

For Immediate Release

Contact: Willis Elkins
347-504-6701

welkins@newtowncreekalliance.org

Community Leaders and Elected Officials Push for Restored Shoreline and Open Space in Long Island City

Long Island City - July 15, 2022 - The Newtown Creek Alliance, along with Councilmember Julie Won, LaGuardia Community College President Kenneth Adams, and numerous community leaders and advocates, gathered near the fenced off shoreline of the Dutch Kills Tributary along 29th Street in Long Island City to push forward a vision of ecological restoration, public reclamation, and community access along this degraded and unmaintained MTA owned street.

Earlier this year, this same coalition of stakeholders, sent [a letter to MTA, NYC DOT, and NYS DEC](#), raising awareness about the unsafe street conditions and drastically eroding shoreline in an area that is significantly plagued by lack of open space and environmental hazards. For years, the community has been seeking access to the Creek, open space for local students and workers, as well the environmental benefits generated by ecological restoration at this location. Given the urgency to address the increasingly unsafe shoreline and roadbed conditions, the advocates are pushing for a redesign that brings value to benefit the community and environment.

The designs, created by the firm Interval Projects as part of the larger [Dutch Kills Loop](#) proposal, show an inspiring transformation from a fenced off and eroding shoreline next to sunken abandoned barges, into a public waterfront access spot overlooking a restored salt marsh.



“We are joined today by a remarkable coalition of elected leaders, community advocates, local businesses, and LaGuardia students and staff, but we need full buy-in from the agencies who own, use and have jurisdiction on this land - the MTA, NYC DOT, and NYS DEC - to transform this state owned shoreline area from a public liability to a community asset. We are eager to work together and make this transformation a reality,” said **Executive Director of Newtown Creek Alliance Willis Elkins**.

Queens Borough President Donovan Richards attended the event offering: “In a community like this that is forever growing we need to make sure there is open space, especially on public land. We’ve come through a very tough time in the borough. We think about this pandemic, how it exacerbated many issues, but also how we got to rediscover our neighborhoods. It’s an incredible time for us to talk about not just building back or coming back to normal. No, normal did not work. If you look behind me, that was our normal before. This is not the normal we will keep moving forward with in the borough... This shoreline is in need of investment if it’s going to reach its full potential. It needs to be repaired so that it stops collapsing after heavy rainstorms. It needs to be restored to include native habitats that will help with the long term resiliency and the health of our waterways... to be made accessible for everyone to enjoy, helping families in our community thrive for generations to come. We are calling on our agencies to get their act together. Now is not a time for bureaucracy. Now is the time for the cure, to begin using our waterways more broadly.”



Shoreline rendering, courtesy Interval Projects.

“The concrete company has spent many years dumping their concrete waste into the Creek, and that is not okay. We are also asking the MTA, who owns this plot of land to be returned and

emptied out, so that it can be used for public use...This has been unusable for so many years, and yet the MTA has still chosen to take inaction. We have so many of us here saying enough is enough and we deserve to have access to this beautiful Creek,” **said NYC Council Member for District 26 Julie Won.**

District Directors Evelyn Cruz and Dan Wiley attended and submitted the following statement from Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez: “The Queens residents who live and work around Newtown Creek have a right to expect that their government will take care of the environment. But what do we find right at the foot of LaGuardia Community College? - Crumbling roads and infrastructure falling into the fetid Newtown Creek. This should not be the case. We have the EPA acting through the strongest tools we have in cleanups: Superfund designation. We have publicly owned MTA land. But we need greater agency leadership and investment. Last month, I requested and secured in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2022 authorization directing the US Army Corps of Engineers to undergo ecosystem restoration study at Newtown Creek to create living shoreline, marsh habitat and public access. This authorizes the Corps to pursue Dutch Kills Shoreline Restoration and Public Access. I look forward to working with all the advocates and agencies to ensure we reconnect Queens and Brooklyn to the creek’s historically neglected and inaccessible natural resources.”



Interval
 Projects

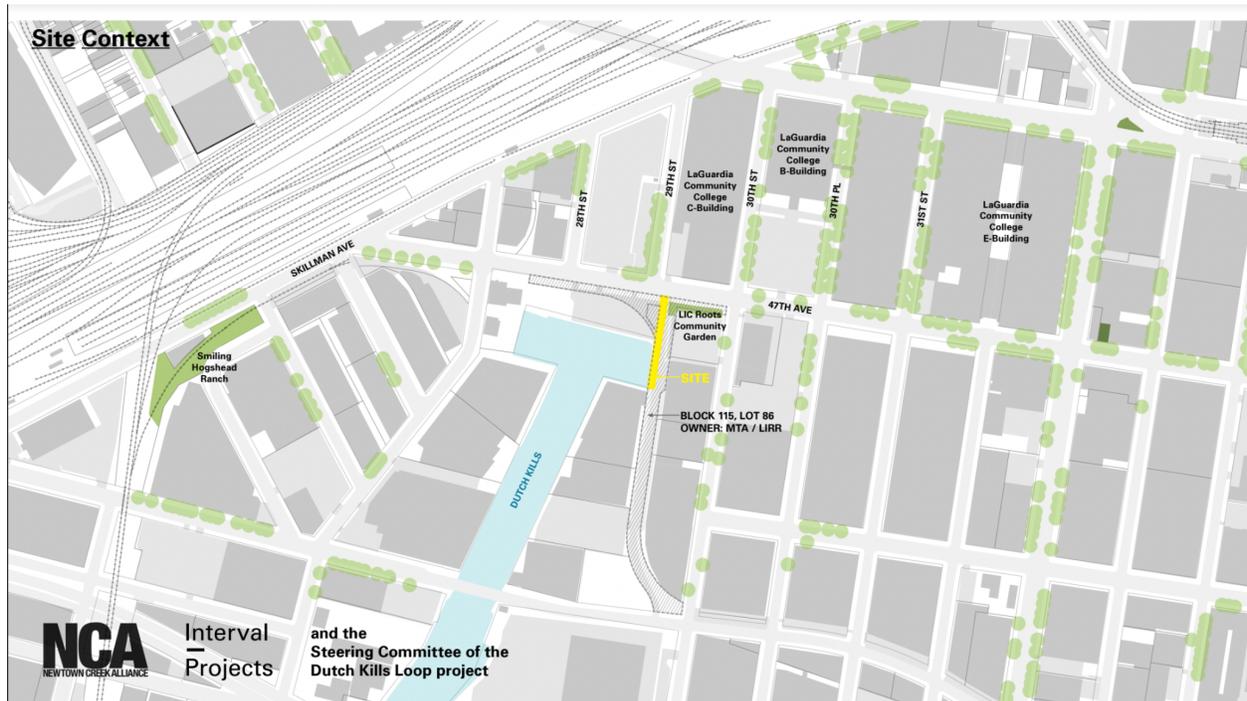
and the
 Steering Committee of the
 Dutch Kills Loop project



Shoreline Rendering, courtesy Interval Projects.

"I am disturbed at the inaction of our city & state agencies as we are joined here today for the third round of structural collapses on this Dutch Kills shoreline. However, I am hopeful that instead of waiting for an inevitable street-collapse to occur, that the MTA, DEC and DOT will work together with our community to rebuild and reimagine this neglected piece of our waterway. Today, we are presenting a unique opportunity to invest in new flood-resilient and

ecological infrastructure to protect the area from extreme-weather occurrences, to include pedestrianization and traffic calming measures for students across the street at LaGuardia Community College, and to open up safe, public access to our waterway. However, this can only happen if city and state agencies begin working together on this plan immediately, and that is why I am proud to join my colleagues in calling on them to do just that," **said NYS Assemblymember Elect for District 37 Juan Ardila.**



Site Context, courtesy Interval Projects.

"I'm confident that this project is going to happen because of our amazing elected officials who will advocate with the agencies, and technical expertise and energy of LaGuardia students. I recommit LaGuardia Community College as an anchor institution in western Queens, my role, the resources we can muster, our amazing faculty, and our students. We recommit to this project, and to do all we can to make it happen," **said President of LaGuardia Community College, CUNY Ken Adams.**

"We are at the bottom of the list in city council districts when it comes to the amount of available open green space. So what are we teaching our students as they come here? When people come and this is the way it is, they don't know how it can be. So we have to envision it, and we have to build it. We own this property. We own it, but MTA and Governor Hochul, we need you," **said Transportation Co-Chair of Queens Community Board 2 Shelia Lewandowski.**

"This is not just an issue about open space, this is not just an issue of environmental resiliency, this is not just an issue about climate change, it is all three at the same time... It also includes going to our Mayor Eric Adams and Governor Kathy Hochul who have the ability to bring all of

these agency heads together in a room and tell them to get this done,” said **District Leader Émilía Decaudin**.

“There is no greater indication of what your values are than how you use your land, how you spend your money, and what you do with your water. There is no greater example of that in our community than this site. And I just want to say that we deserve better than this. I’m grateful that all of these elected officials, community partner organizations and leaders understand this,” said **District Leader-elect Nicholas Berkowitz**.

Full list of Event Attendees:

Council member Julie Won, Borough President Donovan Richards, Assemblymember elect Juan Ardila, Office of Congressmember Carolyn Maloney, Office of Congressmember Nydia Velazquez, District Leader Emilia Decaudin, District Leader-elect Nicholas Berkowitz, Newtown Creek Alliance, LaGuardia Community College, Queens Community Board 2, LIC Partnership, Blissville Civic Association, Dutch Kills Loop Steering Committee, LIC Roots Community Garden, Smiling Hogshhead Ranch, 21st Century Storage, and Broadway Stages.

Resources:

[*Full Set of Site Plans, courtesy Interval Projects.*](#)

[*Photos from July 15th Press Event.*](#)

[*Video from July 15th Press Event.*](#)

[*Photos of current conditions of the shoreline from Mitch Waxman.*](#)