



NORWOOD NEWS

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**INQUIRING PHOTOGRAPHER;
A BETTER STATE OF THE BX. | PG. 4**



**STATE OF THE CITY:
BRONX PRIMED FOR 2 PROJECTS | PG. 10**

DIAZ: REDEVELOP CONCOURSE YARDS

Borough President eyeing 19-acre span for development



Photo by Adi Talwar

THE SPRAWLING CONCOURSE Yards in Bedford Park could one day see plenty of redevelopment following a proposal by Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr.

By DAVID CRUZ

In a proposal that's likely several years away from construction, Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. unveiled his vision for more development by plating over existing open air rail yards peppered around the borough.

The prospect of plating the yards served as the crux to his 10-page report on the promise three rail yards hold for mixed-use development. And

while two yards in the Concourse and Riverdale sections of the Bronx would work as pragmatic sites, Diaz zeroed in on the Concourse Yard, a breathtaking industrial span in Bedford Park, as having "tremendous potential" for development built above the tracks. The yard, found at 205th Street and Bedford Park Boulevard, houses the B, D and 4 subway lines, taking up 19 acres, though 13 acres of it

would be plated for roughly 2 million square feet of "new real estate."

The Concourse Yard's potential for re-configuration is derived mostly from its surrounding amenities. It's not only home to these subway lines, but also to schools and nearby hospitals. It's also closest to the Kingsbridge Armory, set to be converted into the Kingsbridge National Ice Center.

"New real estate where we won't be displacing folks; new real estate where we could have commercial, residential, retail and the potential for expansion of Lehman College," said Diaz, delivering remarks on Feb. 3 at Lehman College on Bedford Park Boulevard, which abuts the yards.

Diaz made his intentions for platform development known during his State of

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IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST



NYC Council Gives Itself Salary Raise, With Conditions

The City Council recently voted on a package of legislation that specifically sets how much elected officials are compensated for their service. Included in the package of bills was the decision to rename various streets, parks, and public places across the Bronx as well as a vote on discounting fees for Department of Parks memberships for disabled New Yorkers.

On the compensation for elected officials, a few resolutions and introductions were passed in an attempt to eliminate outside monetary influence. This included eliminating stipends for those in leadership roles in the city, changing the job status of City Council members from part-time employees to full-time, curbing any income earned outside of the elected post, disclosing finances through the Conflicts of Interest Board and posting it online for the public, as well as putting in place a set compensation for officials, set at: \$258,750 for the mayor, \$212,800 for district attorneys, and \$179,200 for borough presidents. The bill converting council members from part-time to full-time employees was co-sponsored by several individuals, including Council Member Andrew Cohen of Norwood.

"By restricting outside income, designating council members' positions as full-time jobs, and eliminating stipends for members, we'll...set a new standard for elected officials," said Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito.

These decisions come in the wake of a reform package passed in May 2014, which focused primarily on creating a more equal playing field among officials by reducing the powers of the Council speaker, now delegated to committees and their chairs. The newer legislation is more concerned with monetary reforms.



Photo courtesy New York City Council Speaker's Office
NYC COUNCIL SPEAKER Melissa Mark-Viverito presents her State of the City address at Samuel Gompers Campus in Mott Haven on Feb. 11, touting criminal justice reforms. Several days before, Mark-Viverito led a push to increase salaries to city legislators.

"City Council members will be working full time for their residents without the influence of stipends and outside income...long sought-after reforms that improve the integrity of the City Council and remove any doubt that a member's duty is to anything other than his or her district and the City of New York. I commend Speaker Mark-Viverito for the strong follow-up to 2014's rules reform..." said Council Member Ben Kallos, Chair of the Committee on Governmental Operations.

Also passed were street co-namings, sponsored by Mark-Viverito. Among the names to be added to streets are: Detective Randall Holder Way in the Bronx, honoring the NYPD detective who was on duty in Harlem when he was fatally shot in October 2015; Captain James McDonnell Way

in the Bronx, honoring an FDNY Captain who died in October 1985; Police Officer Kevin Joseph Gillespie Way in the Bronx, honoring another NYPD officer killed on duty.

"These co-namings will honor community leaders, clergy, and dedicated public servants across New York City," said Mark-Viverito. "In the case of Detective Randolph Holder Way... this tribute will serve as a small token of gratitude for Detective Holder's sacrifice."

The last piece of legislation included in the package proposed by Councilman Mark Levine, and passed by the NY City Council, provides for the Department of Parks and Recreation to give discounted annual membership fees at their recreation centers for seniors, youths, and disabled persons.

Public and Community Meetings

COMMUNITY BOARD 7 committees are held on the following dates at the board office, 229A E. 204th St. at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted: Community Relations/LTP, Feb. 23; Economic Development, Feb. 23 at 7:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 933-5650.

THE BEDFORD MOSHOLU COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION meets Wednesday, March 2 at 8 p.m. at 400 E. Mosholu Parkway South, B1 (lobby floor).

Showing Love To Norwood in Tax Season

Scores of local residents endured the biting sub-zero temperatures on Valentine's Day, trudging to Jerome Avenue for some valuable help from Ridgewood Savings Bank, which partnered with two non-profit groups to host Free Tax Preparation Day. The bank provided their branch offices and Valentine's Day treats for all. South Bronx non-profit Ariva supplied tax-preparation volunteers, trained with the assistance of New York Cares, another non-profit.

In 2014, Ariva's volunteers guided more than 7,000 low-income New Yorkers through the tax maze, helping them take advantage of available refunds and tax credits so they could repay debts, feed their families and put aside savings.

Individuals qualify for Ariva's assistance if they earn less than \$30,000 a year (for single person with no dependents), or less than \$53,000 for earners with dependents. Those unable to make it to the free tax event on Feb. 14 can still take advantage of Ariva's free services at their offices in the Bronx. Documents needed for return preparation include photo ID card, social security cards for everyone named on the return, last year's tax return, W-2 or 1099 statements, and documentation/care provider tax ID number for those claiming childcare expenses. To make an appointment for assistance, visit www.ariva.org.



ARIVA VOLUNTEERS AND Ridgewood Bank executives hard at work, completing 75 free tax returns for local residents on Valentine's Day.

At BMCA Flea Market, Knickknacks Wanted



File Photo

A LOOK AT last year's flea market hosted by the Bedford Mosholu Community Association.

By JASMINE GOMEZ

Here's one idea for what you can do with that toaster or flower pot you no longer use-- donate it to the Bedford Mosholu Community Association.

The Bedford Mosholu Community Association (BMCA) is hosting its annual flea market on March 5 at St. Mary's Orthodox Church at 360 Bedford Pk. Blvd.

The group is collecting donations of any old or used items such as appli-

ances, glassware, and toys, with the exception of clothes.

The flea market helps the BMCA, a group of volunteers committed to sustaining a quality standard of living for Bedford Park residents, cover the expenses that come with maintaining the neighborhood, such as the rent for the small studio where the association hosts its monthly meetings.

Donations for the flea market will be accepted on Feb. 24 and 27 at their

office located at 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy., So. Their next meeting will be held March 2 at 8 p.m. where they will be accepting last minute donations.

The donations will moved to the church on March 3, with the help of a vehicle from Vanity Fair Bathmart located on Webster Avenue.

In another effort to raise funds, the BMCA is also selling five dollar raffle tickets for a chance to win a color TV, a basket of cheer, or \$50 in cash.

P.S. 94 Adopts Life Building Program

By JASMINE GOMEZ

Fifth graders at a local school are gaining some real life skills, helping younger students while making money.

Every school day for about one hour, a handful of students from the fifth grade class at P.S. 94 on King's College Place tutor kindergartners in different subjects such as math and reading.

The Norwood school participates in the Coca-Cola Valued Youth Program, a program that's typically implemented in junior high and high school. Older students are paired with younger students to teach them academic and personal responsibility in hopes of keeping them on a path to college.

P.S. 94 is the only elementary school, and one of three in the state, to have implemented the program after it was presented at a Superintendent's meeting.

Under the direction of Valerie Dash, P.S. 94's teacher coordina-

tor, each fifth grader is assigned one to three kindergartners, who they refer to as "tutees," to pair with each day. As the year progresses, the older children form bonds with their little ones.

Benefits of the program also include a monthly \$59 stipend.

"We teach them how to be responsible, how to take responsibility, and how to show up for life," said Miriam Seminario, parent coordinator of the program.

As a part of the program at P.S. 94, the students work on self-discipline and improving their self-esteem.

One class involves working on money management skills where students are given the opportunity to open their first bank accounts at Ridgewood Savings Bank along the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District.

"The purpose of the bank participating is to actually teach [students] the value of money,"

said Fausto Martinez, assistant vice president of the Jerome Avenue branch of Ridgewood Savings Bank near Gun Hill Road. "That's why we come to the school and we open the accounts for them."

Yesenia Rodriguez, the bank's customer service representative, says she has personally seen students return to the bank with their parents to apply what they've learned. They've also made the trip to deposit or withdraw their money.

"When I first got my check, I was excited. It was my first salary," said a fifth grader who went by Fahan. "I've earned money before, but not such a huge amount at once."

Fahan had spread his tiny wealth, sending \$40 to his grandmother, and the rest to his mosque.

As for the program, Fahan praised it, knowing it will give "the future fifth graders...an extra head start."

With the State of the Borough address set for Feb. 18, we asked readers what's needed most in the Bronx.



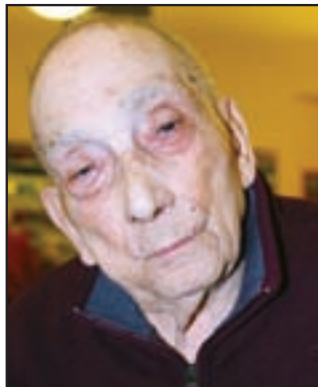
The Bronx needs more police and surveillance video in the area, and take care of all the drug issues going on around here right now. There are a lot of drugs out here and they don't do anything about it. They rather harass a driver going five miles an hour over the speed limit than do what they're supposed to be doing.

William Rodriguez
Bedford Park



I think the Bronx needs more activities for children; maybe programs that can help them become more creative, like arts and crafts and maybe more after school activities for children. It makes them get out of their box and helps them realize their own creativity in their own daily routine. They need movie theaters and more recreation centers so that children have more options.

Marie Rodriguez
Bedford Park



We need more work, more jobs. They're not out here. And it affects a lot of people. It's tough right now. They're giving them free lunch and so forth, but they have to earn the money themselves that they need to live. It's a big problem.

Rocky Parra
Norwood



I live on East 199th Street and Valentine Avenue and there's a lot of drugs. It's not safe out at night, and I've lived here for 30 years. My kids live in Syracuse and I wouldn't live up there because I like it here. My friends have moved to Woodlawn where the rent is too high. [B]ut the cops are around here quite a bit. I know quite a few of them. The situation is not good. That's my number one issue.

Bernard Sullivan
Bedford Park



I think the Bronx needs more affordable housing. Fix up the schools because the kids are flunking; they're all doing bad. The economy is not doing good here and the homeless shelters are completely torn up. They disgust me and it's not working. The money they would spend to fix these places, it would be cheaper to build new buildings and give them a permanent home.

Eddie Nieves
Bedford Park

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Ischia Bravo, Former BDCC Executive Director, Announces Run for Office

By DAVID CRUZ

The former executive director of the Bronx Democratic County Committee (BDCC) has officially announced a run for the 78th Assembly District, long held by Assemblyman Jose Rivera, whose term expires at the end of the year. The race pits two politicians heavily entrenched in borough politics, which could force established lawmakers to pick a side.

Ischia Bravo (pronounced ah-EE-sha) announced her candidacy via Facebook, calling her run for office “a life changing decision” that generated nearly 200 comments from well-wishers.

“The people of this district deserve a fresh choice and a new vision in Albany. I am committed to enacting a strong agenda on the issues that concern us the most—housing, economic development, education and more,” said Bravo in a statement. Bravo, a Hispanic, announced her candidacy the same weekend as the New York State Association of Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Legislators Conference held in Albany.

Bravo’s candidacy is something of



Image courtesy Facebook

ISCHIA BRAVO ANNOUNCES her bid for the 78th Assembly District via Facebook.

a rarity in the Bronx, with the Bronx Democratic County Committee mostly comprised of male legislators. Should she secure the nomination in the September Primary, an election contest that holds more weight in the Bronx, Bravo would be the first-ever female Assembly person for the 78th AD.

Her presence and civic involvement has certainly increased within the 78th Assembly District, a largely working class section of the Bronx that covers

Bedford Park, Kingsbridge, Fordham and Belmont. The neighborhoods are largely Hispanic with high teen birth rates, pockets of supermarket deserts, and a low graduation rate.

After she stopped working for County, Bravo secured a volunteer seat at Community Board 7, covering Norwood, Bedford Park, Kingsbridge Heights, Fordham, and University Heights. She’s also sponsored a handful of events that helped raise her pro-

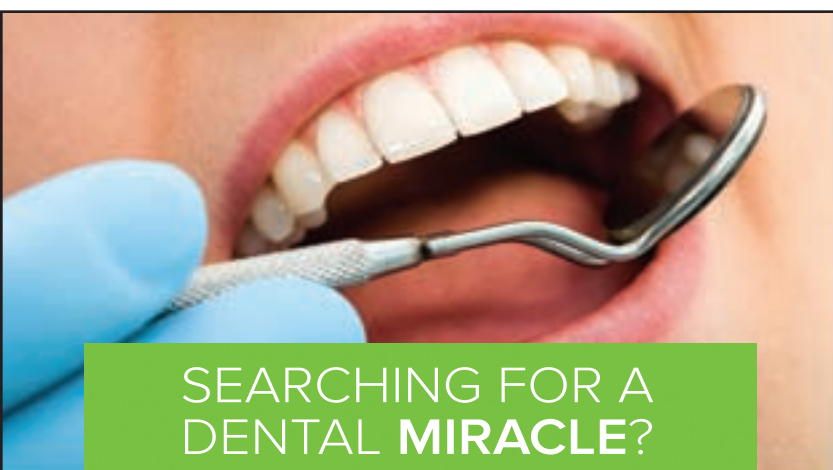
file some.

Rivera, who helped shatter the political mold in the Bronx as one of the few Hispanic legislators in the early 1980s, has held the seat for 16 years even in the face of multiple challengers over the course of his tenure. But while Rivera has kept his presence high within some portions of his district, he has come up short in visiting sections of Bedford Park, which falls within his district, regularly. His legislative accomplishments have been thin in the last few years, with his most recent bill that proposed an extension to The Bronx Zoo’s Free Wednesdays perk through the year 2020.

Even so, the Bronx Democratic County Committee, which offers support in the way of volunteers and campaign funds, does not intend to support Bravo’s bid for office, adhering to its policy of supporting incumbents over challengers.

Bravo told the *Norwood News* she expects to have “a diverse array of supporters from all over the district and the Bronx.”

Rivera was unavailable for comment.



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A Cardiologist Brings Worldly Experience to Montefiore Health System

By DAVID CRUZ

At the administrative office of Dr. Jose Wiley, one of Montefiore Health System's newest interventional cardiologists, a snapshot of his professional life adorns the four walls.

There's the picture of him huddled with his fellow soldiers in the U.S. Army, where he spent 17 years as a reservist for that branch (he retired as a Lt. Col.), a recognition award declaring him an honorary citizen of the City of New Orleans following medical volunteer work, and the endless degrees that paved the way to his work as a career cardiologist.

With a focus mostly on endovascular disease on peripheral arteries, Dr. Wiley has been a globetrotter of sorts, with experiences that included two tours in the Iraq War and a six-year stint treating Native Americans settled in the Dakotas.

Six months ago, in his 13th year as a cardiologist, he accepted a job at Montefiore Health System, where the hospital's February Heart Month awareness campaign is currently under way.

A propensity to espouse the benefits of a healthy heart is nothing new to Dr. Wiley, an amiable practitioner with a cheerful smile. After all, it's part of the everyday talk he has with his patients.

More than 100 cardiologists are employed at Montefiore, a role that includes the treatment of peripheral artery disease. Arteries, considered the free-flowing roadways that distribute blood throughout the body, from head to foot, should remain free of clogs. Should a backup form, the results can be devastating.

"I see a lot of this," said Dr. Wiley, 49, who spoke to the *Norwood News* following a coronary intervention procedure he had just performed.

His journey to cardiology was rooted in passion wrapped in personal tragedy. While on college break, his father passed away from a heart condition. "He actually died in my hands," said Dr. Wiley, who wished his father had sought help sooner.

His arrival to the Bronx will certainly keep him occupied. Persistently high rates of heart disease continue to blanket the borough, particularly among its Hispanic and African-American populations. In some neighborhoods, heart disease is the overall leader in cause of death.

For some patients, seeking early



Photo by David Cruz

FROM IRAQ TO the Dakota states, Dr. Jose Wiley (pictured) has been an interventional cardiologist since 2002.



DR. JOSE WILEY (right) can be seen performing a coronary angioplasty.

intervention, treating a patient is an uncompromising two-way street. "Me putting a stent doesn't work unless patients take responsibility for their own health as well. That means they have to be compliant with their medications that many times they have to take for life. They have to be cognizant of their health habits," said Dr. Wiley. "[O]th-

erwise I'm just putting on a Band-Aid that's not going to do much. You have to empower patients to take control of their health."

He brings that message to the South Bronx, where, on his day off, he's treating patients at Urban Health Plan, Inc., a medical clinic in the Bronx neighborhood of Long-

wood and founded by Dr. Richard Izquierdo, widely considered "an icon for the Hispanic population in the Bronx."

Patients who arrive at Dr. Wiley's office come with different heart conditions, and at varying stages. Some are asymptomatic. Some not. Others are on the brink of a heart attack, and may be completely unaware of it. Dr. Wiley admits that many patients simply "wait 'til the end to get help." "And a lot of times they're not cognizant that there are many approaches that can be done, not only surgically but endovascularly, without having to go through a major operation, which can potentially save their limbs," he said.

And there are the occasional anomalies, including the "30-something-year-old kids...that come with a heart attack." It's happened, sure, and blame often falls on a poor diet and lack of exercise, key ingredients that precipitate a poor-working heart.

In some cases, even a blunt scare tactic on the dangers of heart disease doesn't seem to penetrate. Is it disappointing? It can be. But Dr. Wiley won't quit on his patients. "[Y]ou never lose hope," he said.

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CRIME FILE



52nd Precinct on the Lookout for Brazen Pizzeria Burglar

By DAVID CRUZ

Police have released video of a brazen burglar who made off with cash and valuables at a Norwood pizza shop.

The burglary happened on Jan. 27 close to 2 a.m. That's when police say a man rammed his way into Marconi's Pizza & Restaurant at 185 E. Gun Hill Rd. The thief went behind the counter, then ran off with \$350 and a lock box, according to cops. No one was hurt.

Police vaguely described the suspect as a male black, though video released by the NYPD shows the suspect appearing to have an injured nose.

The pizzeria lies within the borders of the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District, home to some 200 businesses. Another robbery took place within the corridor days after, with a thief robbing El Caribe Restau-



Image courtesy NYPD

A THIEF STRUCK Marconi's Pizzeria at 185 E. Gun Hill Rd. in the early hours of Jan. 27. The thief (pictured here) remains on the run.

rant at 2 E. Gun Hill Rd.

Anyone with information is asked to call Crime Stoppers at 1 (800) 577-TIPS.

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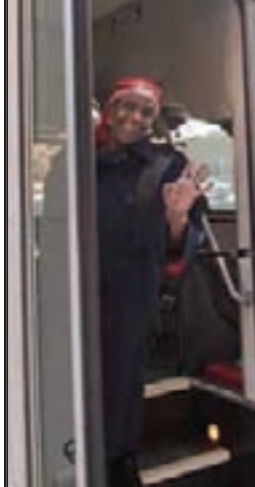
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2016 State of the City

Delivering address at Lehman College, Mayor Bill de Blasio highlights two Bronx projects

By DAVID CRUZ

In his third State of the City address, once again capturing the tenor of inequality, Mayor Bill de Blasio offered a synopsis of citywide initiatives while unveiling a short list of goals specific to the Norwood and Mott Haven sections of the Bronx.

Presenting his evening address at Lehman Center for the Performing Arts in the Bronx, a first-time venue and time slot for the speech, de Blasio summarized policies that he points out have raised New Yorkers' quality of life, particularly the city's downtrodden. Without the help of a teleprompter, de Blasio's speech seemed to be a refresher on accomplishments his administration achieved. More cops. Reduced crime. Pre-K expansion. More affordable housing.

His list of goals aligned with an overall vision of citywide equity, though de Blasio placed a heavier emphasis on the outer boroughs. A check by the *Norwood News* showed the Bronx was mentioned by name seven times, Brooklyn nine, Queens eight, Staten Island six, and Manhattan five times.

The mayor announced that in Norwood, Graffiti-Free NYC will widen its services along the Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District, an L-shaped commercial corridor that's home to some 200 businesses, offering power washing services to wipe gunk from sidewalks, as well as from private and public structures.

Jose Ferman, manager of the Portobello clothing store, praised the extra cleanup services. After all, it's all about "presentation," said Ferman. "When people see the area clean, you want to go shopping," he said.

Across the street, street vendor Jonah Johnson let off a resounding "wow" when he heard the news. "See all this paper," said Johnson, pointing to the trash. "If I could walk up and down, and if I was to pick up all the garbage off the street, I could probably fill up a bag."

"People are going to like a clean area," said Raj Shah, owner of Big Apple Pharmacy, Inc., adding the look would be "more inviting" to the community.

One of the more ambitious local projects involves expanded health-care for poverty-stricken New Yorkers in the Mott Haven section of the Bronx. De Blasio announced that it would now be easier for residents "to walk into their new community clinic in Mott Haven to see a doctor, a dentist, or a mental health professional."

"All patients there, and at all our other healthcare facilities, will get high-quality care regardless of immigration status or ability to pay," said de Blasio, in prepared remarks.

But specific projects for the Bronx stopped there.

"I don't discount the mayor's efforts and how it's impacting the city. But, to be honest, no, I can't describe his ideas for the Bronx as groundbreaking," said Assemblyman Marcos Crespo, who doubles as the Bronx Democratic County Committee chair. "His administration has been instrumental in some good things, but I can't say I was blown away by the two Bronx mentions."

If one were to put an emphasis on dollar amounts, the mayor's most expensive project would happen along the shoreline of Brooklyn and Queens. There, a \$2.5 billion project would create the Brooklyn-Queens Connector, a tramway system that would run along the East River in the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens.

For Far Rockaway in Queens, the mayor talked of a \$91 million facelift project for the peninsula's downtown section, which includes its library.

The timing of de Blasio's speech occurred as two housing cops patrolling Melrose Houses in Mott Haven were shot, forcing the mayor to forego obligatory handshakes as he rushed out of the theater.

"This puts into context, I think, that we still have a lot of work to do," said Crespo.



Photo by David Cruz

MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO presented his third State of the City address at Lehman Center for the Performing Arts.



Photo by David Cruz

GUESTS ATTENDING THE 2016 State of the City include (l-r) Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie, sharing a moment with First Lady Chirlane McCray.



Photo by David Cruz

THE LEHMAN COLLEGE Community Chorus sings the National Anthem at the 2016 State of the City.



Photo by David Cruz

SOME BRONX-SPECIFIC projects focused on increased cleaning services for Norwood's Jerome-Gun Hill Business Improvement District (pictured).

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Under Reform Plan, NCBH's Nurses Will Be at Front Lines

By DAVID CRUZ

A new era of healthcare is slowly dawning in New York, and many of the city-run hospitals are spending the next four years preparing to shift gears before its event horizon. For North Central Bronx Hospital in Norwood, that strategy involves the patient experience and its nurses, often deemed the face of most hospitals.

NCBH is part of the Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC), the city's financially beleaguered hospital network that's recently rebranded itself as NYC Health + Hospitals. Making things tougher is projected cuts in state and federal subsidies by 2020, which could signal further financial turmoil for HHC.

"Health and Hospitals has been kind of strategizing to determine how can we exist and survive beyond the subsidies in 2020," said Greg Calliste, NCBH's interim executive director.

Under a 16-prong 2020 reform plan, hospital officials place a heavier emphasis on easier access to primary care, knowing it can increase patient satisfaction scores, which lead to better reimbursement rates and improved

chances of patient return to NCBH.

To implement part of the plan, NCBH has enlisted Maureen Pode, a seasoned registered nurse recently promoted to Chief Nursing Operator, to help oversee improved patient care. A nurse with over 30 years' experience, Pode told the *Norwood News* that her primary goal will require the interpersonal relationship between patient and the 497 nurses within the system.

"Nursing is one of the largest work forces in the hospital, and as such they are closest to the patient," said Pode, who's been with NCBH since 2002.

Pode also plans to put more focus on empowering patients to remain on top of their health, noticing it can engage the patient to self-management. "When you have an educated and engaged patient, and their caregivers and family members and their support services engaged, you have a patient who is much better able to manage those diseases effectively in the community."

Professionally, NCBH hopes to achieve what's called "Magnet status" by the American Nurses Credentialing Center, a distinction that it hopes to market to any incoming freshmen.



Photo by David Cruz

WORKING TO SEE the NYC Health + Hospitals 2020 plan at North Central Bronx Hospital is Greg Calliste, interim executive director and Maureen Pode, chief nursing officer, both at NCBH.

So far, the network has noticed progress in patient satisfaction. Dr. Ram Raju, president of HHC, told an audience at John Jay College in Manhattan recently that in-patient satisfaction has increased by 6 percent since the plan was introduced last year. Days waiting for an appointment have also decreased from 28 to 18 days. MetroPlus health care, the insurance program owned by HHC, has also seen a boost in mem-

bership. It currently has 1.4 million enrolled, with a goal of 2 million by 2020.

The signs could help change course for HHC, which for several years has struggled to stay fiscally solvent. In July 2014, the network reported losses of \$60 million.

A report by the Independent Budget Office indicated that the network could be \$1.8 billion in the red by 2018 if it does not change its model.

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Nursing Home Celebrates Centenarian



Photo by Miriam Quinones

GUADALUPE FERNANDEZ (LEFT) is all smiles as she celebrates her 100th birthday at the Bainbridge Nursing & Rehabilitation Center in Norwood with the facility's family. A resident of the home for 10 years, Fernandez was born in Puerto Rico on Feb. 13, 1916 and spent much of her life as a homemaker. She resides on the third floor of the home and is said to enjoy the music and arts program of the center's Recreation Department. Fernandez was able to ring in to 100 with two parties, one of which included staff and residents from the entire building and live entertainment.

Family Seeks Justice in Decatur Avenue Killing

By DAVID GREENE

A torrential downpour on Feb. 16 could not stop family members of Hugo Ivan Galindo from appearing in a Bronx courtroom to see firsthand one of three men now charged in their loved one's murder.

Galindo, 24, was walking along Decatur Avenue during the overnight hours of Dec. 30, when he was beaten, robbed and fatally stabbed outside of 3340 Decatur Ave.

Speaking from outside the Bronx Hall of Justice, Gabriel Galindo, a nephew of the victim confirmed that one of the suspects made "an appearance today."

Galindo said "the family is glad" of the three arrests, "but there are still three individuals on the loose, because there were six guys. [T]he detectives are working hard on this."

"They took away a nice looking and responsible young man," said Galindo, adding those held responsible "should be incarcerated for the rest of their lives, so that they can appreciate the life that they took."

In the courtroom, the Galindo family came face to face with Alexi San-



Photo by David Greene

A MEMORIAL FOR Hugo Ivan Galindo, 24, grows along Decatur Avenue where he was fatally attacked on Dec. 30.

tiago, 21, of East Mosholu Parkway, who was picked up by officers shortly after the fatal confrontation and was charged the following day with five felonies including gang assault.

According to the criminal complaint, Santiago admitted punching Galindo as he was stabbed in the hand by an alleged cohort.

On Jan. 5, police arrested Dar-

nell Jones, 22, of Bartholdi Street and Mark Montos, 21, of East 209th Street. Both were charged with second degree murder.

Police officials said they were looking for six Hispanic men in their 20s linked to the killing. Police have not yet released surveillance video that reportedly shows the men pummeling Galindo as he was on the ground.

One suspect stayed behind to rifle

the dying man's pockets.

Many of Galindo's friends in the area were fellow soccer players at the Williamsbridge Oval Park, who only knew the young man as, "Ivan," considered an "intense" player who is now missed by many, even members of an opposing team.

Anyone with any information in the case is urged to call CrimeStoppers at 1 (800) 577-TIPS. All calls remain confidential.

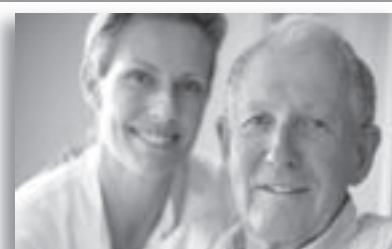


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Redesigned Fordham Plaza Open, But Vendors Still a Year Away

By WENDY JOAN BIDDLECOMBE

Though federal and city officials cut the ribbon at Fordham Plaza's re-opening ceremony in early February, neighborhood residents shouldn't expect vendors to move into the enormous concession area and kiosks for at least a year.

The \$34 million plaza in the largest transit hub in the Bronx includes a new bus depot, access to the New Haven and Harlem lines of the Metro-North, and a sitting area for pedestrians. The plaza also features a main concession area near the Metro-North stairways, and three smaller, newsstand-style booths, as well as a bathroom. The plaza, featuring a canopy and a new bus loop, could stand as a boon for the BID, given the near 80,000 people who travel through the business corridor.

Daniel Bernstein, deputy director of the Fordham Road Business Improvement District, said the BID is finalizing their contract with the city that would allow them to maintain the space and secure vendors.

Officials broke ground on the redevelopment project in August 2014.



Photo by Wendy Joan Biddlecombe

THE FORDHAM PLAZA has now been re-built, though it'll remain vacant throughout 2016.

Bernstein said the shops are still under construction, and once complete,

the BID will solicit proposals to fill the space.

quest for proposal]. We'll go over all the responses and ultimately choose someone," Bernstein said, adding that a community meeting will likely be scheduled for public input.

Community meetings have been at the heart of the BID's affairs for the last two years, when it began the process of extending its borders beyond Fordham Road and Webster Avenue. It was an attempt to incorporate the mall and One Fordham Plaza, the neighborhood's tallest office building, located at the corner of Third Avenue and Fordham Road. The building is home to medical clinics, an unemployment service office and professional services. Expanding its borders allowed the BID to serve as the plaza's official concessionaire, a distinction that allows the BID to choose who it wants inside the plaza.

"This little corner of the world has really changed drastically. We've had a lot of new retailers and construction over the last few years," Bernstein said. "But we're not changing the neighborhood."

"I'll be worried if they open the same kind of business," said Mostack Bhuiyan, who, for a number of years, has owned and operated Nabila newsstand on the northeast corner of Fordham Road and Webster Avenue, across from the plaza and next to the Fordham Road Metro-North station.

Bernstein said he hoped new shops will offer more healthy food options. "We have a lot of variety in terms of retail [on Fordham Road]—you can buy whatever you want—and hopefully people will be able to buy things like smoothies, and we won't just have fast food and burger shops," Bernstein said.

A farmers market is in the works for the plaza, Bernstein said, drawing upon the successful food truck rallies the BID has hosted at Bryan Park.

To keep up public confidence, Bernstein said the BID is looking into temporary art exhibits to "put some life" into the empty spaces so that residents "don't feel detached."

"It can be seen as a negative thing in the Bronx, with a lot of people making comments that 'this wouldn't happen in Manhattan.' I want people to understand these large projects take time."

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"[W]e don't want to take business away from anyone who is currently in the neighborhood or the BID. It's a transparent process with the [request for proposal]. We'll go over all the responses and ultimately choose someone."

-- Daniel Bernstein, Deputy

Director, Fordham Road Business

Improvement District.

"One thing that is important is that we don't want to take business away from anyone who is currently in the neighborhood or the BID. It's a transparent process with the [re-

CB7, Sticking With CB8, Votes for Bike Path at Old Putnam Trail

By DAVID CRUZ

A proposal to create a bike path connecting the Bronx to Westchester in Van Cortlandt Park won approval by Community Board 7, beating out environmentalists who objected to disruptions in the park's ecology.

The unanimous vote ends years of starts and stops for the project, which involved several revisions by the New York City Department of Parks, which proposed the bike path.

CB7's Parks Committee met prior to the full Board meeting, allowing some members to meet their counterparts at Community Board 8, which voted for the proposed 1.25-mile bike path the day before CB7's Parks Committee met to approve the project.

It was at the CB7 committee meeting where much of the action took place. There, proponents of the bike path boasted of the health and safety benefits of such a path while environmentalists worried about the natural landscape's erosion.



Photo by David Cruz

JENNIFER GREENFELD (BACK LEFT), with the New York City Parks Department, begins her presentation on a proposed bike path at the Old Putnam Trail before Community Board 7's Parks Committee.

Considered a missing link between the Bronx and 40 additional miles of bike trails beginning at the Westchester County line, the flat-surfaced path would be 14' wide with a two-foot buffer in between. The path, which the New York City Department of Parks

and Recreation said would be unlit and remain open at night, would be constructed at the historic Old Putnam Trail using \$2.5 million in federal monies.

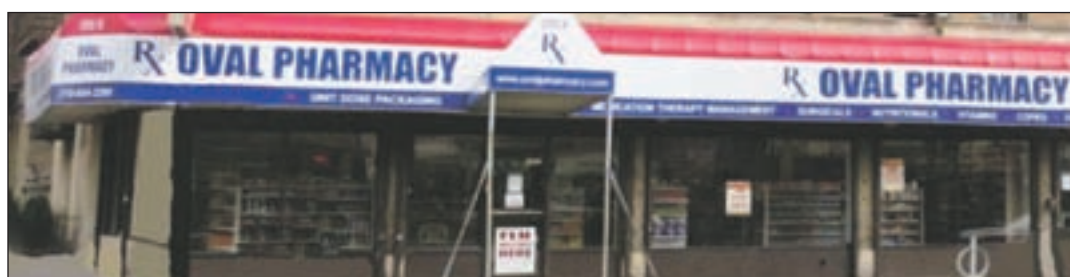
Up until 1980, the trail served the New York Central Railroad line, once a commuter trail that

took riders north to Brewster, New York. These days, remnants of the line still remain, including a marker indicating when the line was built (it was 1904). The paths still contain railroad ties that contain creosote, a toxin. A representative from Parks told guests the toxin would be removed piece-meal, given its expense. Toxic soil will also be removed.

In proposals that involve shared space, Boards typically defer its decision to the Board whose district geographically dominates that communal area. In this case, CB7 deferred its decision to CB8 since the latter mostly covers Van Cortlandt Park. Community Board 12, which also covers the park, abstained from any input.

The Department of Parks needs approvals from impacted community boards before receiving its permits from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

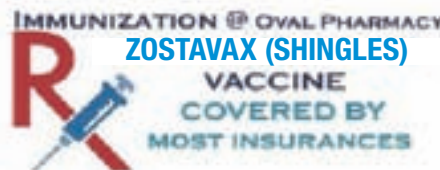
Should approvals be met, it would take a year to complete the path.



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Sealed food bids will be received at Tolentine Zeiser Early Learn Center located at 2345 University Ave., Bronx, New York 10468, until noon on March 4, 2016. Specifications for 145 breakfasts, 145 lunches, and 145 snacks may be obtained by contacting Sr. Margaret McDermott at Tolentine Zeiser between 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. or call at (718) 933-6935 ext. 13. All work will be conducted in strict accordance with bid specifications. Bids will be opened and read on March 4, 2016 at 3 p.m.

TRIPS

Taj Mahal Casino, Atlantic City. Saturday, Feb. 20, 10:30 a.m. from East 163rd Street and Southern Boulevard. For more info, please contact Eddie at (718) 757-5485.

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NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

BMCA Seeks Flea Market Donations

The Bedford Mosholu Community Association is accepting donations for its annual flea market set for March 5. Bring new and used items (except clothes) to 400 E. Mosholu Pkwy. So., apt. B1 (lobby floor) on Wednesday, Feb. 24 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., Feb. 27 from 1:30 to 4 p.m., and March 2 from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Free Tax Services

Free tax services for anyone earning \$62,000 or less are available at the Eastchester Library, 1385 E. Gun Hill Rd., Thursdays through April 7 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Spanish-speaking volunteers will be available. For more information, additional sites, and what to bring, call (718) 653-3292.

Free Music Program

The Middle School Jazz Academy at Lincoln Center in Manhattan seeks Bronx middle school students interested in afterschool, instrumental jazz in-

struction. Qualifying applicants will be awarded full scholarships, learning in a group setting or one-on-one. To apply, go to jazz.org. Application deadline is March 1. For more information, call (212) 258-9922.

Free Tutoring

Sistas & Brothers United, 103 E. 196th St., 3rd fl., offers free tutoring for students ages 12 to 21 in the subjects of math, history, English, and science, Monday through Friday from 3 to 6 p.m. For more information, call Crystal Reyes, College Access Coordinator, at (718) 584-0515 ext. 243.

Scholarship Program

The Financial Service Centers of NY (FSCNY), in conjunction with MoneyGram International launched its 2016 Scholarship Awards Program. Applications will be accepted through March 4, and must include a 250-word essay describing the applicant's most rewarding community service

experience. The program, called Rewarding Young Leaders in Our Community, focuses on nurturing and promoting leadership and accomplishments among high school students approaching their first year of college. These NYC seniors must show academic achievement, school leadership, community involvement, and service each year of high school. For more information, visit www.fscny.org.

Online Applications for Catholic Elementary Schools

The Archdiocese of New York offers a new free online application and increased financial assistance to families applying to Catholic elementary schools (all faiths are welcome). Applications are due by March 9 for early acceptance. Awards are on a first come, first served basis. For more information, call (646) 794-2885 or visit www.Catholic-SchoolsNY.org

Immigration/Legal Services

Immigration and legal services are available at the Office of Councilman Fernando Cabrera, 107 E. Burnside Ave. Appointments are required. To schedule one, call (347) 590-2875.

Free Income Tax Guide

A free copy of the "2015 Income Tax Guide" by the Financial Advisors Group is available to anyone. The guide covers current tax law provisions, capital gains and losses, and plenty more. Call (347) 575-5045 to request a copy.

Foreclosure Prevention

The Northwest Bronx Resource Center, 2715 Bainbridge Ave., hosts a foreclosure prevention workshop every first and third Thursday of each month from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Speak to a specialist from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to learn how to stay in your home. To schedule an appointment, call (718) 933-2539.

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Out & About

Compiled by JUDY NOY

EDITOR'S PICK

Have Your Voice Heard

The public is invited to the 22nd annual Bronx Parks Speak Up held by the Bronx Coalition of Parks and Green Spaces, Feb. 20 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., at Lehman College's faculty dining room in the Music Building, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W. Bronx residents will join elected officials and agency personnel to learn about government and non-government resources and participate in face-to-face discussions with city and local elected and appointed officials. Residents are encouraged for voice their opinions on neighborhood matters. For more information, visit www.bronxpeakup.org.

Onstage

Lehman College's Center for the Performing Arts, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., presents **Lehman Chamber Players**, performing classical music, Feb. 20 at 2 p.m., in the Recital Hall (3rd floor, Music Building; free); **Love in Salsa & Merengue**, Feb. 20 at 8 p.m., featuring three singers celebrating Valentine's Day (tickets are \$50 to \$65); and **Free Classical Music Performances on Feb. 23**: Pianists at 12:30 p.m. in the Music Building's Recital Hall; and pianist and cellist at 2 p.m. (info: (718) 960-8247). Programs are subject to change. For more information and program details, call (718) 960-8833.

The Bronx Arts Ensemble presents **"The Tortoise and the Hare,"** at Lehman College's Lovinger Theatre, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W., Feb. 21 at 2 p.m. (\$8); and **Jazz Favorites With Willie Rodriguez**, including wine and cheese party, at Riverdale-Yonkers Society for Ethical Culture, 4450 Fieldston Rd., Feb. 27 at 8 p.m. (\$20; \$15/seniors/students). Programs are subject to change. For more

information, call (718) 601-7399.

The Van Cortlandt Jewish Center presents singer **Gary Lovett**, performing a variety of genres, Feb. 21 at noon, at Vladeck Hall, 74 Van Cortlandt Pk. So. (entrance on Hillman Ave.). \$40 admission includes a kosher Chinese buffet, wine, beverages, dessert, one door prize raffle and one pick-your-prize raffle (50 prizes). For more information, call (718) 884-6105.

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents **Music of Motown**, a musical tribute by Cody Childs & the Ladies of Soul, Feb. 27 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The School of American Ballet presents **The Beauty of Ballet**, free with a required ticket, Feb. 20 at 2 p.m. at the Hostos Center for the Arts & Culture, 450 Grand Concourse (149th Street), featuring students dancing classical ballet. No reservations required. Tickets may be picked up at box office on day of event beginning at noon; first



Image courtesy Lehman Center for the Performing Arts

LOVE IN SALSA and Merengue will feature the New York City debut of bachata vocalist Joseph Fonseca on Feb. 20 at 8 p.m. at Lehman Center for the Performing Arts.

come, first served seating begins at 1:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 518-4455.

Events

The Church of the Holy Nativity, 3061 Bainbridge Avenue (204th Street), presents its **12th Annual Evening of Dining & Poetry Reading, etc.**, Feb. 19 at 7:30 p.m., including dinner, drinks, poetry and surprises (\$20/donation). For more information, call (718) 652-5853.

The New York Botanical Garden presents **Bronx Green-Up** (info: (718) 817-8026) and **NYC Compost Project** (info: (718) 817-8543), Feb. 20 from 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Lehman College, 250 Bedford Pk. Blvd. W. Preregistration is recommended. Call for more information.

Wave Hill, a Bronx oasis at 675 W. 252nd St. in Riverdale, offers **Family Art Projects**: Armour for Armor, to use recycled materials and colored foil to make armor, Feb. 20 and 21; and A Desert Under Glass, to sketch and paint desert dwellers, then make a desert mirage, Feb. 27 and 28; both in WH House from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Also offered: **Armor Day**, to try on armor, watch fencing and archery demonstrations, and enjoy roaming minstrels, Feb. 20 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at WH House; and **Rebel Baroque Ensemble**, concert featuring classical music, Feb. 21 at 2 p.m. in the WH House, (tickets: \$28; \$22/members; \$15/ages 8 to 18; \$12/members. Grounds admission is free until noon Saturdays and Tuesdays all year. For more information and a schedule of events including tours and walks, call (718) 549-3200 ext. 251.

The Beso Lounge, 320 E. 204th St., presents **The Soul of a People**,

which seeks to provide a black history historical account, past and present, as a fund-raiser for African-American veterans in NYC, Feb. 18 from 6 to 9 p.m. Events include the spoken word, dancing and drumming, panel discussion, complimentary hand massage, and more (\$5/suggested contribution). For more information, call (347) 458-5040.

Library Events

The Bronx Library Center, 310 E. Kingsbridge Rd., presents the following events for children: **Hands-on Projects at 4 p.m.:** (ages 7 to 12; in-person preregistration required), Color Paint Friendship Hand Making, Feb. 18 and Door Hanger Making, Feb. 25; and **Up and Up:** (ages 7 to 12), play about Dr. Mae C. Jemison, first African-American woman who traveled to space, Feb. 20 at 2 p.m. Adults can enjoy **film:** "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," Feb. 20 at 2:30 p.m. For more information, call (718) 579-4244/46/57 or visit www.nypl.org.

The Mosholu Library, 285 E. 205th St., offers for teens/young adults: **film:** "Goosebumps," Feb. 27 at 1:30 p.m. Adults can attend: **Free Computer Classes:** to learn email and basic computer information, Wednesdays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. For more information, call (718) 882-8239.

The Jerome Park Library, 118 Eames Place (near Kingsbridge Road), offers for kids: **Kids Get Active Fridays:** (ages 5 to 12), to enjoy dance and zumba, Feb. 26 at 3 p.m. Adults can attend **Computer Basics at noon:** Feb. 18, 25 and March 3. For more information, call (718) 549-5200.

NOTE: Items for consideration may be mailed to our office or sent to norwoodnews@norwoodnews.org, and should be received by Feb. 22 for the next publication date of March 3.



File Photo/Adi Talwar

BRONX PARK LOVERS will get on the record for what improvements are in need at their local playgrounds and recreation spaces for the 21st annual Bronx Parks Speak Up (See Editor's Pick for details).

Report highlights “tremendous potential” for Bedford Park Rail Yard

(continued from page 1)

the Borough speech last year. Since then he has scheduled meetings with the borough's elected officials on the likelihood this proposal can be championed. “We know that it's worked in other parts of the city,” he said. “So why not look at the Bronx?”

But it's also home to Scott Tower and Tracey Towers, two separate complexes that's home to thousands of residents.

Barbara Stronczer, president of the Bedford Moshulu Community Association, whose borders include the Concourse Yards, remained on the fence on seeing this project through, given its proximity to current residential buildings. “My feeling is you have Scott Tower and you have Tracey Towers,” said Stronczer. “They're not going to be happy when they hear this, but we'll see.”

Still, the proposal has won the favor of Assemblyman Jeffrey Dinowitz, whose district overlaps with the yards. “I'm very bullish on this,” said Dinowitz. “I actually proposed many years ago to the then school superintendent of schools in our district the idea of

building schools there because District 10 was extremely overcrowded.”

Dinowitz envisioned part of the platform space to house Lehman College's new parking facility as a way to replace the current lot that sits just near the Jerome Park Reservoir. “I want that area where the parking is, and it's a substantial bit of land on Goulden Avenue, turned into parkland,” said Dinowitz.

While the report is high on vision, it's light on mechanical engineering, the neighborhood's environmental impact, and any level of endorsement from the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which owns the property.

“It is still feasible as a project, but much, much more challenging,” said George Deodatis, Ph.D., a professor of civil engineering at Columbia University. “The columns and the foundations will have to be much larger. Depending on the current configuration of the rail tracks, some of them might have to be permanently removed. A lot will depend on the quality of the soils at this particular location.”

Diaz admitted that the Authority “did not say that they support this, but

I am comfortable in my many years with dealing with the MTA that they did not say, ‘no way, no how.’” “We'll take that for now. It's the most positive they could be at this moment,” he said.

The MTA sidestepped any hint at a commitment. Through spokesman Kevin Ortiz, the MTA simply said it has “communicated with the BP and we look forward to studying his report.”

Some can look at the proposal as a rehash of an idea that was once batted around the Bronx, though money has always kept the project from ever becoming a reality. But building above rail yards is an old concept that's finally been taking off these days given the demand for more housing across the city.

One of the more successful platting projects to date is Hudson Yards, a mixed-use development site on Manhattan's west side. Headed by conglomerate The Related Companies, the site includes offices, retail space and housing. Construction began in 2010 after Oxford Properties Group agreed to build a platform over the West Side

Yards for \$400 million. Related, under a deal first drafted under original developer Tishman Speyer, agreed to pay the MTA \$1 billion in air rights in exchange for a 99-year lease.

The more pressing rail yards project these days is at the Sunnyside Yards in Astoria, Queens, where the New York City Economic Development Corporation is assessing proposals that would deck the near 200-acre open yard. It's the latest proposal in a long line of bids that have fizzled since the 1960s.

This observation stirred one reporter to ask whether this project could take off by the time Diaz's term expires in 2018. “All we could do is get it started, and hopefully with the next administration, be it the Bronx administration or the city's administration, hopefully there will be that level of enthusiasm and that level of commitment to finish what was started,” said Diaz.

Construction of the project is estimated between \$350 and \$500 million, and would require a public review process involving Community Board 7 and the New York City Council.

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