“As a local development corporation, our role is not limited to developing bricks and mortar. It is also about developing a vibrant and healthy community.”
OUR MISSION

Started in 2007 by former Queens Borough President, Claire Shulman, the Flushing Willets Point Corona Local Development Corporation is comprised of private and public sector stakeholders who seek to develop a comprehensive set of economic development goals and facilitate development projects that help revitalize and stabilize the Greater Flushing – Willets Point – Corona neighborhoods of Northern Queens area.

We focus on development initiatives including the creation of housing and community open space, opportunities for health and wellness, and improvements to infrastructure and mass transit options.

OUR HISTORY

The FWCLDC was formed to activate a connection between Downtown Flushing and planned development at Willets Point. While the Mayoral Administration was proceeding with its plans for Willets Point, the LDC began its focus on developing the Flushing waterfront. Ever since parts of the Flushing waterfront was rezoned from a manufacturing zone to a commercial and residential zone, the area has been underdeveloped and underutilized. On September 2017, after 8 years of planning with community leaders, private developers, and community members, the LDC, with the help of its subcontractor NYC Department of City Planning, completed the Flushing Waterfront Revitalization Plan for the 40-acre Waterfront. On June 15, 2018, the Flushing Waterfront was officially designated a Brownfield Opportunity Area by NY Secretary of State Rossana Rosado.

Today, the FWCLDC is actively focused on ensuring a completion of the Flushing Waterfront that would meet the recommendations outlined in the Flushing Nomination Study. We hope to incorporate the input from our health and wellness activities into the healthy living activities to take place along the Flushing waterfront esplanade. Additional activities of the LDC also include affordable housing, community and/or open space initiatives, aesthetics, transportation and the clean-up of Flushing Creek.
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

As a former nurse, I know firsthand the importance of quality health care. As a local development corporation, our role is not limited to developing bricks and mortar. It is also about developing a vibrant and healthy community. In the past year, thanks to Citi Community Development, we incorporated a variety of health and wellness activities from hosting free community tai chi lessons to community visioning sessions, activating public spaces, creating awareness around existing activities and publishing e-newsletters surrounding health issues such as stress and allergies. Through these events, we have gain some valuable insights and wish to share our observations through this Health Flushing Report. Our ultimate goal is to better connect Flushing residents to the rich healthy-living activities available to them.
Introduction

ABOUT THE AREA

Downtown Flushing is a vibrant multi-modal transit hub and is the fourth largest central business district in New York City. It is also one of the most active regional retail areas in the City with the heaviest foot traffic outside of Manhattan. Flushing retail offerings include restaurants that have become a tourist destination and a mecca for local residents as well.

Flushing is also one of the densest neighborhoods in the borough. Its population has been growing more rapidly than the rest of Queens and the City. For the zip code 11354, the US Census Bureau approximated 54,878 residents in the area. Seniors, who comprise 18% of the total Flushing population, ranks the neighborhood as 11th out of all other 55 neighborhoods in New York City. The growing population of seniors in the area emphasizes the needs for affordable housing, social services, and safe streets.

More than 210,000 residents live in Flushing with approximately 68,902 of the population living in downtown Flushing. From 2011 to 2014, more than 75,000 new immigrants moved into Queens, a statistic that represented the biggest influx of newcomers in the entire New York City (NYS SBS). Furthermore, an estimated 6,400 additional residents will live in the downtown core over the next few years as a result of additional development. Population density per square mile in downtown Flushing is 50,663—approximating three quarters of total downtown Flushing population, which demonstrates the neighborhood’s packed density. In addition to the limited space available, rental and condo prices continue to rise as more families, millennials, and empty nesters choose Flushing for its transportation access, and diverse commercial establishments.

Flushing is one of the city’s major inter-modal transit hubs-making its business, cultural, retail, and famous restaurant offerings readily accessible to millions of City residents and visitors. Approximately 15 million rides are generated at the Number 7 subway Main Street Station each year—making it the busiest subway station outside of Manhattan. Some 24 public and private bus lines serve downtown Flushing, carrying approximately 88,000 passengers daily, making Flushing one of the busiest inter-
modal transfer points in the City of New York. Flushing is a two-stop 18 minute ride from Manhattan and one stop from the Citified and US Open subway stop at Willets Point.

An unprecedented infusion of additional development is about to be unleashed as a result of the Brownfield Opportunity Area plan to revitalize 42 underutilized/undeveloped acres along the Flushing Creek waterfront. The development of the waterfront offers a significant opportunity to the community of Flushing that will XXXX

Development Projects

Ongoing and past development projects in the downtown Flushing area provides the city with an ability to cater to its flourishing demographics of immigrants, urban families, and young working adults. Like many other districts in New York City, downtown Flushing went through an economic downturn in the 1970s. In the 1980s, Korean and Chinese immigrants began to settle in Flushing and both foreign and domestic private investments fueled the resurgence of its commercial base. Projects completed and underway include:

- One Flushing: a mixed-use development project that includes 232 units of affordable housing, a roof terrace, and farm
- Flushing Commons: $850 million projects for a five-acre site that includes a mix of public, private, and commercial space.
- Macedonia Plaza: $49.8 million project featuring 140 units of affordable housing, commercial and public space.
- RKO Keith Theatre: $66 million to redevelop the long-shuttered RKO Keith’s Theatre into a 269 unit condominium and mixed-use project
- Shops at SkyView Center: $600 million project to develop 785,000 square ft. for a Western-style mall
- SkyView Parc and The Grand: $1.3 billion project to develop a six-tower residential collection of condominiums approximating 1.2 million square ft.
- Tangram: four 15- or 16-story buildings with 300 luxury condo units, 80,000 square feet of office space and a hotel, 34,000-square-foot movie theater
- Macy’s Department Store: A 99 year, $1 billion ground lease was signed for the four-story, 225,000 square ft. Macy’s department (Macy’s lease won’t be up for another five years)
- Center for Community and Entrepreneurship: AAFE’s planned of a 90,000 sq. ft., seven story building that will be comprised of community, public, and commercial space

This massive investment is primarily due to the coordination efforts of the community, the public sector, and the private sector. In 2004, the New York City Economic Development Corporation and the Department of the City Planning issued a Downtown Flushing Development Framework to identify key obstacles the city must overcome to make way for further progress. Since this Framework was released, several public sector investments relevant to the DRI designation have come about. These include:
• $1.5 million Brownfield Opportunity Area (BOA) grant from the Department of State to revitalize Flushing’s waterfront.
• $11 million Downtown Flushing Pedestrian Project, which created a sign system orienting pedestrians, constructed streetscape improvements along 37th and 39th avenues, and connected the downtown core with the waterfront.
• An initial $26.4 million in tax-exempt bonds to finance construction, $6.3 million in city capital funding and $1.9 million in federal HOME funding for the Flushing Commons to assist the Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal in providing 143 affordable housing units.
• $7.8 million Department of Transportation (DOT) project to widen sidewalks and replace manholes, fire hydrants, sewers, catch basins, and water mains to accommodate increasing pedestrian traffic.
• Rehabilitation project (representative of up to $60 million) by DOT for Roosevelt Ave Bridge over the Van Wyck Expressway.
• $6 million streetscape project between Flushing BID and the NYC Economic Development Corporation.
• $500,000 received from New York City’s Department of Small Business Services (SBS) for business attraction, retention and support, cleaning and beautification, district marketing, public safety, storefront improvements and other quality-of-life enhancements.
• $1.55 million from New York City’s SBS to Asian Americans for Equality and Flushing BID for Neighborhood 360°. A grant to exhibit the neighborhood’s diversity, unique landmarks and cultural amenities, highlight its businesses, and promote tourism.
• US Army Corps of Engineers is planning to provide wetland support to improve the water quality in Flushing Creek.

Public investments and private investments are jointly connected, and the outlook of Downtown Flushing remains positive. In addition to these public and private development projects that bring about prosperity to the neighborhood, there tend to be a severe lack of community facilities in the area.

Convenience
A small study was performed in the local community of Downtown Flushing to gather the community’s opinion on how convenient it is for them to reside in Flushing. From a sample of 49 surveys, 40 participants agree that Flushing is a very convenient place to live. This is mainly due to Flushing providing the community with a variety of goods and services within a relative distance from each other. With a walkable score of 89%, Flushing is ranked as the 114th most walkable neighborhood in the state of New York, where most errands can be accomplished via foot.

The district contains about 565 restaurants/bars/coffee shops, transportation lines, and services. These services include salons, spas, public education institutions, medical centers, pharmacies, consumer/commercial banking, community libraries, and entertainment sites. Additionally, grocery/convenience stores can be found one to two blocks away from each other. On average, residents of Downtown Flushing can expect to walk about 10 restaurants, bars, entertainment sites and coffee shops within 5 minutes. Notable locations that are convenient for the community include:
Skyview Parc: a luxurious condominium built above an indoor complex, provides the residents and community with accessible parking, grocery stores on the ground floor and a multitude of retail branches. In addition, Skyview Parc is only 0.4 miles away from Flushing Main street and Roosevelt, where transportation is accessible to the community.

New World Mall: located directly on Flushing Main Street and Roosevelt, this indoor complex serves thousands of community members each day with its bi-level Asian food market, food court, karaoke lounge, dim sum eatery, and retail stores. It is also convenient that most locations in Flushing can communicate in Chinese, as a big percentage of the population in Downtown Flushing are immigrants or those that learned English as their second language.

- Roosevelt Avenue & Main Street: Central Downtown Flushing area. Accessibility to transportation, restaurants and retail centers.

Flushing provides a reliable transportation system with a transit score of 83. The district has roughly 30 buses, 1 rail and 3 subway lines passing through it always throughout the day. This makes it very convenient for time sensitive individuals because one can commute to Manhattan within 40 minutes via the 7-local train, and within 25 minutes via the 7-express line. Additionally, the community can also use the Long Island Railroad to travel into Manhattan or into deep Long Island.
Downtown Flushing gives easy access to a variety of medical offices and facilities that provide top quality care for its residents. These facilities are located within a one-mile radius from Flushing Main Street and Roosevelt, making it a quick trip in event of an emergency. [NY Presbyterian hospital queens, Flushing Hospital, Main Street Radiology, etc.]

Open Green Space
Downtown Flushing is also a location for the community to luxuriate from daily activities. Within the district are a multitude of open green space that provide the community with locations to rest and enjoy their surroundings. These open spaces are not only vibrant and spacious providing floriculture and aesthetics, but also lively as community events and activities occur here regularly. Some locations include:

- Maple playground: a .98-acre public green space (.69 acres of active open space and .29 acres of passive open space) that provides the community with basketball courts, handball courts, benches, swings, slides, jungle gyms, fountains and restrooms.
- Bowne Playground: a 1.82-acre public green space (1.64 acres of active open space and .18 acres of passive open space) that offers the community the same activities that Maple playground offers with the addition of a baseball/softball field to occupy the extra land.
- Bland Playground: a .55-acre public green space (.5 acres of active open space and .05 acres of passive open space) that provides the community with basketball courts, handball courts, benches, swings, jungle gyms, and drinking fountains. **Photo courtesy of Gary Gucciardo.**
- Bland Houses: a commercial lot that is owned by the NYCHA. The land is consisted of 1.3-acres of passive open space and .44-acres of active open space, which activities include basketball courts and walkways.
Flushing Branch Library: .02 acres of public green space that has a set of stairs besides it that is convenient for the community to sit on. It is also right in front of the Q20 bus stop.

- Flushing commons: 1.5-acre town square of open space with a fountain plaza. Convenient location for friends and family to gather, and to participate in local community events.
- Weeping Beech Park/Carman Green: Located near Flushing High school. Consists of 1.13 acres of active open space, which includes handball courts, benches, swings, jungle gyms, historic structures, and restrooms, and .48 acres of passive open space.
- Daniel Carter Beard Mall: Provides .66 acres of passive open space to the public; primarily composed of benches.
Lippmann Arcade: occupies .10 acres of passive open space. They feature locations for the community to rest, and trees to provide shade and protection against harmful U.V rays.

- Roosevelt Avenue and College Point Boulevard Green Street: occupies .02 acres of passive open space which features floriculture.

Social Service
Downtown Flushing social services aim to provide low-moderate income residents and the non-English speaking community with assistance to ensure their accessibility to the resources that are available to them. Two notable social services in the Downtown Flushing community are the:

- Asian Americans for Equality: a non-profit committed to preserving affordable housing throughout New York and to provide new opportunities for the city’s diverse immigrant communities. Through a wide range of multilingual counseling services, AAFE provides education, financial assistance and training to empower people, small businesses and neighborhoods.
- Chinese American Planning Council: One of the largest social services organization that creates positive social change. They empower Asian American, immigrants, and low-income communities in New York City by ensuring they have equitable access to the resources and opportunities needed to drive. As of today, they offer over 50 high-quality programs at 33 sites in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens.

The Downtown Flushing district provides several senior centers whose goals are to fulfill the emotional, physical, social, and intellectual needs of older adults. Most hire bilingual staff to remediate the existing language barriers between Flushing’s English and non-English speaking community. The Nan Shan Senior Center: funded by the NYC Department for the Aging, provide senior adults with lunch, English-Second Language courses, culture and arts programs, education, and health management including: exercise routines, health/nutrition seminars and case assessments.

The district also provides daycare and education centers for young children. Likewise, these centers help the younger generation develop socially, physically, emotionally and intellectually. All centers provide
bilingual staff as well as modern education, exercise routines, health/nutrition, and foreign language courses (Spanish, English, Chinese).

**Case Management**

Development projects and other initiatives are catered towards the community’s needs. These needs are identified through extensive surveys and observations done by local community organizations. The American Community surveys from the Census Bureau collects data regarding to community population, demographics, and housing that helps local officials and community leaders understand changes taking place in their communities. These surveys indicated that over 70% of the senior population in Downtown Flushing lived alone or do not exercise regularly. In response, local community organizations like the LDC, proposed initiatives such as the Flushing Healthy Community Action Plan, which provided community activities for the Flushing senior population to increase their physical, mental, emotional, and social wellness.

Many residents in Downtown Flushing consist of low-income households. This created incentive for local organizations to increase their focus on much needed affordable housing. The Asian Americans For Equality [AAFE] organization created a project that would provide

**Community Events**

Although the events in Downtown Flushing are not as huge as those in Manhattan, there will always be gatherings for its residents and neighbors to indulge in. These events are hosted by the community, its local leaders and their foundations. During the Fall of 2019, the community had a “Fall Festival” that was hosted by the Glow Foundation and they provided the community with free rides, popcorn, entertainment, refreshments and performances. During Lunar New Year, the community hosts a festival to celebrate and honor the Chinese tradition and culture. The Lunar festival provides refreshments that resemble the culture and provides entertainment such as the Lion Dance, famous throughout Chinese history. The Lion is an animal which symbolizes power, wisdom and good fortune, chases away evil spirits and brings happiness, longevity, and good luck.

During off-holiday seasons, many organizations within the Downtown Flushing community will host their own public community event. An example is the Flushing Willets Point Corona Development Corporation’s free tai chi lessons for senior adults to develop their overall health and cater to their social needs. This event not only utilized vacant areas; it also created a social gathering between the different age community.

**Flushing Waterfront**

The Downtown Flushing waterfront will be undergoing substantial redevelopment in the future. The LDC contributed to the Brownfield Opportunity Area Nomination Study which provided a series of land use recommendations for the Brownfield Area by the waterfront. This area currently includes underutilized and/or vacant pieces of land that is in a state of disrepair. An area that was once occupied by small supermarkets and manufacturing sites will be transformed into a mix-used development that will provide the community with an accessible waterfront, additional private road networks, improved traffic congestion, and improvement in pedestrian and vehicular circulation.
The water body itself is currently inaccessible due to the accumulation of pollution from combined sewage overflows [CSOs]. CSOs occur when the oil containment units are unable to hold the excessive amount of hazardous waste that are being dumped and retrieved from the community’s storm drains. The LDC will initiate a project that will educate and raise awareness amongst residents and business owners in Downtown Flushing regarding waste oil dumping into storm drains. Additionally, the B.O.A development will help facilitate the cleanup of Flushing Creek.