

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NAG, GWAPP & CUFFH Joint Statement on the Impending Sale of Con Ed Waterfront Site

The Con Ed site on the East River between Grand Street and North 3rd Street is on the market. It used to be that this could mean only one thing – high-rise condominiums with segregated affordable housing (the least they could do), a waterfront esplanade and big retail at the base. But after 13 years of this, Williamsburg residents know better and we know what can be done.

Neighborhood housing and open space advocates NAG, GWAPP, and Churches United For Fair Housing want to make it known that same old same old won't fly here. We call on Councilmember Stephen Levin to refuse any rezoning of this property unless very high standards are met.

Since the adoption of the 2005 Greenpoint-Williamsburg Waterfront Rezoning, we have seen it all. We have seen rezonings get rezoned, and we have seen rezonings get supersized. Through it all, we have learned what works and what doesn't. Sterile, underfunded and poorly-maintained waterfront esplanades do not work. Semi-private buffers between the public way and luxury developments don't work. Poor doors don't work. Affordable housing at only 80% and 120% AMI doesn't work.

Here's what does work for residential development on the waterfront:

- A blend of affordable housing, averaging out to 40% of AMI across all units.
- Substantial affordable housing, achieved through a mix of cross subsidies and public funds/tax breaks. Just meeting the minimum standards of Mandatory Inclusionary Housing doesn't begin to cut it.
- Affordable housing that is integrated throughout the development.
- Equal access to amenities for all residents.
- Residential density no greater than allowed under the 2005 waterfront rezoning – no supersizing.

And any rezoning – residential or commercial must have:

- A waterfront that is 100% accessible to all.
- Waterfront open space that goes well beyond the minimum requirement of a 40-foot esplanade and connects from Grand Ferry Park to the Williamsburg waterfront esplanade.
- No parking minimum.

- Substantial green space, including expansive tree canopy and other vegetation coverage, to reduce urban heat island effect and mitigate future flooding.
- A mix of active and passive open space.
- Sustainable, world-class open space that connects piers, walkways and existing parks and open space (e.g. Hunter's Point Park or Domino Park).
- Direct unmediated access to the water (no bulkheads, no high wharves) that incorporates resilient design.
- Legacy funding for parks upkeep under the supervision of a parks conservancy.
- Community amenities, such as affordable space for community organizations and facilities available to all community members.
- Actual streets to integrate the waterfront with the community; no upland connectors or visual corridors.
- Off-street accommodations for all building services, including sanitation.
- World-class architectural and urban design, from top to bottom.
- Small footprint retail for local businesses.
- Affordable light manufacturing and office space.

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