- Sent via Electronic Mail -
March 21, 2025

Honorable Donovan Richards, Jr.
Queens Borough President
Queens Borough Hall 120-55 Queens Blvd
Kew Gardens, NY, 11424

Dear Borough President Richards:

Pursuant to Section 204(g) of the City Charter, this letter seeks to inform you of a proposed combination Acquisition and Site Selection land use actions for a public open space facility located along the East River in the Long Island City neighborhood, Queens Community District (CD) 2. The New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS) and the New York City Economic Development Corporation (NYCEDC), on behalf of the City of New York, hereby notifies you of the request for a Site Selection of a public facility for a new waterfront publicly accessible open space to be located at the western end of Queens Block 488, part of Lot 114 (the "Project Site"). This proposed waterfront open space facility was neither listed in the 2026-2027 Citywide Statement of Needs nor described in the City's Ten-Year Capital Strategy that was published in April 2023. The identified Project Site comprises a portion of privately-owned land, owned and operated by Con Edison, where the City seeks to establish a public access easement. NYCEDC is acting as the Applicant Representative for the site selection actions on behalf of DCAS.

The Site Selection (the "Proposed Action") would facilitate the development of approximately 890 linear feet of publicly accessible waterfront open space on the Project Site. The terms of this arrangement, including any associated costs for the acquisition, maintenance, and construction, are currently being negotiated between the City and Con Edison. The development of a public facility requires review of the Site Selection under Section 218 of the City Charter (Site Selection) and the Uniform Land Use Review Procedures ("ULURP") as described in Sections 197-c and 197-d of the City Charter. The Site Selection is also subject to review under the City Charter's Section 203 Criteria for the location of city facilities.

Concurrent with the Proposed Action, a related ULURP application including zoning map amendments, acquisition, disposition of City-Owned property, designation of Urban Development Action Areas (UDAA), designation of an Urban Development Action Area Project (UDAAP), City map amendments, and zoning text amendments are proposed to facilitate the implementation of a neighborhood land-use plan focused on the Hunters Point North area of Long Island City.

OneLIC Neighborhood Plan
The New York City Department of City Planning (DCP), together with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD), Department of Transportation (DOT), DCAS, and NYCEDC, is proposing a series of land use actions including zoning map amendments, acquisition, disposition of City-owned property, designation of Urban Development Action Areas (UDAA), designation of an Urban Development Action Area Project (UDAAP), City Map amendments, and zoning text amendments (including modifying the Special Long Island City Mixed Use District and establishing Mandatory Inclusionary Housing [MIH]) to facilitate the implementation of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan ("Neighborhood Plan") focused on the Long Island City Neighborhood.

The Neighborhood Plan is intended to build on Long Island City's status as one of Queens' primary Central Business Districts, excellent transportation accessibility and unique waterfront to generate significant new housing, deliver new public open space, increase access to diverse jobs and training, and plan for infrastructure and area-wide resiliency. These actions will also be reinforced by investments into local community resources and the public realm to improve sustainability, safety, mobility, and neighborhood connectivity, through the overarching Neighborhood Plan.

The Neighborhood Plan seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- Protect existing affordable housing and generate new housing, especially affordable housing that serves diverse types of households and family needs.
- Invest in existing parks and deliver new open space along the waterfront and in the core that is high-quality, resilient, sustainable, and accessible.
- Enhance connectivity with multi-modal transportation, improve safety for pedestrians and bikers, and improve logistics for deliveries, loading zones, and truck access.
- Plan for a more resilient and sustainable Long Island City by addressing existing challenges, planned development, population growth, and climate change.
- Support existing businesses and the creative community, increase local job growth, and improve access to diverse, quality jobs and training.

Proposed Easement Area and Waterfront Open Space

Con Edison, a public utility company, owns and operates a facility along the waterfront within the study area on Queens Block 488, part of Lot 114. The lot is approximately 458,000 square feet and includes approximately 890 linear feet of waterfront along the East River. The Con Edison Learning Center is an approximately 185,000 square-foot training facility and education center for Con Edison staff. The facility includes classrooms, a library, and an outdoor simulated training yard where employees learn to work on utility systems.

DCAS and EDC are seeking the acquisition and site selection of waterfront portions of a property located on Block 488, Lot 114. The approval of these ULURP actions would allow the City to acquire an easement to facilitate the creation of a publicly accessible open space along the East River waterfront. EDC, on behalf of the City, is in the process of negotiating the terms of this agreement with Con Edison. The project remains subject to ongoing negotiations regarding the terms of acquisition, easement rights, and any necessary site modifications. The easement area would be located along the entirety of the approximately 890 linear feet of waterfront. The portion of the site contemplated for acquisition is primarily used today for parking and underutilized open space along the bulkhead area. It is anticipated that the Con Edison Learning Center and accessory functions will remain open and operational on the site; however, portions of the parking lot may require alteration depending on the width of the easement agreed upon.

Access to the waterfront open space would be provided through the western portion of 43rd Avenue, a mapped street owned by the City and currently occupied by the Department of Sanitation (DSNY). Following the acquisition of the privately owned waterfront easement, it is anticipated that DSNY will relocate and the western portion of 43rd Avenue will be improved to DOT standards. Creating publicly accessible open space on this stretch of land would help remove a key barrier to realizing a continuous greenway connecting from Gantry State Park to Queensbridge Park.

Site Selection Request
The City has selected the Project Site, as described above, as it meets the spatial and programmatic requirements of the proposed uses, and its location serves to provide the residents of Long Island City with improved access to and connectivity along the East River waterfront. Additionally, the Proposed Project would serve to continue the City's efforts of creating publicly accessibly waterfront in the Long Island City neighborhood. South of the Project Site, NYCEDC has transformed 11 acres of formerly industrial waterfront to publicly accessible parks and open space as a component of the City's Hunters Point South rezoning in 2008. As part of the OneLIC planning process, the City is also seeking the disposition of City-owned waterfront properties located to the south of the Project Site. The associated dispositions are intended to facilitate the development of a mix of uses which include waterfront public open space. The Proposed Project helps to establish the goals of creating continuous, publicly accessible waterfront open space along the East River. This proposed waterfront open space facility was neither listed in the 2026-2027 Citywide Statement of Needs, nor described in the City's Ten-Year Capital Strategy that was published in April 2023. Delivering the proposed open space would be responsive to feedback heard during community engagement for the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan and supports the long-term planning goals of the City's Comprehensive Waterfront Plan.

In the coming weeks, DCAS and EDC will be submitting the ULURP Application to the Department of City Planning (DCP) for the Combined Acquisition and Site Selection in association with the larger land use application for the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan. Please respond within 30 days of receipt of this letter. Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Please feel free to contact Joseph Helferty, NYCEDC at 917.715.3780, or jhelferty@edc.nyc with any questions.

Rebecca Gafvert
Senior Vice President, Land Use
NYC Economic Development Corporation

cc:
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