

#### Subcommittee on Planning, Dispositions, and Concessions

September 25, 2017

Testimony By: Nick Molinari, NYC Parks Chief of Planning and Neighborhood Development

Good afternoon, Chair Salamanca, members of the Subcommittee, and other Members of the City Council. I am Nick Molinari, NYC Parks Chief of Planning and Neighborhood Development at NYC Parks. Thank you for providing me an opportunity to offer testimony on EDC's project at Lower Concourse North.

Parks is committed to expanding waterfront access along the Harlem River and improving open space, and we have many projects that work to accomplish this. Specifically, we worked to complete Mill Pond Park, refurbished the historic High Bridge, and completed a portion of Bridge Park at the bridge's footings. We continue to work towards its completion and are also pursuing acquisition of the Putnam Rail Line, which could create an important greenway connection between the Harlem River waterfront and Van Cortlandt Park and areas further north. Partnering with the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality and New York State Department of State, we completed the Harlem River Brownfield Opportunity Area Report, which outlines a comprehensive vision for the Bronx waterfront of the Harlem River. To the south, we are also working closely with EDC to acquire and develop a 2.3 acre site as a waterfront park at 144th St.

The Lower Concourse North project will help us achieve our goals of expanding waterfront access and improving public open space along the Harlem River. It will provide substantial, high-quality open space, presents an opportunity to provide amenities the community has been requesting, and expands towards a more continuous waterfront esplanade. The residential and commercial uses on the site will also bring more "eyes" on neighboring Mill Pond Park, which we have found can make people feel safer.

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

In 2006, NYC Parks was assigned jurisdiction of Piers 1 through 5, the area between the Major Deegan Exit 6 Ramp and the 145<sup>th</sup> St Bridge. The mere assignment of those parcels to NYC Parks did not dedicate them as parkland. Although some may associate Pier 5 with the Yankee Stadium and Gateway Center projects, a commitment to create parkland at Pier 5 was not part of either project.

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

Piers 4 and 5 are not mapped as park. Pier 4 was developed as open space in connection with the Gateway Center development to the east of the Major Deegan Expressway.

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

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

Thank you for allowing me to testify before you. I will now be happy to answer any questions that you may have.

### LOWER CONCOURSE NORTH ULURP

City Council Subcommittee Hearing
September 25, 2017

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### **PUBLIC SESSION PRIORITIES (2015 - 2017)**

#### What we heard:

- Desire for mixed-income, affordable housing
  - Housing to meet the needs of people in the surrounding areas
  - Quality housing and good design
- Strong desire for more open space
  - Waterfront open space, opportunities for an extended greenway
  - Desire for publicly accessible bathrooms and barbecues
  - Safe streets and enhanced connectivity
- Community facility uses
  - Development that benefits the community
  - Activities for youth / kids
  - Cultural spaces
- Access to jobs and workforce development opportunities
  - Opportunities for minority and womenowned businesses
  - Local retail opportunities
  - Job training and local marketing of jobs



Community Workshop



Community Workshop



### **LOWER CONCOURSE INVESTMENT STRATEGY \$194M**

Priority projects

#### 1. New Harlem River Park

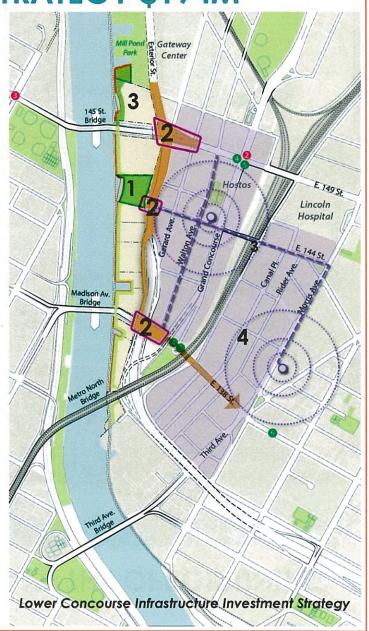
- Acquire 3 parcels
  - Title anticipated in early 2018
- Design/construct new park
  - Public design process for all aspects of the new park

#### 2. Street improvements

 Reconstruct key intersections, update water/sewer lines, improve lighting and streetscape

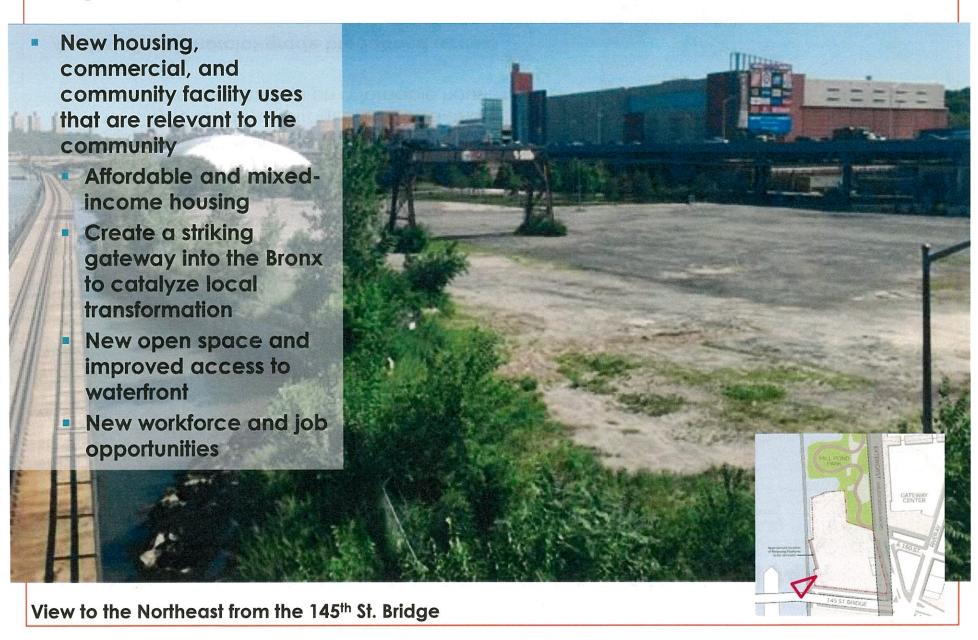
#### 3. Lower Concourse North Site: Bronx Point

- City to fund waterfront esplanade and open space construction on affordable housing site
- 4. Install commercial-grade broadband access





#### LOWER CONCOURSE NORTH SITE - WHAT'S THE OPPORTUNITY?





#### PROPOSED ULURP ACTIONS

- 1. Disposition for future development
- 2. Zoning map amendment to
  - a. Rezone from M2-1 to an R7-2/C2-5/SHRWD
- 3. Zoning text amendment to:
  - a. Create a new subdistrict (Harlem River Waterfront North Subdistrict) to the SHRWD and modify sub-district waterfront regulations
  - b. Extend the Harlem River Waterfront Access Plan
  - c. Establish a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Area
- 4. ZR 74-533 Special permit to reduce parking in order to facilitate affordable housing



Lower Concourse North - Existing Condition

### City Council Planning Subcommittee September 25, 2017





### Type A Projects

Over 25 years of nonprofit, commercial, institutional, and mixed-use development experience; Woman-owned business enterprise & emerging developer



DREAM CHARTER SCHOOL

HARLEM CHILDREN'S ZONE

EXCELLENCE CHARTER SCHOOL

PS/MS498 - ICAHN SCHOOL

1490 SOUTHERN BLVD



Over 30 years of experience developing mixed-income, mixed-use developments in New York City area; Committed to enhancing community opportunities



HARLEM RIVER POINT NORTH

ESSEX CROSSING

ST. BARNABAS

11 BROADWAY

NORTH SIDE PIERS





#### **Key Community Partner**

- Serving the people of the Bronx with life-changing services for over 40 years.
- Community facility space may include educational programs for children, workforce development for adults, and social services for low-income families.
- Maintain ongoing dialogue with neighbors and supporting organizations to maintain a pulse on the community's needs.







#### **RFEI Objectives**

- Publicly Accessible Open Space
- Waterfront and Street Life Enlivening
- Neighborhood Enhancing
- Mixed-Use, Mixed-Income
- Job Opportunity Intensive
- Feasible and Implementable











### **Current Conditions**



### **Current Conditions**

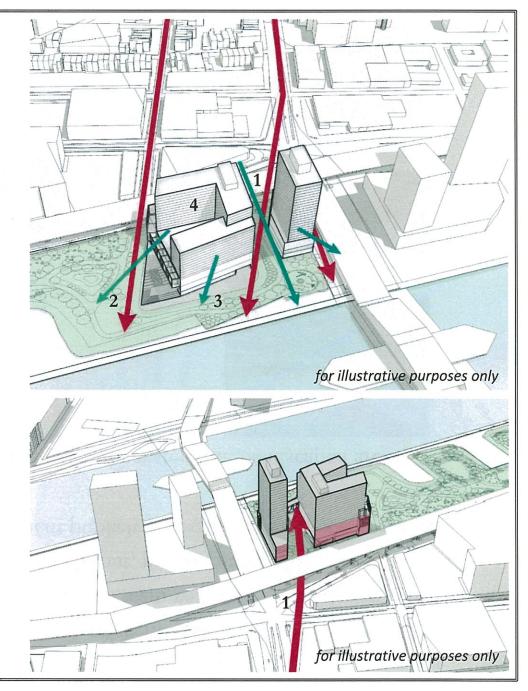






## Community and Open Space-Centric Siting

- 1. Prioritization of public travel to and through the site
- 2. Creation of important site lines to the river, esplanade, and sky
- 3. Visual and physical connection to the existing landscape and the Harlem River
- 4. Northern facing U-shaped design relieves park from building bulk



#### Community Engagement on Design

- Working with Marvel Architects, designers of adjacent Mill Pond Park
- Site plans shown for illustrative purposes; Design team will hold public design sessions to incorporate community input on layout, programming, etc
- Project will substantially expand permanent publicly accessible open space, seamlessly integrating into Mill Pond Park
- Scenic walkways through open space and along the waterfront, landscaped areas



#### World-Class Publicly Accessible Open Space Goals

- Substantially expand permanent publicly accessible open space
- Seamless integration and extension of Mill Pond Park, continuing landscaping and established walking paths
- Dedicated active landscaped areas with greened circulation spaces
- Scenic waterfront public esplanade with viewing platform
- Welcoming public plaza along Exterior Street



### Engaging Open Space Element Examples

Connection to Mill Pond Park

Extended Walking Paths

Esplanade with Viewing Platforms

Open Grand Public Stair

Children's Playground

Planted Seated
Areas

Activate Exterior
Street













#### Lively Outdoor Programming

- Dynamic plaza Under the Elevated highway, drawing people into the site
- Community-engaging terraced site seating and viewing outlooks
- Public performance space to support community events
- Option for early childhood playground in collaboration with the Bronx Children's Museum and local artists



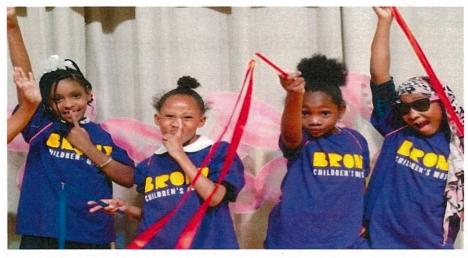




#### Youth and Family Educational Programming

- Child focused STEM-based programming and support space for CityScience
- Harlem River-specific programming for families
   with organizations like the Billion Oyster Project
- Option for artist-designed playground created in partnership with the Bronx Children's Museum















#### Active Bronx Harlem River Waterfront

### Captivating Entertainment and Food Destinations

- Energize waterfront with continuous traffic from magnetic attractions
- State of the art movie theater
- Food and beverage market hall providing opportunities for local entrepreneurs









## Universal Hip Hop Museum In the South Bronx... Where it Belongs!

- The nation's first brick and mortar hip hop museum
- Dedicated to the preservation and celebration of Hip Hop history and culture and the Bronx's role in this global movement:
  - Expertly Curated Interactive Museum Experience
  - Immersive Exhibits
  - Live Performances
  - Film Screenings
  - Seminars
  - Demonstration Labs









## Universal Hip Hop Museum In the South Bronx... Where it Belongs!

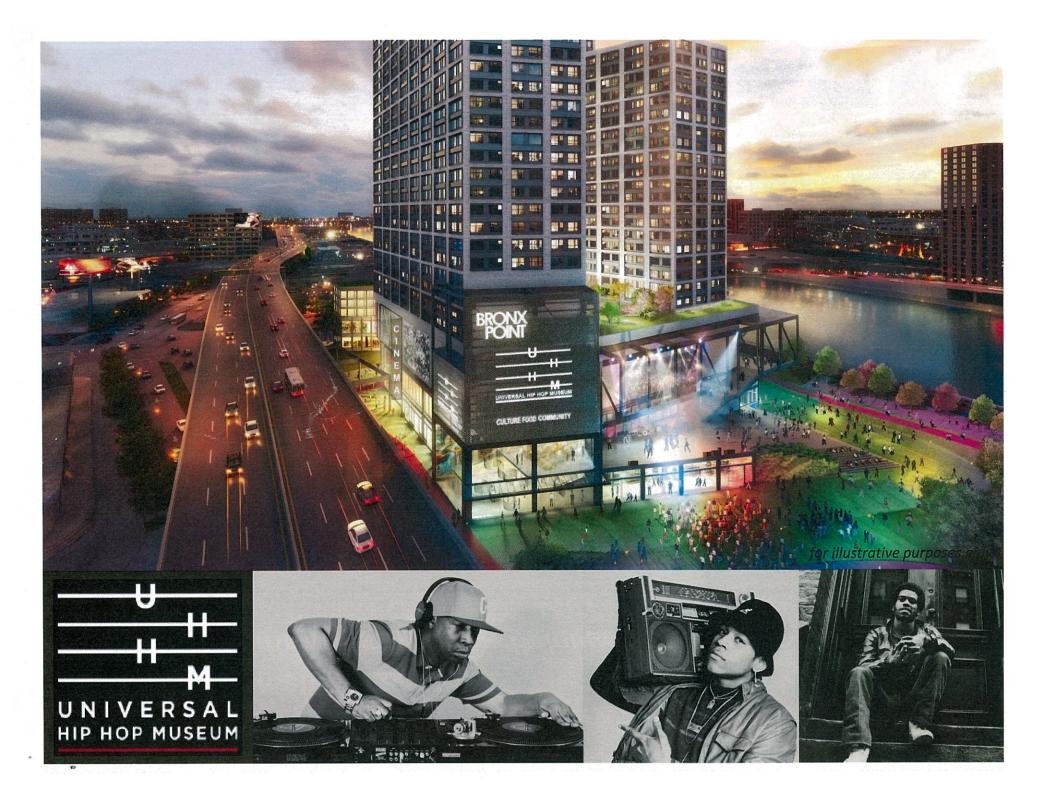
- Strategic Partnerships
  - Google

- Microsoft
- Facebook
- Universal Music Group

- Sony Music
- Warner Music
- Established board of directors, team members, and ambassadors
  - Kurtis Blow
- Wyclef Jean
- Tom Silverman
- Ice-T
- Young Woo
- LL Cool J







#### Quality Permanently Affordable Housing

- Phase 1 approximately 600 units in Studio, One-, Two-, and Three-Bedroom Apartments
  - Approximately 50% are Two- and Three-Bedrooms Apartments
  - Phase 1 is **permanently affordable** with a goal of accommodating a wide range of affordability
    - Serving families that earn between 30% and 130% of AMI
      - 20% at or below 40% AMI
- 20% between 60% 80% AMI
- 30% between 40% 60% AMI
- 30% between 80% 130% AMI
- Ample amenities include fitness center, community room, bicycle room, and large accessible central landscaped courtyard
- Phase 2 will be up to 445 units
  - Goal will be to maximize affordability
  - 50% of units will be available for households earning at or below 80% of AMI







#### Design and Sustainability

- High standards of environmental sustainability
- Environmental remediation through Brownfield Cleanup Program
- Shoreline resiliency and flood mitigation (no cellar, roof boiler room)
- Enterprise Green Communities or LEED Gold Certification
- NYC Active Design Guidelines









#### **Economic Opportunity**

Over \$300 million investment, promoting economic development for New York City and the local Bronx community with an impactful global reach.

- Draws international interest with Universal Hip Hop Museum anticipated to yield 1.5 million annual visitors and tourist dollars
- Community interaction with state of the art movie theatre
- Advances small business development at the food and beverage market hall
- Approximately over 1,000 Construction and Permanent Jobs
- M/WBE Commitment and HireNYC Development Program
  - 35% target participation goal
  - Recruitment/Outreach/Job Fairs
  - Workforce Development Training
  - Permanent Employment for Low-Income Families
  - Continuous collaboration with the Department of Small Business Services









# BRONX POINT

### THANK YOU!





#### September 25, 2017

Good afternoon, Chairperson Rafael Salamanca, Jr. and other distinguished members of the City Council's Land Use Subcommittee on Planning, Dispositions, and Concessions. My name is J.T. Falcone, and I am the Senior Associate of Workforce and Economic Development at JobsFirstNYC, a policy to practice intermediary working to improve the workforce development system and ensure all New Yorkers are in a position to access and climb the economic ladder of New York City's labor market.

For ten years, JobsFirstNYC has been working with local communities and citywide developing and supporting collaborative and innovative strategies to find effective solutions to support out-of-school, out-of-work young New Yorkers. We are here today to lift up one such strategy, the Lower East Side Employment Network (LESEN), that has – for the last 8 years – worked to serve the needs of the residents of the Lower East Side while that neighborhood has seen a swell of economic development activity. The coalition of eight nonprofit agencies came together in partnership with their local Community Board (CB3) in a neighborhood-wide effort to ensure that local residents were appropriately trained and positioned to benefit from those opportunities as they arose.

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

All parties benefit from the Employer-Facing Network model. The LESEN partners have engaged 173 businesses as of June 2017 and achieved a 3:1 interview-to-hire ratio, reducing costs associated with referring and interviewing excess candidates. What's more, incoming businesses give LESEN partners lead-time on projected jobs, and because of this advanced notice, they're able to build out customized programs for residents to ensure that they're skilled and credentialed in what employers need, expanding employment access for local community residents. As testimony to the value businesses see in the LESEN, they have taken a notable step in signing an MOU's designating a 30 percent local hire expectation at Essex Crossings, a new large-scale development project in the Lower East Side.

Given the contextual similarities between the Essex Crossing development work and the Lower Concourse Work on the agenda today, the NYC Economic Development Corporation (EDC) approached JobsFirstNYC early last year to discuss the possibility of developing a similar Employer-Facing Network in the Lower Concourse. Since that time, we have worked to gauge the local workforce community's interest in exploring an Employer-Facing Network model, and found them to be receptive – particularly given LESEN's success.

Based on our firsthand experience working with LESEN, the opportunity to develop a similar model to serve the Lower Concourse would help the community to better prepare to serve not only public development activities, but the private development that is sure to follow. By facilitating direct connections between existing residents and new businesses, an employer-facing network can help to ensure that the improvements to the neighborhood are good for all New Yorkers – particularly those that call the surrounding neighborhoods home.

Thank you,

J.T. Falcone, JobsFirstNYC jfalcone@jobsfirstnyc.org

As Co-Founder of the Billion Oyster Project and President of the New York Harbor Foundation, I am pleased to provide this testimony in support of L&M Development and Type A Projects' proposed development at the Lower Concourse North site in the Bronx.

Billion Oyster Project is a long-term, large scale plan to restore one billion live oysters to New York Harbor over the next twenty years and in the process train thousands of young people in New York City to restore the ecology and economy of their local marine environment.

Billion Oyster Project is a partnership of schools, businesses, nonprofits and individuals all working together to make our city a healthier and more resilient place to live.

Oysters were the keystone species and original ecosystem engineers of New York Harbor. The Billion Oyster Project aims to reverse the effects of their functional extinction and restore the local marine ecosystem's natural mechanisms for maintaining itself, resulting in cleaner water, greater biodiversity and a more stable waterfront.

Moreover, engaging students and the general public in this work builds a culture of stewardship and a more robust understanding and appreciation of NYC's Harbor and waterways for future generations.

At the Lower Concourse site, we anticipate working with the development team, CityScience and other local partners to install and monitor Oyster Restoration Stations at a minimum which will provide a new Bronx location for student and community volunteers who want to be "hands-on" in monitoring and restoring the local habitat. Once our community partnerships are up and running, ideally we would move on to building a full-scale Community Reef.

With sites like the proposed development at the Lower Concourse site, and the opportunity to partner with on-site community organizations like CityScience, we will have the ability to expand our mission and have a dramatic impact on ecosystem health and waterfront resiliency.

Respectfully

Murray Fisher President

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New York Harbor Foundation

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Please accept this testimony in support of L+M and Type A's proposed development, Bronx Point.

CityScience is a not-for-profit, placed-based program that uses the natural and built environments of New York City as laboratories for active learning. Since 2010, CityScience has worked with partners including the NYC Department of Education, Department of Youth and Community Development, the National Parks Service, Partnership for After School Education and The After School Corporation, 60 schools and over 1,000 educators to transform teaching, make STEM education relevant and engaging for PreK-8th grade students, and inspire meaningful exploration of urban environments.

Bronx Point's siting along the Harlem River, adjacent to the inlets at Mill Pond Park and in close proximity to the future home of the Bronx Children's Museum, presents a highly unique opportunity to further our organization's mission to raise the quality of science education in NYC and support environmental stewardship by our citizenry.

At Bronx Point, we anticipate housing our administrative offices as well as a classroom space where we will develop STEM explorations surrounding the Lower Concourse North site. We are additionally excited about the potential opportunity to partner with the Billion Oyster Project and other organizations to further embed our work within the community.

We believe that science is best learned in connection to the communities in which we live, and that we have an obligation to integrate an understanding of the local built environment into our urban education models. We look forward to continuing our successful model with a new bricks and mortar location at Bronx Point.

Thor Snilsberg
Executive Director
CityScience

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