

The Public Ought To Know

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By Corey Bearak

Don't Overlook Flushing's Transit Facilities for Development Opportunities – & Good Jobs.

We know the MTA can use some cash and often looks at its assets as revenue sources. At this time when the MTA seeks a cash infusion to help fund its capital plan one site of substantial size and excellent location apparently sits untapped with nary a thought of its possibilities while non-MTA properties nearby get all the attention.

The City plans retail development in the parking lot of Citifield and a mix of commercial development and housing at Willets Point

across 126th Street from the home of the Mets. You may also know of proposals to develop the Sunnyside Rail Yards. So I meet briefly with Mark Henry, president/business agent of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1056 outside one of the three MTA NYC Transit bus depots where the local's bus operators start and end their days and maintainers keep the buses running (I serve the local as policy and political director). In addition to Casey Stengel Depot, the tract of land nestled south of Roosevelt Avenue and Flushing Meadow Corona Park also includes LIRR and subway facilities; the LIRR Port Washington line and the 7 Subway also traverse the location. Where Mark and I stood one can view the National Tennis Center to the south and Citifield to the north.

I mentioned to Mark how the cash strapped MTA could make substantial dollars if it developed a plan – or welcomed others to submit one – to essentially deck over the transit facilities for hotels and perhaps a convention center. Building hotels there – right off a beautiful park – seems akin to building off a public beach.

Imagine the possibilities:

- ▶ an opportunity for development involving trade union members;
- ▶ new facilities employing union member service workers;
- ▶ economic activity including tourism; and
- ▶ sales and real estate revenue to fill state and city coffers.

Hopefully this commentary inspires others to act.

****Corey Bearak can be reached at StrategicPublicPolicy.com. Find his ebook, *The Public Ought To Know*, at [Kindle](#), [Nook](#) and [Apple iBooks](#).***

