



# PCAC

PERMANENT CITIZENS  
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## Testimony on the Proposed Willets Point Redevelopment

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit public comment regarding the proposed Willets Point redevelopment in Queens. As rider representatives and trusted advisors to the MTA, the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC) researches issues, recommends viable solutions, and advocates on behalf of the region's subway, bus and Staten Island Railway riders, and Long Island Rail Road and Metro-North Railroad commuters. We thank Borough President Donovan Richards for holding this public hearing on the Willets Point redevelopment. Our comments are focused on the transit investments that we believe should be included for riders and users of the Mets-Willets Point station.

In service of our mission to advocate for riders, we're asking that you ensure that the NYC Economic Development Corporation and Queens Development Group be required to make the Mets-Willets Point 7 train and LIRR stations fully accessible. New York City and the MTA's joint "Zoning for Accessibility" program has proven to be a useful tool that delivers newly accessible stations at no cost to the MTA. We hope to see a similar model implemented at Mets-Willets Point—potentially in exchange for more air rights.

Phase 2 of the Willets Point development will bring 2,500 units of 100% affordable housing, a 650-seat public elementary school, a 250-room hotel and a 25,000-seat soccer stadium as the new home for the New York City Football Club to the neighborhood – in addition to the 1,100 affordable housing units that passed through the ULURP process last year – all of which will bring many more riders to these stations. As this area transitions to year-round use it's even more crucial that the Mets-Willets Point 7 train and LIRR stations to be made fully accessible: all residents, sports game attendees, and other visitors deserve access to the transit that can quickly and efficiently get them there. During peak season, tens of thousands of people from around the city and world travel to the neighborhood—but those with disabilities, families with strollers, tourists with luggage, and anyone else with limited mobility are prevented from accessing the 7 train and LIRR at the station.

Making Mets-Willets Point accessible is long overdue, even by the MTA's standards: PCAC has been advocating for this change for decades and the station should have gotten its elevator nearly a decade ago. While we work to build a 21<sup>st</sup> century transit and rail system for all New Yorkers and get riders back on board, we cannot leave tens of thousands of people with limited mobility behind. This impressive new development must be the impetus to right the wrongs of neglect.

With the proposed new development, there is no better time to make the station fully accessible—and developers, sports teams, and other private companies with a stake in the plan should be the ones to fund it. We're calling for city programs like Zoning for Accessibility to be

expanded to make it easier for private developers to fund and construct elevators, ramps, escalators, and other station improvements—even when they fall just outside of the distance allowed in the zoning text.

All New Yorkers should be able to access the wealth of new development in the Willets Point area. Riders are counting on the developers to invest in making the Mets-Willets Point 7 and LIRR stations accessible for the thousands of transit users who will live, work, and visit the newly developed area. We look forward to working with you to finally making the vision for an accessible Mets-Willets Point station a reality.

