



January 15, 2021

Willis Elkins  
Executive Director  
Newtown Creek Alliance  
510 Kingsland Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Brooklyn, NY 11222

Dear Mr. Elkins:

Thank you for your correspondence regarding the Newtown Creek Bulkhead Restoration capital project in response to our October 29, 2020 letter addressed to the Queens Community Board 2.

We appreciate your input and would like to continue working with your organization along with other interested local stakeholders to bring public space amenities to this Vernon Boulevard street end location. We want to reiterate that while the current scope of work is related to critical structural repairs to ensure the safety of this street end, the final design for the restoration of the bulkhead does not preclude future opportunities to expand public amenities in the upland area. DOT plans to engage the local community this year to develop a vision for additional public amenities in this area, as the Newtown Creek Bulkhead Restoration Project commences. The aim of this public process would be to develop a shortlist of public amenities from DOT's toolkit to implement at this location when the restoration project is complete.

DOT shares your concern for the protection and restoration of the shoreline. As sea levels continue to rise, the Vernon Boulevard street end is anticipated to be regularly flooded by tidal inundation and this bulkhead reconstruction is designed with that in mind. We believe we have a public responsibility to ensure that our projects are resilient to climate threats that are only becoming more severe. The finished seawall, which will be 4 feet above the finished street grade (which equates to 11 feet NAVD88, not 13 feet, as referenced in Newtown Creek Alliance's letter), represents a proactive step to protect the upland portions of Vernon Boulevard and 54th Avenue from increasing levels of tidal flooding from Newtown Creek. Further, our design also accounts for challenges posed by the existing DEP Combined Sewer Overflow outfall, a National Grid Gas Pipeline, and U.S. EPA Superfund site at Newtown Creek—all of which limit design options for this site.



## Department of Transportation

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Margaret Forgiione, Acting Commissioner

Again, we are happy to discuss a longer-term vision for this site. In the meantime, we are eager to finalize these critical structural repairs to make the bulkhead safe, and hope to engage in a fruitful discussion of public amenities that would work for the Vernon Boulevard street end given the current conditions. We look forward to remaining in close touch with Newtown Creek Alliance on these efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nicole Garcia".

Nicole Garcia  
Queens Borough Commissioner

NG:gs

DOT-487902-P5T1

**NYC Department of Transportation**

**Office of the Queens Borough Commissioner**

120-55 Queens Boulevard, Room 285, Kew Gardens, NY 11424

T: 212.839.2510 F: 212.839.2518

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