

**INVOLVED AGENCY STATEMENT OF FINDINGS**  
**Willets Point Phase II Development Plan**  
**CEQR Number 23DME005Q**  
**Made Pursuant to the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act and**  
**City Environmental Quality Review**  
**New York City Department of Parks and Recreation**  
**March 8, 2024**

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**INTRODUCTION**

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (Parks) is an Involved Agency in the proceedings related to the Willets Point Phase II Development Plan in accordance with the environmental review requirements of Article 8 of the New York State Environmental Conservation Law, the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), as set forth in Section 617.11 of its implementing regulations, and the New York City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) process as set forth in New York City Mayoral Executive Order 91 of 1977, as amended, and in the Rules of Procedure for City Environmental Quality Review, found at Title 62, Chapter 5 of the Rules of the City of New York. The SEQRA Regulations require that all Involved Agencies make a written Findings Statement in actions that have been the subject of a final EIS (6 NYCRR 617.6(b)(3)(iii)). In making this Findings Statement, Parks has considered the relevant environmental impacts, information, and conclusions disclosed in the Draft and Final Second Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Willets Point Phase II Development DSSEIS and FSSEIS) for the Willets Point Phase II Development (the Project), the Findings Statement adopted by the Lead Agency, the New York City Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development, and Workforce (DMHEDW or the Lead Agency)<sup>1</sup>, and the complete record of proceedings in all of the above (collectively, the Record of Proceedings). In preparing this Statement of Findings, Parks has considered the Record of Proceedings and hereby incorporates that Record of Proceedings herein by reference.

Parks is an Involved Agency because it will be taking discretionary action with respect to the Project. The proposed action to be taken by Parks is described below and relates to the amendment of certain parking agreements in connection with the Project (the Proposed Action).

This Findings Statements focuses on matters in the Record of Proceedings related to the Project and the Proposed Action and has been prepared to 1) certify that the procedural requirements of SEQRA and CEQR have been met; 2) consider the relevant environmental impacts, facts, and conclusions that may be associated with the Proposed Action, as disclosed in the Willets Point Phase II Development FSSEIS; 3) weigh and balance the relevant environmental impacts of the Proposed Action with social, economic, and other considerations; and 4) set forth a rationale for the decision of Parks as an Involved Agency<sup>1</sup>, and thereby adopted by Parks.

Pursuant to CEQR, DMHEDW is the lead agency responsible for conducting the environmental review that determined whether the Project – or any subsequent modifications to Project – would have significant impacts on public health and the environment. For the Willets Point Development Plan, an FGEIS was first certified as being complete, and a Notice of Completion was issued on September 12, 2008. Subsequent to the FGEIS, modifications were made to the project and analyzed in six technical memoranda, a supplemental EIS (FSEIS), as well as a second supplemental FSEIS (FSSEIS). The FSSEIS, as described

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<sup>1</sup> Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development, and Workforce (DMHEDW), formerly the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Economic and Workforce Development (DMEWD), was the lead agency for the environmental review on the 2008 FGEIS and 2013 FSEIS.

below, was certified as being complete, and a Notice of Completion was issued on February 23, 2024. After considering the FSSEIS, DMHEDW has adopted its Statement of Findings on March 6, 2024.

DMHEDW consulted with a number of City agencies in adopting its findings, including the New York City Department of City Planning (DCP), New York City Department of Transportation (DOT), Parks, New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC), New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), New York City School Construction Authority (SCA), New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY), New York City Fire Department (FDNY), New York City Police Department (NYPD), New York City Transit (NYCT), New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH), the New York City Industrial Development Agency (NYCIDA), and the New York City Law Department (Law). These agencies provided particular assistance to DMHEDW in the review of those matters within the agency's area of expertise.

#### **LEAD AGENCY**

New York City Office of the Deputy Mayor for Housing, Economic Development, and Workforce  
100 Gold Street – 2nd Floor  
New York, NY 10038  
(212) 788-6801  
Contact Person: Ingrid Young

#### **INVOLVED AGENCY**

New York City Department of Parks and Recreation  
830 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10065  
(212) 360-8195  
Contact Person: Emily Humes

#### **SEQRA STATUS**

The Project is classified as a Type I action pursuant to 6 NYCRR Part 617.4(b)(5)(v) and Part 617.4(b)(6).

#### **BACKGROUND**

The CFG Stadium Group, LLC (CFG) Soccer Stadium is one component of the proposed Phase II Development within the Special Willets Point District, which was analyzed in an FSSEIS. The FSSEIS analyses assume, as the Phase II Development's primary parking option, that a proposed Scheduling and Parking Agreement (SPA) would be in place in the future With Action condition, and that certain parking facilities (described below) would be made available for CFG Soccer Stadium events.

#### **PROPOSED ACTION**

Parks proposes amending or, in the case of the leases described below between IDA and Queens Ballpark Company, L.L.C. (QBC), consenting to the amendments to, the following agreements (the "Parking Agreements") administered by Parks, for surface parking facilities at Citi Field in Queens:

- **Amended and Restated North Parking Site Lease**, dated as of February 1, 2009, between IDA and QBC, amending the North Parking Site Lease Agreement dated as of August 1, 2006;<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This lease is a sublease to the Primary Site Ground Lease Agreement, dated as of August 1, 2006, as amended, between the City and NYCIDA. Parks signed as Lease Administrator. The lease covers the Stadium Site and the North Parking Site.

- **Amended and Restated South Parking Site Lease**, dated as of February 1, 2009, between NYCIDA and QBC), amending the South Parking Site Lease Agreement, dated as of August 1, 2006;<sup>1</sup>
- **Pork Chop Hill Lease**, dated as of February 1, 2009, between the City and QBC; and
- **Off-Site Parking License Agreement**, dated as of February 19, 2009, between QBC and Parks.

## **PURPOSE AND NEED**

The amendment of the Parking Agreements is necessary to implement certain provisions of the proposed SPA between QBC and CFG. The SPA will obligate QBC to provide parking for CFG Soccer Stadium events at the On-Site Parking Facilities currently leased to QBC and the Marina East and Stadium View Lots, within the Off-Site Parking Facilities currently licensed to QBC (collectively, the “Designated Parking Facilities”) surrounding the Citi Field Stadium in Queens, which are currently leased, in the case of the On-Site Parking Facilities, and licensed, in the case of the Off-Site Parking Facilities. The Designated Parking Facilities are currently leased and/or licensed, as the case may be, to QBC to provide parking in connection with Citi Field Stadium events, as well as United States Tennis Association (USTA) events, Parks events, and commuter parking. Under the Proposed Action, the Designated Parking Facilities would remain in their current parking use but would also be made available for CFG Soccer Stadium events in addition to Citi Field Stadium events, USTA events, Parks events, and commuter parking.

Parks administers and entered into the Parking Agreements in connection with the construction and operation of the Citi Field Stadium, which was completed in 2009 and is utilized by the New York Mets Major League Baseball organization and for other major events. Pursuant to the Parking Agreements, QBC operates the parking facilities and provides parking for Citi Field Stadium events, as well as events at the USTA facilities, Park events, and commuter parking. Upon completion of the CFG Soccer Stadium, pursuant to the SPA, QBC will provide parking for CFG Stadium Events at certain parking facilities leased or licensed to QBC pursuant to the Parking Agreements.

## **FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS RELIED UPON TO SUPPORT THE DECISION**

The Willets Point Phase II Development FSSEIS analyses assume, as the Phase II Development’s primary parking alternative, that the proposed SPA would be in place in the future With Action condition, and that the Designated Parking Facilities would be made available for CFG Soccer Stadium events. For the 2039 With Action condition identified in the Willets Point Phase II Development FSSEIS—which also accounts for changes resulting from the proposed adjacent Queens Future project described in the FSSEIS, which if approved is assumed to be developed by this analysis year—all NYCFC parking demand is expected to be accommodated within a new 4,000-space structure parking garage to be developed at where Lot A (north of the Citi Field Stadium) is currently located. The FSSEIS also considers the potential for a scenario in which the Designated Parking Facilities are not made available for CFG Soccer Stadium events. Under the Proposed Action, the Designated Parking Facilities would remain in their current parking use but would also be made available for CFG Soccer Stadium events in addition to Citi Field Stadium events, USTA events, Parks events, and commuter parking. However, CFG Soccer Stadium events would not take place during the US Open period.

The FSSEIS analyzed the Willets Point Development project in detail—both the Phase II portion of the project, which includes the CFG Soccer Stadium, and the potential future buildout of the remainder of the Special Willets Point District (referred to as the Phase III Development) and concluded that it would not result in significant adverse impacts in the following areas: land use, zoning, and public policy;

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<sup>1</sup> This lease is a sublease to the South Parking Site Ground Lease Agreement, dated as of August 1, 2006, between the City and NYCIDA. Parks signed as Lease Administrator.

socioeconomic conditions; public schools; libraries; health care facilities; fire and police protection services; open space; shadows; archaeological resources; urban design and visual resources; natural resources; hazardous materials; water and sewer infrastructure; solid waste and sanitation; energy; greenhouse gas emissions; noise; public health; or neighborhood character. Areas where potential significant impacts were identified include publicly-funded early childhood programs, historic resources, and transportation (operational and construction period).

The FSSEIS concluded that compared to the approximately 42,000-seat Citi Field, the proposed 25,000-seat CFG Soccer Stadium would have a smaller seating capacity (approximately 40 percent smaller), and the SPA would establish standards for the timing of events at the CFG Soccer Stadium and Citi Field to ensure parking spaces are not required for both venues at the same time. The SPA would therefore minimize scheduling conflicts between CFG Soccer Stadium and Citi Field events by building in a buffer period to ensure the availability of parking. Given the smaller seating capacity of the CFG Soccer Stadium, the shared use of existing Citi Field parking lots for CFG Soccer Stadium events, the similar travel characteristics among attendees of Major League Soccer (MLS) events and Mets games, and trip-making for the stadium not overlapping with events held at Citi Field, a New York City Football Club (NYCFC) match with fewer vehicle, transit, and pedestrian trips than a Mets game at Citi Field would correspond with a condition that has less activity than a baseline condition that already exists (i.e., a Mets game at Citi Field). A targeted assessment of the anticipated game-day traffic management strategies for events at the CFG Soccer Stadium also concluded that access/circulation of future event and District activities, particularly along 126th Street/Seaver Way and within the District, could be readily maintained under the 2027 With Action condition. Specific game-day traffic management and security details are considered as a result of consultation with DOT, NYPD, FDNY, Parks, and the New York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC). CFG has committed to undertake transportation monitoring efforts after stadium opening. These efforts, which may be repeated to revisit the plan at specific intervals, are expected to entail collecting traffic and pedestrian data during peak game-day travel periods, observing actual operations in the area surrounding the stadium, and exploring alternative strategies, where needed, to refine game-day plans in coordination with DOT, NYPD, FDNY, Parks and EDC.

The FSSEIS also concluded that in the scenario in which the Designated Parking Facilities are not made available for CFG Soccer Stadium events, attendees who choose to drive to CFG Soccer Stadium events would have to rely on the parking resources in adjacent neighborhoods—Corona and Flushing. With limited available on-street parking in both neighborhoods and public parking facilities only available in Flushing, most, if not all, of these auto trips would be made to the area in Flushing surrounding these public parking resources. Conservative analyses for this scenario, prepared to assess the potential transportation-related effects of a highly attended event at the CFG Soccer Stadium, concluded the potential for significant adverse traffic and pedestrian impacts at locations in Flushing and adjacent College Point, where event activities would be concentrated. These activities would take place over short durations on event days and only on 40 to 50 occasions a year. In this scenario, CFG would, in collaboration with NYPD and FDNY, extend game-day traffic management strategies that currently take place surrounding Citi Field and would occur in the future surrounding the new soccer stadium to Flushing and College Point, to address the above periodic short-term effects on traffic conditions. CFG would additionally commit to undertaking a transportation monitoring effort after travel patterns have stabilized to reevaluate the actual effects experienced at that future point in time. A work plan would be drafted for review and approval by DOT for implementation. The findings from this study and those presented in the FSSEIS would be compared to identify specific needs for inclusion in the game-day traffic management strategies.

## **CONCLUSION**

The benefits of the amendment of the Parking Agreements outweigh the adverse environmental impacts identified in the Willets Point Phase II Development FSSEIS and described above. As discussed above, the FSSEIS sufficiently analyzes the Proposed Action. Therefore, no supplemental environmental review is

required. The balance of benefits and impacts provides a full and compelling rationale to proceed with the Proposed Action.

### **CERTIFICATION OF FINDINGS TO APPROVE**

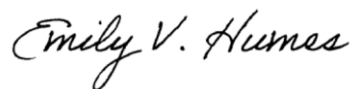
Having considered the relevant environmental impacts, facts, and conclusions disclosed in the Willets Point Phase II Development FSSEIS and having weighed and balanced relevant environmental impacts with social, economic, and other essential considerations as required in 6 NYCRR 617.11, Parks as the agency pursuing the discretionary action of the amendment of the Parking Agreements certifies that:

- the requirements of 6 NYCRR Part 617 have been met and that, consistent with social, economic, and other essential considerations from among the reasonable alternatives available;
- the action is one which avoids or minimizes adverse environmental impacts to the maximum extent practicable, and
- adverse environmental impacts will be avoided or minimized to the maximum extent practicable by incorporating as conditions to the decision those mitigation measures that were identified as practicable.

For these reasons, Parks has determined to undertake the amendment of the Parking Agreements. The Willets Point Phase II Development FSSEIS and these Findings constitute Park's written statement of facts and the environmental, social, economic and other facts and standards that form the basis of this decision, pursuant to Section 617.11 (d) of the SEQRA regulations.

Copies of the FSSEIS and this Findings Statement are available on the CEQR Access website:

<https://a002-ceqraccess.nyc.gov/ceqr/>



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Emily Humes, Director of Environmental Review and Program Delivery  
March 8, 2024  
City of New York – Department of Parks and Recreation