

Stadium...

From page 36

will include concessions by the Mets organization requested by Queens city councilmembers similar to the \$50 million in community benefits which the Yankees will provide surrounding communities, including \$1 million for a youth sports program. Councilmembers also demanded that a certain number of construction contracts and permanent jobs stemming from the project be set aside for women, minority-group members and Queens residents. Thousands of free tickets for various groups and money to address traffic concerns were asked for as well as the youth sports funding, under a Community Partnership Agreement.

City Councilmember Hiram Monserrate called for close scrutiny of the Mets' offer to be certain that the community truly benefits from the new facility. "As Shea [Stadium's] representative in the City Council, I look forward to working with my Queens colleagues to ensure the Mets step up to the plate for the residents they call neighbors," he said. "Specifically, I'd like to see assurances that a certain percentage of construction jobs be awarded to Queens' residents, with specific attention paid to minorities and women. Apprenticeship programs should be created where our young people can learn the skills necessary to acquire this well-paying employment. There also needs to be a commitment from the Mets that Queens-based contractors will be given preference and that these local businesses will be trained in how to best bid for contracts."

Like its counterpart in The Bronx, the stadium will be built on land currently owned by New York City. The land will be turned over to the city Industrial development Agency, which will issue bonds to finance the stadium construction. The debt incurred through issuing the bonds will be serviced by payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT payments), the maximum amount of which will be the equivalent of what the Mets would have paid in property taxes on the new stadiums. When the debt has been paid off, any PILOTs remaining will go into the city General Fund.

The Mets will begin construction on the facility, designed specifically for baseball, later this year in the outfield parking lot between Shea Stadium and 126th Street. Construction is expected to be completed by Opening Day 2009. The new

ballpark is expected to generate tens of millions of dollars in incremental fiscal revenue for the city and state over the next 37 years. Construction of the stadium is expected to create more than 6,000 temporary, full-time equivalent jobs, while ongoing stadium operations are expected to result in nearly 1,000 permanent full-time equivalent jobs.

The open-air Mets Ballpark will connect the Mets' National League heritage to the future and to the city through a number of unique design elements. The new venue will feature natural grass and capacity for approximately 45,000 fans within the 1.26-million-square-foot facility. A contoured seating configuration will bring spectators closer to the field on all levels to provide optimal sightlines for a more intimate and entertaining experience throughout the park.

"Today marks a new era in Mets baseball, as we unveil plans for a brand new state-of-the-art ballpark - one that will dramatically enhance the experience of fans, provide the team with even better facilities, and stimulate the regional economy," Governor George E. Pataki said. "This great project will solidify the Amazins' future in New York by providing a world-class entertainment and sports facility that will create thousands of jobs, hundreds of millions of dollars in tax revenue and spur further investment and opportunity right here in Queens. I want to thank Fred and Jeff Wilpon, and Saul Katz for believing in New York, investing in New York, and giving another generation of New Yorkers the chance to feel the unique excitement and pride that is Mets baseball."

"The Mets new ballpark, which will be built in the parking lot to the east of Shea, will merge the intimate feel of the old, classic ballparks like Brooklyn's Ebbets Field with the amenities of today's modern sports facilities, and further enhance our efforts to redevelop neighboring Willets Point and Flushing," Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said. "Our breakthrough agreement with the Mets helped to create the foundation for a beautiful new home for the team while at the same time relieving the city of its obligation to maintain Shea Stadium, thereby saving taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars. We thank the Mets for taking on the financial responsibility of building, operating, and maintaining a new ballpark that will serve baseball fans throughout the City, and that will create more than 6,000 construction jobs and preserve the 1,000 full-time jobs



Photo New York Mets

Proposed stadium interior

currently at Shea while also generating tens of millions of dollars in incremental fiscal revenue for the city and state over the life of the new lease."

"The 'new millennium' Mets will have a new and improved facility to call home," Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver said. "While New Yorkers look forward to this sparkling venue as a home for their beloved Mets, they also see it as a catalyst to spark development from here to Willets Point. Speaking for the New York State Assembly and especially for the members of our Queens Assembly Delegation, I join all New Yorkers in saying, 'Let's Go, Mets!'"

"The new Mets Ballpark is a spectacular showcase for the Borough of Queens that creates new jobs for Queens residents and opportunities for minority- and women-owned businesses in our community," Queens Borough President Helen Marshall said. "The Mets have been a Queens treasure since the club moved to Flushing in 1964 and the new ballpark continues our efforts in making Flushing Meadows-Corona Park a premier venue for spectator and participatory sports."

"Our new ballpark is the realization of a dream—to create a world-class environment and enduring experience for everyone, especially for the best fans in all of sports," Fred Wilpon, New York Mets chairman of the board and chief executive officer, said. "This new ballpark will become the home our fans have long

deserved, one created for shared celebrations among future generations of Mets fans."

"The new Mets Ballpark will become a destination attraction for enjoyment of fans in the borough of Queens, residents of the tri-state area, and those visiting New York City. It will be one of the finest sports and entertainment facilities in the world," Jeff Wilpon, New York Mets chief operations officer, said. "We thank the borough, city, and state for their financial commitment and support of our private financing for this ambitious project."

"The public investment through this new partnership with the Mets will deliver a very favorable return over the span of the agreement," Charles A. Gargano, Empire State Development Corporation chairman, said. "We salute the Mets for their vision and dedication toward bringing this landmark development for the borough, city, and state to fruition."

"The New Mets Ballpark will play an integral role in the revitalization of the entire Flushing area and the redevelopment of Willets Point," Deputy Mayor Dan Doctoroff said. "The project brings thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions in private investment to an area of the city that needs both."

The city and state have been working with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) on both short- and long-term options to make additional transit service available for Mets fans and to encourage more fans to

take mass transit to games. There will be additional service on the MTA New York City Transit No. 7 subway line, with as many as 14 additional trains available on weeknights and up to 12 additional trains available on weekends and after matinee games. MTA Long Island Rail Road service has also been expanded on the Port Washington branch line. The MTA is also working on additional marketing and promotional efforts with the Mets that will encourage the use of public transportation.

The highlights of the project are as follows:

- Superior Sightlines
- Vastly Improved Access, Egress, and Circulation
- Spacious Seating
- Field Views
- Fewer Lines, More Time to Watch the Game
- New Restaurants, Suites, Clubs
- Family-Friendly Attractions
- Inspired by Tradition
- Building Materials
- Bridging Generations and the Boroughs
- Landscaped Plazas
- Ease of Entry
- Connection to City:
- Mets Headquarters
- Field Orientation
- Right Field Porch
- Pitcher Friendly
- Collaboration of Industry Leaders
- Minority and Women Owned Business Initiative.