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Peek inside the plan for a gorgeous NYC park that would reshape the Midtown waterfront

This casino plan calls for all kinds of green.

A massive public waterfront park – roughly the size of Bryant Park – may be coming to Midtown East if a developer gets its Mohegan-backed casino proposal OK'd later this year, The Post has learned.



The massive public waterfront park – roughly the size of Bryant Park – may be coming to Midtown East if a developer gets its Mohegan-backed casino proposal rubber-stamped later this year.

Freedom Plaza, a now-vacant 4.7-acre green space between FDR Drive and the waterfront, would tout an outdoor amphitheater, river promenade, playground and even a museum

should the state dole out one of three coveted downstate casino licenses to the project's developer [Soloviev Group](#) by Dec. 31.

New renderings released Thursday by OJB Landscape Architecture reveal Soloviev's vision to transform the former Con Ed power plant site into an oasis with a 18,000-square-foot central lawn, 1.2 miles of pathways, scenic "garden room" overlooks and a 700-foot East River Promenade east of First Avenue between 38th and 41st streets.



New renderings released Thursday by project designer OJB Landscape Architecture reveal its vision for an 18,000-square-foot central lawn, 1.2 miles of pathways, scenic "garden room" overlooks and more.



The plans call for scenic “garden room” overlooks and a 700-foot East River Promenade.

The plan also calls for a 7,000-square-foot children’s play area, 6,000-square-foot “serene retreat” cascading water garden, community center, outdoor amphitheater and six food kiosks. The developer is set to finance the long-term maintenance, security and cultural programming of the public park, according to a press release.

“As fourth-generation residents and neighbors of this community, Soloviev understands the immense value that green spaces bring to urban life,” Soloviev Group CEO Michael Hershman said.

“Freedom Plaza is a commitment to creating an inspiring place where memories are made in this wonderful part of the city, with an accessible, and sustainable park for everyone to enjoy.”



The entrance plaza on First Avenue will feature about eight species of 350 trees designed to prevent flooding and promote biodiversity.



A 7,000-square-foot children's playground area at Freedom Plaza.

The waterfront site has found supporters in civic groups like the Manhattan East Community Association, with president Kevin O'Keefe describing the park plans as a "forward-thinking approach that can provide the public with safe and inviting experiences from family-friendly lawn activities to connections with nature."

“The open spaces in our unique, international neighborhood are essential to support sustainability and wellbeing, enhance quality of life, and enable our community to gather across generations and cultures,” Sherrill Kazan, president of the World Council of Peoples for the United Nations and public space advocate, said in a statement.



Manhattan East Community Association President Kevin O’Keefe described the park plans as a “forward-thinking approach that can provide the public with safe and inviting experiences.”

The park is just one component of the proposed 6.3-acre Freedom Plaza casino project, which would also include dual residential towers with 1,325 units including rough 500 designated affordable; “locally-oriented” retail and dining options; a daycare center; two hotel towers from Mohegan and Banyan Tree; and a Mohegan-operated casino offering “modern gaming.”

The pitched Museum of Freedom and Democracy, located blocks from the United Nations headquarters, would feature international artists and permanently display slabs from the Berlin Wall.

A local steering committee will be created to help attract community groups to use the open spaces, the developer said.

The project is up against more than a half dozen [other massive casino plans](#) in the Big Apple (and even more contenders in the suburbs), from a Coney Island casino to a Caesars Palace in Times Square to even a slots haven [above the flagship Midtown Saks Fifth Avenue](#) store – and next to New York City’s most cherished Catholic church.

Revenues from the gaming companies who are awarded the new casino licenses will help fund the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.



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Last year, Albany Law School Professor Bennett Liebman and John Sabini, former chairman of the state racing and wagering board, [told The Post](#) that the existing bidders — Resorts World New York Casino at Aqueduct in Queens and Empire City Casino in Yonkers — are the “favorites” to win two of the licenses.

“I would say the ‘racinos’ are the favorites. They have a track record of being a partner with the state for a long time,” said Sabini, who was skeptical of any Manhattan pitch that survives the review process.

And who is the “favorite” contender for the assumed single license left on the table?

“The Sands proposal is probably the strongest proposal right now,” Sabini added. “Long Island/Nassau-Suffolk is a pretty good market.”

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