the
16 development and what could potentially benefit the
17 project or the community more as Phase 1 unfolds.
18 And also, in terms of financing, it's quite an
19 investment; it's about \$300 million of an investment,
20 and so I think just based on the scope that Phase 1
21 already has and then financial resources and effort
22 for Phase 1 and the learning lessons that we'll take
23 from that, I think it'll benefit the community going
24 forward.

25 ANNIE TIRSCHWELL: I would add just one
other thing, which is that because the open space

3 activation is so critical, it's not just building 600
4 units of affordable housing, building an esplanade
5 and the waterfront is a very large endeavor and I
6 think we're glad that the City has prioritized that
7 as part of the first phase; it will certainly add a
8 complication to the project that is commensurate with
9 a phased delivery.

10 CHAIR COHEN: I guess -- I mean like you
11 said, the project could have a significant impact on
12 the community and I think that we wanna lock in Phase
13 2; that Phase 2 is consistent with Phase 1 and I
14 think that there are deep levels of affordability in
15 Phase 1, you know diverse affordability, but also
16 deep affordability and I guess we just wanna make
17 sure that the character of Phase 2 is consistent with
18 the character of Phase 1 and there might be -- you
19 know, again, we're all at the table right now;
20 there's an argument I think for making, you know,
21 locking it all up, but maybe between now and this
22 project's approval that will happen; I don't know.

23 This is sort of a technical question, but
24 I guess Phase 2 could conceivably be 400'. and you're
25 proposing it for 320'. Is there any reason like why

3 that gap should be preserved; as part of this
4 application; should we cap the height at 320?

5 JOSUE SANCHEZ: I mean I just think that
6 given the timing of Phase 2, I think it'll benefit to
7 have that flexibility, so I think we could look at
8 the site and see if there's -- the footprint of
9 Phase 2 obviously is not nearly the size of Phase 1
10 and so it would be good to maintain that flexibility
11 to incorporate additional uses if need to. So
12 whether that be additional community facility uses or
13 other uses that really engage the community, I think
14 having that flexibility would benefit, yeah.

15 CHAIR COHEN: I guess I would just say
16 is, you know advice, for whoever wants my advice, but
17 I think that that ambiguity is a double-edged sword
18 for you guys.

19 All the units in Phase 1 and Phase 2,
20 there's 100% affordability in this project, right?
21 [background comments] Is there any thought to in the
22 design about noise and sound, I mean you have the
23 Major Deegan I guess to the east and I don't know how
24 active the rail is to the west, but does rail to the
25 west [background comment] and..

2 ANNIE TIRSCHWELL: Yeah, I think that the
3 west is for garbage and it happens two trains a
4 night, in the middle of the night, and so part of the
5 reason -- yeah -- part of the reason we designed a U-
6 shaped building to begin with I think was to in a way
7 shelter as many units as we could form the Deegan,
8 but we will certainly need to employ, you know, a
9 curtain wall or not curtain wall; façade designed to
10 mitigate noise and impact on the residential units
11 for sure. And it's also part of the reason we've
12 raised the building up so high; part of the reason
13 our podium includes so much commercial and community
14 facility space is that we wanted to bring units above
15 the line of the Deegan, so that was one of the first
16 measures at this early stage to try and mitigate the
17 impact of the highway on our residences.

18 JOSUE SANCHEZ: I would also say that
19 coming out of rezoning I believe we'll have E-
20 designations on the site and so whether or not we
21 have, for example, noises is a common one, but we
22 would incorporate consultants to help us mitigate any
23 noise concerns. So we've worked a lot with, for
24 example, Cerami Associates, who's done a lot of work
25 in the City and so obviously not only what's going on

2 in the area, but also our uses -- the museum, the
3 theater -- so we'd be looking to retain those
4 professionals to help with that.

5 CHAIR COHEN: Again, I wonder if the U-
6 design -- I mean there is a quality of life
7 difference between the unit that faces the Deegan
8 versus the unit that faces the Harlem River;
9 [background comment] I wonder if, sort of the pluses
10 and the minuses of the site, if there's any way to
11 sort of make that more equitable; I don't know the
12 answer to that, but I would... again, I would much
13 prefer I think to be on the... [laugh] looking out at
14 the river than looking out at the Deegan. So again,
15 I don't know how that would play itself out.

16 You have a contract with a movie theater?

17 JOSUE SANCHEZ: We're considering several
18 operators; there's one that we're closer to getting
19 there; we don't have a contract yet, but there's been
20 extensive conversations with a movie operator for the
21 space.

22 CHAIR COHEN: You're telling us you're
23 very confident you can deliver a movie theater
24 operator ultimately?

2 JOSUE SANCHEZ: Yeah, absolutely. I
3 think if you look at the Bronx, there's not a lot of
4 movie theaters out there. I used to go to
5 Whitestone; that's closed down; you have Bay Plaza,
6 so given the lack of supply, the movie theater
7 operators are certainly interested in opening the
8 space up.

9 CHAIR COHEN: Well that's great.

10 JOSUE SANCHEZ: Yeah.

11 CHAIR COHEN: In terms of the not-for-
12 profit space; how is that gonna work and how are we
13 gonna make sure that the Hip Hop Museum is viable and
14 has a deal that they can -- gotta look out for the
15 Hip Hop Museum? How is that gonna work?

16 JOSUE SANCHEZ: So we've talked, I don't
17 know, maybe a year, and so we have an agreement if
18 you will to get there. We're obviously... [interpose]

19 CHAIR COHEN: You agree to agree?

20 JOSUE SANCHEZ: Well yeah [laughter]...
21 We're obviously making a lot of public
22 representations, our reputations are important, and
23 so you know, we've worked with a lot of nonprofits
24 such as Bronxworks in years past, so I think -- and
25 we continue to do so -- so we've had those

2 conversations; we have a form of agreement, and so
3 we're getting there.

4 CHAIR COHEN: Yeah.

5 ANNIE TIRSCHWELL: I would also add that
6 we're looking at adding layers of subsidy into the
7 creation of their box and so we don't expect them to
8 do it alone and we're gonna help assign and attribute
9 subsidy to their **[inaudible]**.

10 JOSUE SANCHEZ: And just a quick
11 clarification on the affordable housing for Phase 2,
12 that's still to be determined, so I know EDC and the
13 City and local stakeholders have been discussing
14 that, so 50% of the units will be available for
15 incomes at 80% AMI or below and then above that 50%
16 is to be determined.

17 CHAIR COHEN: So you're saying there
18 could be units that are not regulated in Phase 2?

19 JOSUE SANCHEZ: I think that's still a
20 conversation between the City partners, yeah.

21 CHAIR COHEN: Conversation to continue.
22 Does Bronxworks have -- will you have space in the
23 facility ultimately?

24 JOHN WEED: Yes, we haven't really
25 discussed what, because we've done a lot of different

3 projects with L&M; we've done workforce development,
4 we do senior work; we do youth programming, and
5 generally we've gone into their locations, we've
6 funded programs through them, through DYCD, through
7 other foundations, so it'll be -- you know I mean
8 we've got a lot of time to plan this, but we fully
9 expect to be there providing social services in some
10 capacity.

11 CHAIR COHEN: Could you just briefly talk
12 about local hiring, in terms of construction?

13 JOSUE SANCHEZ: Sure. I mean I would say
14 it's part of our agreement with the City to provide
15 local hiring in compliance with the HireNYC program;
16 we have a history of local hiring and MWBE
17 commitments. Last year we were awarded over \$35
18 million in MWBE contracts; over 120 of those since
19 2014 within the New York/New Jersey area we've hired
20 over 350 people; we've worked with local
21 organizations such as Building Skills NY, the Osborne
22 Association as well, and so we have a history of
23 partnering up with local organizations for local
24 hiring; it's in our agreement with EDC, and we look
25 forward to working with the local community members;
Speaker's Office to make sure we hit the goals.

2 CHAIR COHEN: You know, whether it's
3 perception or reality I don't know, but Bronxites and
4 the Bronx elected officials I think have a perception
5 that other projects have not delivered on local
6 hiring, so it really... it's important not only that
7 you do it, but I think that you demonstrate that
8 you're doing it in a way that's very visible; that
9 people really can tangibly see that that commitment
10 is being met and that it's your neighbor who's
11 getting these jobs. Because again, whether it's
12 reality or not, the perception is that people come,
13 they shake your hand; they say they're gonna do
14 something and then it's either hard to verify or... but
15 it's important to us and you know, on behalf of you
16 know my Bronx colleagues I know it's particularly
17 important to us that we see, in a tangible way that
18 that commitment is fulfilled.

19 Alright, I don't have any more questions
20 for this panel. Thank you.

21 Joyce -- I don't know if it's Hogi or
22 Hogi. [background comment] Hogi, Joyce Hogi.
23 You're a panel of one. Miss Hogi, just 'cause the
24 hour's getting late, I'm gonna [background comment]
25 put the panels on... on four minutes... [crosstalk]

3 JOYCE HOGI: I will be brief. Okay...

4 [crosstalk]

5 CHAIR COHEN: Okay. If we could put
6 everybody on a four-minute clock, that would be
7 great.

8 JOYCE HOGI: You know my late husband had
9 a saying when the kids were trying to convince us to
10 do something, you know, don't dazzle me with the
11 fancy footwork. That said; I just have a couple of
12 statements.

13 CHAIR COHEN: So can you state your name
14 for the record?

15 JOYCE HOGI: Joyce Hogi, H-O-G-I; sounds
16 like the sandwich; spelled a little differently.
17 I've been livin' in the community for 40 years
18 **[inaudible]**; I'm the President of the Bronx Council
19 for Environmental Quality (BCEQ), so we're very
20 committed to the environment. The Bronx, South Bronx
21 specifically, has one of the worst air qualities in
22 the nation; no one is addressing how we're going to
23 mitigate that. We think being able to mitigate that
24 involved parkland and trees. Pier 5 was promised to
25 the community as parkland; the City has refused to
fund it; the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality

3 and the Harlem River Working Group have -- they've
4 commissioned a couple of studies and we've, you know,
5 presented great plans for parkland with trees and
6 different ways of dealing with the air quality in the
7 area. That said; no other sites have been considered
8 for housing; we have taken free public land, giving
9 it to a developer and now we're gonna go across the
10 street and buy private land to create a park. It
11 doesn't seem very cost efficient and does that \$200
12 million or whatever the figure is, does that include
13 the purchase and relocating of those businesses?
14 Just food for thought -- we don't think it's a good
15 deal.

16 CHAIR COHEN: Thank you for your
17 testimony. [background comment] Okay. John Taylor;
18 I think that's Falcone; David Dishy; Jill Crawford --
19 I'm doing everybody? -- one large panel -- Paul
20 Philps; and John Howard. [background comment] Okay.
21 [background comment] Yes, everybody'll... How are you?
22 [background comments] I know everyone's gonna be
23 brief, but just 'cause the hour's getting late,
24 everybody's on a four-minute clock and if everybody
25 could identify themselves before their testimony.
You seem ready to go. [laugh]

3 JOHN TYLER FALCONE: And I am John Tyler
4 Falcone; I am the Senior Associate of Workforce and
5 Economic Development with JobsFirstNYC.

6 Good afternoon, Council Member Cohen and
7 other distinguished members of the Council's Land Use
8 Subcommittee on Planning, Dispositions and
9 Concessions. My name is J.T. Falcone; I'm the senior
10 associate of Workforce and Economic Development at
11 JobsFirstNYC, a policy to practice intermediary
12 working to improve the workforce development system
13 and ensure that all New Yorkers are in a position to
14 access and climb the economic ladder of New York
15 City's labor market.

16 For 10 years, JobsFirstNYC has been
17 working with local communities and citywide
18 developing and supporting collaborative and
19 innovative strategies to find effective solutions to
20 support out of school, out of work young New Yorkers.
21 We're here today to lift up one such strategy, the
22 Lower East Side Employment Network, the LESEN, that
23 has for the last 8 years worked to serve the needs of
24 residents of the Lower East Side while that
25 neighborhood has seen a swell of economic development
activity. The coalition of 8 nonprofit agencies came

3 together in partnership with their local community
4 board (which is CD3) in a neighborhood-wide effort to
5 ensure that local residents were appropriately
6 trained and positioned to benefit from those
7 opportunities as they arose, so the local hire topic
8 that we've heard come up a few times here.

9 By agreeing to collaborate rather than
10 compete, these 8 nonprofits have improved their
11 engagement of local employers and developers to the
12 benefit of residents of the Lower East Side. With
13 CB3 as a partner, LESEN is able to leverage this
14 strong relationship to negotiate with incoming
15 employers. Further, because employers have a clear
16 access point for local talent, they know who to reach
17 out to when they need candidates and the nonprofits,
18 by pulling their resources, can offer a broader range
19 of training options and ready a larger talent pool.
20 Thus the network collectively fills a greater
21 percentage of job openings than a single agency would
22 exclusively fill on its own and maintain deeper
23 relationships with a larger array of employers.

24 All parties benefit from the employer-
25 facing network model; the LESEN partners have engaged
173 businesses as of June 2017 and they have achieved

3 a 3:1 interview to hire ratio, reducing costs
4 associated with, referring and interviewing excess
5 candidates to employers. What's more, incoming
6 businesses give LESEN partners lead time base don
7 projected jobs and because of this advance notice
8 they're able to build out customized programs for
9 residents to ensure that they're skilled and
10 credentialed in what employers need, expanding
11 employment access for local community residents.

12 As testimony to the value businesses see
13 in the LESEN, they have taken a notable step of
14 signing MOUs designating a 30% local hire expectation
15 at Essex Crossings, a new large-scale development
16 project in the Lower East Side.

17 Given the contextual similarities between
18 the Essex Crossing development work and the Lower
19 Concourse work on the agenda today, the NYC Economic
20 Development Corporation approached JobsFirstNYC early
21 last year to discuss the possibility of developing a
22 similar employer-facing network in the Lower
23 Concourse. Since that time we've worked to gauge the
24 local workforce community's interest in exploring an
25 employer-facing network model and found them to be
receptive, particularly given LESEN's success. Based

3 on our firsthand experience working with LESEN, the
4 opportunity to develop a similar model to serve the
5 Lower Concourse would help the community to better
6 prepare to serve not only public development
7 activities, but the private development that is sure
8 to follow. By facilitating direct connections
9 between existing residents and new businesses, an
10 employer-facing network can help to ensure that the
11 improvements to the neighborhood are good for all New
12 Yorkers, particularly those that call the surrounding
13 neighborhoods home. Thank you for your time.

13 PAUL PHILPS: So my name is Paul Philps;
14 I'm the District Manager for Community Board 4 and
15 our Board voted in favor for this project in May with
16 a number of conditions, many of which have already
17 been discussed here. The first one that I wanted to
18 talk about was employment opportunities and he stole
19 a little bit of my thunder, but [laughter] we are
20 excited to hear about LESEN, but I do wanna emphasize
21 the importance for us that the jobs before, during
22 and after construction, that they go to local people,
23 both in Community District 4, but also in the Bronx;
24 it's really, really important for us; this is a great
25 opportunity to leverage a publicly-owned site, a

2 City-owned site for the people of the Bronx, so
3 that's really important. We are excited to work with
4 JobsFirst, as well as EDC in creating a model for
5 LESEN, so that's really important for us.

6 The other thing that I wanna touch on is
7 the schools piece and I know we talked a little bit
8 about this before. There is already a need for
9 school seats without this project, both in elementary
10 and I believe in secondary school seats, and as
11 someone from EDC alluded to, there is a letter for
12 commitment to monitor this process, but I have to be
13 very frank that we feel very strongly that the City
14 should commit to not just monitoring the process;
15 they should identify a site and put funding toward
16 it. Today in SCA's capital plan, there is a need for
17 seats in this subdistrict as well as an adjacent
18 subdistrict, and this is without this project and
19 also without the Jerome Avenue project, which is not
20 part of the hearing today, but is north of this
21 project and also in my district. So we feel very
22 strongly that the City should commit to that, they
23 should commit to a site and provide funding. We've
24 given examples of several different sites which are
25 in the broader catchment area which could be used. I

3 should note that a lot of those sites are owned by
4 the City, although they are tied up in an agreement
5 for Bronx Park and Development, but they are City-
6 owned sites; they are woefully underutilized and they
7 are a public resource.

8 Lastly, or the last few things are just
9 on the transportation piece. So I know that there
10 are gonna be major improvements to the intersections;
11 one of the things that will not be provided as part
12 of this project will be parking; most of the parking
13 will not be required pursuant to zoning. What I will
14 say is that perception is not reality; the number
15 that indicate that there are not a lot of cars or
16 drivers in the district is woefully untrue, so what I
17 would ask is that we look at some creative ways to
18 provide some parking for new residents that come in
19 here; there is capacity in the adjacent Gateway
20 Center, in their development, but the issue with that
21 is that it's all about price and so if there is a way
22 for the City to think about being creatively and
23 thinking outside the box to provide at some level
24 some affordable parking for the people in the
25 district, that would go a long way.

3 And then the last piece on that is in
4 terms of transportation. We're looking at improving
5 the intersections, but I have to say we're excited
6 about this project, but when you talk about
7 additional users, 1,000 units, the Hip Hop Museum,
8 all of those uses coming to that intersection in an
9 area that is already seeing tremendous amounts of
10 development -- I went to a groundbreaking last week
11 for another 265 units just north of this site, so
12 we're busting at the seams. So all of that is to say
13 that we need to have investments in infrastructure as
14 well as investments in affordable housing; they're
15 extremely, extremely important.

16 And then lastly what I will say is that
17 we are very much committed to creating a
18 steering/governing committee for this project; we're
19 very interested and excited to work with EDC and its
20 other partners; we think it's a really important
21 component for all us within the community to monitor
22 that site but also to be engaged in the community
23 engagement piece of that.

24 And then lastly I just want to thank EDC
25 specifically -- Kate Van Tassel, Charlie Samboy,
Elijah Hutchinson, as well as Cecilia Kushner for

2 their partnership and their collaboration and their
3 willingness to work with us, and we're very excited,
4 and on behalf of Community Board 4, we look forward
5 to working with everyone on this project. Thank you.

6 JOHN HOWARD: Good afternoon everyone

7 **[inaudible]**... [mic off] press the button. [laughter]

8 You couldn't hear me before, right? [laughter] Well

9 here's the concern I have and I'm grateful to...

10 [interpose]

11 CHAIR COHEN: I'm sorry; could you just
12 re-identify yourself?

13 JOHN HOWARD ALGARIN: Sure. John Howard
14 Algarin; I'm the chairperson of the Parks and
15 Recreation's Committee for Community Board 4.

16 Now my focus or the focus of my
17 statements will have to be with the development and a
18 long-term view towards not ending up with staccato
19 waterfront access for green spaces. We have a great
20 traveling walkway or bike path that ends at the High
21 Bridge; we have a beautiful bike path that begins on
22 the northern side of Mill Pond Park and winds through
23 the park and goes nowhere. I hear commentary coming
24 from the developers in the group that they will
25 create a loop on that walk path that will kinda turn

3 back on itself and then we're gonna have another park
4 at 144th Street, and my concern is that -- and my
5 overarching vision for that entire waterfront is that
6 we have one contiguous waterfront access travelway,
7 akin to what they have in the -- well the majority of
8 Manhattan that would allow people to enjoy the green
9 spaces that you're developing; it makes no sense to
10 have a new park on 144th Street if the access is just
11 144th Street and no one from the surrounding areas
12 will find themselves in a fluid pathway that leads to
13 that location. So I'd like to see the development
14 include concepts with parkway or parkway pathways
15 that continue to the southernmost tip of the Bronx
16 peninsula where we know that new development is
17 coming. We're grateful to see the activation of the
18 parkland and we look forward to actually gaining more
19 acreage for use by the community, but in addition to
20 all things that have been said and promised, and
21 particularly what our district manager, Mr. Philps
22 said, you know keep that in mind and we'd like to see
23 some projected depictions that show you know the
24 waterfront park access travel thoroughfare with a
25 mind towards it's continuing south and continuing
north, with the hurdles that come with some of the

2 landowners to the north and to the south dealt with
3 in future sessions. And I thank you for your time.

4 JILL CRAWFORD: Thank you, Chairman. I'm
5 Jill Crawford from Type A Projects and my colleague
6 David Dishy from L&M. We were meant to read
7 statements from CityScience and the Billion Oyster
8 Project, but I think in the interest of time we'll
9 submit those. [background comment] Thank you.

10 CHAIR COHEN: Alright, thank you for your
11 testimony everybody. [background comment] Alright.
12 I'm gonna go back to the script. [background
13 comments]

14 Alright. Alright, so I will now close
15 the public hearing on LU 747-750; we will be laying
16 over these items until our next hearing.

17 I'd like to thank the counsel and Land
18 Use staff for preparing today's hearing and the
19 members of the public and my colleagues for
20 attending. This meeting is hereby adjourned. Gavel.

21 [gavel]

22 [background comments]

23

24

25

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date October 5, 2017