

FORT TILDEN REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

Fort Tilden Local Redevelopment Authority

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Redevelopment Plan and Homeless Assistance Submission has been prepared in accordance with the *Base Closure Community Redevelopment and Homeless Assistance Act of 1994 (the Redevelopment Act)*. The Redevelopment Act was enacted after it was determined that earlier dispositions of large parcels of decommissioned federal land, including military bases, did not adequately address potential use of these properties for the homeless. The Redevelopment Act mandates a reuse plan for former federal properties and consideration of those properties for provision of services for the homeless.

The Redevelopment Act places responsibility for base reuse planning on the Local Redevelopment Authority (LRA). The LRA is responsible for developing a reuse plan that appropriately balances the needs of the various communities in consideration of economic redevelopment, other development and homeless assistance. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is responsible for reviewing the plan to determine its compliance with the statute.

Following HUD review and approval of the Homeless Assistance Submission the Department of Defense makes their determination on the proposed reuse plan.

Fort Tilden Local Redevelopment Authority

This Fort Tilden Local Redevelopment Authority Redevelopment Plan and Homeless Assistance submission is based upon a review of the existing conditions of the former Army Reserve property and the existing buildings at the facility, the physical location of the site and the uses in the surrounding neighborhood and its proximity to transportation, schools, retail and services, the Notices of Interest (NOI) received in response to the July 27, 2016 public notification, a determination by the NYC Department of Homeless Services regarding utility of the site for provision of homeless assistance, and responses or comments received at a Public Hearing held on September 19, 2017.

Response to request for Notices of Interest

There was one response received on the October 31, 2016 deadline for submission of NOIs that was stated in the July 27, 2016 public notification. The sole submission was from the New York Police Department (NYPD) Counterterrorism Bureau. The proposal of the NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau is to use the existing buildings and property of the facility as a classroom and situational training facility to carry out its evolving mission. The range of activities of the Counterterrorism Bureau include development of training programs for the NYPD patrol force, specialized units and tristate law enforcement agencies and first responders. Currently, the Counterterrorism Bureau is involved with: threat reduction for infrastructure sites: detection and deterrence of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive weapons of mass destruction; harbor security and detection of potentially harmful materials that traverse the waterways; partnerships between the private and public sector security entities; emergency preparedness and response; audiovisual informational and instructional production; special events counterterrorism planning; and live training exercises

for “active shooter situations”. The facility would be established as the Regional Training Center for Advanced Counterterrorism and Disaster Studies.

Former Army Reserve Center at Fort Tilden and surrounding area

The former Army Reserve Center at Fort Tilden is located on the western end of the Rockaway Peninsula surrounded by a portion of the National Park Services Gateway National Recreation Area. The Gateway National Recreation Area on Rockaway was formerly a military base that was decommissioned over time as the nation’s defense needs changed. The park is mostly undeveloped with a few buildings that are used by cultural organizations within the Gateway National Recreational Area. The 9.15 acre former Fort Tilden Army Reserve Center is the last part of the former base on Rockaway that is now available for reuse. Located between the Rockaway Inlet and the Atlantic Ocean, the surrounding area is largely undeveloped. The nearest neighborhoods are Breezy Point and Roxbury. These communities came into being as summer vacation beach bungalows that over the time have been improved and modified into year round residences. Rockaway Point Boulevard is the one major roadway into the mostly undeveloped area. There are few schools, retail stores, mass transportation or other services readily available to this portion of Rockaway.

New York City housing services and homeless prevention programs

New York City’s multifaceted program to keep individuals and families in their homes, encourage production of affordable housing, and provide shelter for the homeless within their resident communities with support services are all designed to prevent homelessness and to reduce the overall homeless population. These programs are identified and detailed in the annual Consolidated Plans submitted to the federal government. The New York City Department for Homeless Services as the collaborative applicant for the NYC Coalition on the Continuum of Care works closely with a network of organizations made up of government agencies, local community based not for profit providers and other service providers. Working with these organizations the Department of Homeless Services is responsible for the programmatic portions of the plan regarding homelessness in NYC. The NYC Department for Homeless Services has determined that Fort Tilden would not be needed to provide homeless assistance.

Fort Tilden Local Redevelopment Authority Proposal

The Fort Tilden Local Redevelopment Authority in consideration of the history of the site, the surrounding national park, the lack of readily available mass transportation, retail and other services, or educational facilities has determined that it is not suited for residential redevelopment or homeless assistance. Without those support services, this 9.15 acre site would not be successful for residential reuse.

The NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau was the only qualifying respondent to the public notification for submission of Notices of Interest. The NOI submitted by the NYPD met the criteria for qualifying submissions that were outlined in public notification. The NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau is an established unit of the NYPD with a critical mission that has been protecting against and preventing terrorist acts in New York City since 2002. The Counterterrorism Bureau also provides information and support to neighboring jurisdictions

and works in partnership with private security entities. Their proposed use would require the entire 9.15 acre Fort Tilden property as a regional training facility.

Conclusion

Therefore, the Fort Tilden Redevelopment Authority recommends reuse of the Fort Tilden property as a training facility for the NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau. This application will be made for an Educational Public Benefit Conveyance.

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FORT TILDEN HISTORY

Fort Tilden was developed as a 317 acre military base in 1917 as a part of the coastal defense system. During World War II additional armaments were added to the base. From 1954 to 1974 the base functioned as a NIKE missile launch facility. In 1976 the NIKE missile program was discontinued and the all surrounding properties, except the 9.15 acre area around the reserve center, were decommissioned and incorporated into the Gateway National Recreation Area. Some of the remnants of the WWI, WWII and NIKE era still exist but are all closed and inaccessible for safety reasons. The reduced Fort Tilden became the headquarters for the reserve center. The center was last occupied by the Army Reserve unit in September 2011.

Interim uses since the Army Reserve have been:

- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) from October 2012 to May 2013
- New York City's Build it Back Program after the devastation of Hurricane Sandy from 2013 to 2015. The mission of the Build it Back Program is to assist Rockaway homeowners in rebuilding and restoration of their homes. Build it Back vacated the site in June 2015.
- The NYPD Counterterrorism Program has been operating on the site on a month to month license with the Department of Defense since August 2016.

The site is located on Zoning Map 29d and is mapped R4 and is also marked as a military installation. R4 is a general low density housing district (Floor Area Ratio .75-.90). The maximum allowable building height is 35 feet with 25 feet perimeter walls.

Fort Tilden is not well served by public transportation. It is located on the western edge of the peninsula west of Jacob Riis Park. It is surrounded by the National Park Services gateway National Recreation Area. Roxbury is a low density residential community across Rockaway Point Boulevard from Fort Tilden. The next nearest residential community is Breezy Point located at the western tip of Rockaway. The nearest bus stop (Q22) is on Beach 169th Street and Rockaway Point Boulevard which is approximately .39 miles from Fort Tilden. The nearest roadway off the peninsula is the Gil Hodges Bridge which is a tolled bridge also approximately .39 miles from Fort Tilden in the vicinity of Beach 169th Street. There is no local retail in the immediate area. There closest stores are to the west near Breezy Point. The nearest public school is P.S./M.S. 114 in Belle Harbor which is 2.25 miles to the east.

FORT TILDEN EXISTING CONDITIONS

The former U.S. Army Reserve Center is located on a 9.15 acre lot that is improved with a 29,469 sf Administration Building and a 7,036 sf Organizational Maintenance Shop. Also located on the site are Military Equipment Parking (MEP) and a privately owned vehicle

parking area. The existing development were built on the site between 1947 and 1954. The reserve center operated on the site until 2005. Most of the grounds are covered with impervious materials such as concrete and asphalt.

Water and sanitary sewer service is provided by NYC. Electrical service is provided by Public Service Gas and Electric and natural gas is provided by National Grid.

Administration Building

1. An irregularly shaped two-story building with a two-story drill hall. The building consists of office space, classrooms and an arms vault used to store rifles and pistols, a storage area, kitchen and a drill hall. All munitions had been removed by 2006. Storage rooms are located at the southwestern portion of the first floor and at the southern portion of the second floor. An environmental compliance assessment in 2005 identified grease traps however an August 2006 site reconnaissance did not locate any grease traps. A boiler room is located on the eastern side of the administration building, the boiler room is lower in elevation than the first floor and houses the building's gas heating units, bypass feeder and electrical subpanels.
2. The second floor consists of office space, classrooms and storage space.

Organizational Maintenance Shop (OMS) and Vehicle Wash Area

1. The OMS is located on the southeastern portion of the property. The building is a rectangular steel and brick building which contained five vehicle maintenance bays and detergent and hot water washing stations. Cabinets were used to store flammable petroleum oil and lubricants. The building also contained a bathroom and office.

Environmental Assessment

Under contract to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers an Environmental Condition of Property (ECP) report was first prepared in 2007. In 2011, the report was updated in anticipation of disposition of the property. The 2011 ECP was conducted by a historical document search and interviews with personnel familiar with the property.

The follow-up 2011 ECP found that the 2007 ECP identified 500-, 1000-, and 6000-gallon No. 2 fuel underground storage tanks (UST) existed on the site and spills had occurred at the fill pipe for the 1000 gallon UST and at the fill pipe for another UST. The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) identified one spill that has been cleaned and the case closed. All USTs have been removed with no associated contamination remaining.

Asbestos Inspection Report 2004

The inspection found that there were highly friable asbestos containing material (ACM) was found in the thermal system insulation piping and fittings, and nonfriable ACM was in the floor tile. There was no ACM found in the OMS building. There are no records of abatement of the asbestos that were found.

Potential Chemical Contamination on adjacent properties

The areas surrounding the Fort Tilden Reserve Center were used as NIKE missile launch areas. The 2007 report says that there has not been any further investigation of those areas to

determine if any of the chemicals used to maintain and launch the missiles had spilled or are present in the soil around the launch pads.

Lead Based Paint (LBP)

There are no records of an evaluation or abatement at the site for LBP. However, the buildings were constructed prior to 1978 raising the likelihood that there is LBP present.

Radioactive materials

A historical review and interviews with personnel indicate that radioactive materials were present in equipment used on the base. Meters used to monitor nuclear, biological and/or chemical hazards were stored in the building. There is no evidence of any spills of those materials. However, there has not been specific testing for any of these materials.

BASE REALIGNMENT AND CLOSURE ACT (BRAC)

- Fort Tilden was designated for closure under the Base Realignment and Closure Act in 2005 and notice was published in the Federal Register on May 9, 2006. On May 25, 2012 there was another notice published in the Federal Register that the property was being withdrawn as a surplus property and instead would be added to the National Park Services Gateway National Recreation Area. On June 26, 2015, there was a notice in the Federal Register that Fort Tilden Reserve Center was declared surplus property subject to the BRAC process.
- A solicitation for Notices of Interest for all interested parties including homeless service providers or those interested in a public benefit conveyance was placed by the Fort Tilden Local Redevelopment Authority in the NY Daily News on July 27, 2016. The response date for submission of Notices of Interest was October 31, 2016. The solicitation for NOIs also included the base criteria for evaluation of any responses. Qualifying NOIs would have to demonstrate that the respondent organizations at a minimum would have to include information regarding: the submitting organization's purpose, mission, structure and background; proposed use of the property, including a description of the reuse of the existing buildings and grounds necessary to carry out such use; duration of the proposed activity; the benefit to the community from such proposed use and the number of persons served; and a description of the organization's ability and wherewithal to implement and carry out the proposed use.
- Following the publication of the request for Notices of Intent there was workshop held on site on Friday, August 17, 2016.
- The deadline for submission of responses was October 31, 2016 to the Fort Tilden Local Redevelopment Authority (FTLRA). There was one respondent - The NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau.
- Public Hearing on Draft Fort Tilden Redevelopment Plan and Homeless Assistance September 19, 2017

**NEW YORK CITY OUTREACH, HOUSING PROGRAMS AND HOMELESS SERVICES
2017 PROPOSED CONSOLIDATED PLAN**

- NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and the Human Resources Administration (HRA) overseen by the Commissioner of Social Services working with other city agencies and community based not for profit service providers work together in a coordinated effort to prevent homelessness before it occurs, and provide assistance and a variety of support services to individuals and families transitioning to permanent housing.
- The NYC Department of Homeless Services is designated as the collaborative applicant for the NYC Coalition on the Continuum of Care (NYC CCoC) for the Consolidated Plan. The membership of the NYC CCoC Steering Committee (SC) includes 8 government agencies (federal, state and city), 8 consumer groups, 8 coalition and 3 at large members (including private industry). These organizations meet on a regular basis to create programs and implement policy objectives and coordinate how funding is used. The NYC CCoC and its Steering Committee is the main mechanism for coordination between government and community based organizations to create programs and implement a wide array of programs including emergency shelters, essential support services offered by the community based program providers, homeless prevention initiatives, rapid re-housing providers, and mainstream services and housing assistance. The programs and initiatives designed to prevent homelessness, keep people in their existing housing and other supportive services provided by the private and public are outlined in detail in the 2017 Proposed Consolidated Plan.

Three approaches/policies are identified to address housing affordability and homelessness:

- Making housing more affordable and eviction prevention programs for those at risk of losing their housing
- Operational reforms to better serve people in shelters and neighborhoods. These include coordinated case management, needs evaluations for individuals and families, analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of services provided
- Revamped shelter strategy that transitions people out of cluster apartments by 2023, cut shelter facilities by nearly 45%, and maintain neighborhood ties by locating homeless people as close to their home neighborhoods as possible

Statistics

Turning the Tide on Homelessness was issued on February 2017 by the Mayor of New York City. The report outlines the comprehensive, neighborhood based strategy to address the homelessness crisis. The data collected by these agencies and providers show that there are approximately 2800 street homeless individuals and the overall homeless population is at about 60,000 people (1 in 3,013 of New Yorkers) eighth lowest of major U.S. cities

- The Proposed Consolidated Plan of 2017 is now effective and open to public comment from July 25 to August 7, 2017 with a public hearing to be held on August 4, 2017. The

2017 Consolidated Plan is the third year of a five year plan issued in 2015. In Program Year 2017, the City is expecting approximately \$260,292,900 from the four U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant programs: \$150,294,862 for Community Development Block Grant (CDGB); \$53,258,298 for HOME Investments Partnerships Program (HOME), \$44,197,111 for Housing for Persons With Aids (HOPWA), \$13,542,650 for Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG)

- NYC DHS is the recipient of the ESG funding that is used to run the vast majority of emergency shelters. The NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (NYC HPD) is one of two Public Housing Agencies on the NYC CCoC SC. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene receives the HOPWA funding and participates at CCoC meetings to provide data used by the CCoC to target funding to programs assisting homeless living with AIDS/HIV. The Human Resources Administration (HRA) is a member of the CCoC that is located at NYC's homeless intake center and uses Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding for community based prevention programs for families to exit the shelters with rapid re-housing assistance.
- HPD's total 2017 capital budget is approximately \$1,192,128,000. Of HPD's total capital budget the City provides \$1,151,212,000. \$205,025,000 of those city provided funds are used in conjunction with Federal funding. \$946,187,000 for programs do not receive any federal funds. The City's \$205,025,000 share of funding for those programs exceeds the 12.5% match requirement.
- The 2017 Proposed Consolidated Plan identifies 37 organizations agencies and community based not for profit organizations who use the federal funding in coordination to carry out and implement the various programs and strategies aimed at reducing the root causes of housing affordability issues, supportive services and preventative programs to keep residents from becoming homeless. And finally, programs for people who do become homeless and giving them assistance to find transitional and permanent housing. The comprehensive strategy includes production of affordable housing.
- The Department of Homeless Services has issued a letter that states NYC's comprehensive, neighborhood based strategy *Turning the Tide on Homelessness in New York City* published by the Departments of Social Services and Homeless Services and Homeless does not identify the former Fort Tilden U.S. Army Reserve Center at 415 State Street as a site under consideration for provision of homeless services or part of the NYC Coalition on the Continuum of Care's or DHS's Consolidated Plan for 2016.

PROPOSED NYPD REUSE OF FORT TILDEN

NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau

- The NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau was created in January 2002 after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Its mission is to detect and deter terrorism in New York City and the surrounding region. Since the bureau was founded it has grown and evolved to meet new threats. Its special units include:

- Training Section which develops counterterrorism training for the NYPD patrol force, specialized units and outside law enforcement agencies and private sector entities. Since 2002 they have played a vital role in training first responders from around the Tristate Region;
- Threat Reduction Infrastructure Program (TRIPS) which identifies critical infrastructure sites and devises protection strategies
- Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) Section which researches these materials and test emerging technologies that detect, deter weapons of mass destruction
- Maritime unit which researches and develops systems to increase harbor security and utilizes the Tactical Radiological Acquisition Characterization System (TRACS) for proactive deployments and mapping of background radiation in the Port of New York and New Jersey. This is the only such technology in the nation;
- SHIELD unit which manages the NYPD public-private sector security partnerships
- Emergency Preparedness and Exercise Section, which is the NYPD interface with the NYC Office of Emergency Management. This unit designs and manages the NYPD tabletop exercises used to assess other agencies response to crises during major events
- Video Production Unit produces all audio visual informational and instructional products for the bureau.
- Special Projects Section ensures that appropriate counterterrorism measures are in place to safeguard special events, parades, sporting events and dignitary visits.
- The configuration of the buildings allows realistic training indoor and outdoor exercises for “active shooter scenarios”.

The NYPD is proposing to establish the first “Regional Training Center for Advanced Counterterrorism and Disaster Studies” in the northeast region. The vision is to create a state of the art academy with a collegiate atmosphere. Such a facility would provide tactical and academic training for advanced preparedness and offer training to first responders from throughout the region.

The NYPD does not anticipate that it will have to make many immediate improvements to the site for the proposed use. The secluded 9.15 acre site provides enough space for specialized training exercises and classroom instruction. In their application the NYPD notes that the existing building is well suited for the some of the situational training exercises that they conduct. The NYPD proposes to use the entire site for this training center facility.

CONCLUSION

- The Fort Tilden site is located in a somewhat remote part of the Rockaway Peninsula. The site is not well served by public transportation and there are few retail stores in the area. The surrounding land is also the Gateway National Recreation Area. The cost of demolition of the existing structures and potential environmental remediation of the site for redevelopment to the underlying R4 zoning would make redevelopment of the site financially infeasible.
- The existing administration building on the site is configured as an office and classroom building with a large drill hall attached to it. To make the building habitable as a residence it would have to be environmentally remediated up to residential standards, renovated and retrofitted with water and sanitary systems, and require installation of gas and electric lines and other building systems that would meet building code.
- The NYC Department of Homeless Services has stated that the property at Fort Tilden is not part of the plan to provide homeless services, housing or other supportive services. The NYC Proposed Consolidated Plan 2017 and the NYC Consolidated Plan of 2016, prepared in consultation with the NYC Coalition on the Continuum of Care and with public input, do not include this site for provision of housing and homeless services. Both the 2016 and 2017 Plans identify coordinated programs provided in local neighborhoods throughout the city to be implemented by the various government agencies and their non for profit partners.
- NYC is pursuing a multi-faceted strategy that provides supportive services to address the root causes of homelessness, interventions to keep families and individuals in their existing housing, maintain the existing affordable housing stock and increase production of new affordable housing units. These initiatives are being implemented by broad base of local neighborhood service providers and a number city agencies. For those who do become homeless, NYC will provide temporary shelter while also providing critically needed assistance and support services to get the homeless back into affordable housing within their home communities.
- The NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau was the only respondent to the request for Notices of Interest that were due on the October 31, 2016 response deadline. The NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau's mission and proposal to utilize the entire site and their financial ability to maintain the site make it a logical reuse for Fort Tilden. The training aspect of the proposed reuse is consistent with an educational public benefit conveyance of the property to NYC.
- An application for an Educational Public Benefit Conveyance of Fort Tilden would be appropriate to establish the NYPD Counterterrorism Bureau's proposed Regional Training Center for Advanced Counterterrorism and Disaster Studies. NYPD's proposal is to use the facility to educate and train the NYC Police Officers and special units, as well as first responders from the tristate area, and private security agencies that partner

with the NYPD. That function would enhance the security of NYC and the surrounding area by detecting and preventing potential and future terrorism threats.

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