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Waterfront Alliance Secures Congressional Grant to Develop a Climate Resilience Plan for Flushing Meadows Corona Park

Plan will be a Community-Led Process to Identify Climate Hazards and Potential Resilience Strategies to Advance Plans for Shovel-Ready Projects

Waterfront Alliance is pleased to announce that its proposal for a climate resilience plan for Flushing Meadows Corona Park has been awarded Community Project Funding in the 6th Congressional District (NY) as part of the new federal spending package.

In Spring 2021, Congressmember Grace Meng submitted 10 Community Project Funding requests to the House Appropriations Committee for review. The funding was included as part of the FY 2022 spending bill signed into law yesterday.

Flushing Meadows Corona Park serves as critical infrastructure for multiple neighborhoods in the 6th District. The park is a space for recreation, reflection, and increasingly, refuge from urban heat. And yet, the park faces tremendous challenges due to climate change.

The primary objectives of Waterfront Alliance's "Flushing Meadows Corona Park: A Hub for Climate Resilience" are to increase public awareness about local climate risks, build community participation in planning and infrastructure projects, and to identify potential resilience solutions for future investigation and development. Working with Queens community leaders, partners in city government, and academia, alongside the community, Waterfront Alliance will provide tools and lead events to share and gather information that will culminate in a climate visioning for the park. These concrete recommendations and concept plans can better position the Park and surrounding community to receive city, state, and federal funding for resilience projects.

Receiving much of the stormwater from surrounding neighborhoods, the park was identified by the [Center for an Urban Future](#) as the most-flooded park in the City alongside Forest Park due to increasingly heavy rains. Recent extreme weather events including Hurricane Ida reinforce the need for better preparation and planning. Torrential waters forced the NYPD to conduct multiple rescues from Flushing Meadows Corona Park and there was severe flooding as stormwater from the Grand Central Parkway and the Van Wyck Expressway ran off into areas of the park. Access to recreational programs and facilities in the park was halted due to sustained damage to buildings.



Additionally, the park faces risks due to sea level rise and storm surge, with much of the park facing permanent inundation by 2080, according to the [New York Panel on Climate Change](#), and other areas only recently being brought back online following damage from Hurricane Sandy.

"As Queens' signature local and destination park, serving several Central and Northern Queens communities with high social vulnerability, we must ensure that the park and surrounding communities are prepared for our climate future," said **Karen Imas, Vice President of Programs, Waterfront Alliance**. "Tremendous thanks to Congresswoman Meng for her climate leadership. This project is particularly timely as increased funding may come to our region for climate change adaptation projects per the infrastructure funding package."

"Flushing Meadows Corona Park is a beautiful landmark of our district. It provides a lovely area for recreational and leisure activities, refuge from the heat in the summer and possesses one of the most beautiful sculptures in all of New York, the Unisphere," said **Congresswoman Meng, New York's senior Member of the House Appropriations Committee**. "That is why I am so pleased that the Waterfront Alliance will receive funding through the new government spending package to help the park battle the effects of climate change. Stormwater from surrounding neighborhoods continuously flood the park and in some areas, the park is projected to be permanently flooded due to rising sea levels in the coming decades. The funds will help make key assessments, plan out necessary strategies, and begin implementation to help keep the park open for Queens residents for generations to come."

"Once a flourishing tidal wetland that absorbed waters from Flushing Bay and the Long Island Sound, Flushing Meadows Corona Park has undergone many transformations—a coal ash dumping ground, two World's Fairs and one of the top 10 biggest parks in NYC," said **Rebecca Pryor, the Executive Director of Guardians of Flushing Bay (GoFB)**. "GoFB is eager to play a role to envision the park's next stage of transformation: as a climate resilient hub for the surrounding environmental justice communities who depend upon it. We are looking forward to collaborating with Waterfront Alliance and our local partners in this process, and we are sincerely thankful to Congressmember Grace Meng for making the project possible."

"I am delighted that Federal funding has been awarded to support community-based resiliency planning and education in Flushing Meadows Corona Park," said **Kizzy Charles-Guzman, Executive Director of the NYC Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice**. "Together, communities and governments can build a more just vision for the future as we fight against climate change." "NYC Parks is committed to improving Flushing Meadows Corona Park and ensuring this iconic park is resilient for decades to come. To that end, more than \$350 million has already been invested in recent and upcoming park renovations, including projects that increase resiliency and improve stormwater management," said **NYC Parks Commissioner Sue Donoghue**. "We're grateful for the Waterfront Alliance's partnership to raise awareness and engage the community around these important issues."



About:

Waterfront Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a strong track record of providing technical planning and project development services, developing community-based plans, and convening individuals and groups across New York City and the region to inform different public and private waterfront projects. Specifically, the organization has been engaged by NYC Department of City Planning, NYC Economic Development Corporation and The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, among other government agencies and organizations, to either develop waterfront plans, convene community engagements on major projects and plans, and/or provide technical advice on critical coastal and waterfront projects.