



January 15, 2024

Executive Director Sreoshy Banerjea
Public Design Commission
City Hall, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10007

Dear Executive Director Banerjea,

We are writing to express our full support for the Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) proposed plan for the Gateway to Greenpoint project, located at the intersection of Kingsland Avenue and Greenpoint Avenue. The community has advocated for the transformation of this city-owned parcel for many decades and its potential to create much needed environmental benefit and open space in a heavily industrial, and long polluted area.

Beginning in the late 1990's, the City began a multi-billion dollar upgrade to the Newtown Creek Water Pollution Control Plant (the largest of 14 treatment plants in the City). During this decades-long project a number of open space projects were offered by DEP to Greenpoint, including developing the parcel at Kingsland and Greenpoint Avenues as a community amenity. In 2018, our organization received a small grant to oversee a year long community based planning process for the Gateway to Greenpoint site. After multiple input sessions from community members and key stakeholders, including DEP, we revised design concepts and completed a community plan in the summer of 2019.¹ We met with DEP leadership to lay out a path forward in making the project a reality, however the significant financial constraints faced by the City during the COVID-19 pandemic delayed progress on the project. We are very appreciative of DEP's support and flexibility in making this project a reality, despite the numerous changes and hurdles faced since our 2019 plan was completed.

The Gateway to Greenpoint project has received significant community support, including from the four local industrial businesses located on this section of Kingsland Avenue; elected officials, including former Council Member Steve Levin, who allocated \$150,000 in 2020, and current Council Member Lincoln Restler, who has allocated \$350,000 through participatory budgeting; as well as broad community support as evidenced by the project's success during the participatory budgeting voting process.

The DEP design incorporates the majority of the original design elements from the 2019 community plan, with the addition of a stormwater retention system that will provide significant environmental impact through the capture of stormwater, and reduction of untreated runoff going to the long polluted Newtown Creek. Additionally, the project will help mitigate the urban heat island effect, which is more significant in industrial areas and becoming more dangerous via climate change and increasing extreme heat events. Any opportunities to further increase the amount of planted areas on the proposed design will further help mitigate extreme heat as well as provide habitat for native wildlife, which we are fully supportive of.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Elkins" or similar, with a stylized flourish at the end.

Willis Elkins
Executive Director
Newtown Creek Alliance

¹ See full community plan here: <https://www.newtowncreekalliance.org/gateway-to-greenpoint/>