

# Proposed Sanitation Garage in Northern Astoria Moves Forward

## *Subcommittee Vote Guarantees Community Investments, Full Affordable Housing*

**Astoria, NY** — A proposed New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY) facility took a major step forward today, after the Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings, and Dispositions advanced the proposal to the full City Council for approval.

“The agreement we’ve made delivers major wins for the western Queens community,” said **Council Member Costa Constantinides, District 22**. “This will improve traffic safety along 21st Street, clean the air for Queensbridge and Ravenswood Houses, and create truly affordable housing. I’d like to thank our partners, especially the community leaders, who made this agreement possible.”

DSNY plans to replace its nearly 90-year-old garage at 34-28 21st Street, at 34th Avenue, with a new 93,775-square-foot facility within the Astoria Industrial Business Zone, located within Council District 22 at 19th Avenue and 37th Street. The agency also plans to build a new 20,000-square-foot salt shed within the business zone, replacing one at 43rd Avenue and Vernon Boulevard.

For years, the City has noted the current garage on 21st Street is too small and beyond repair. That’s forced the Sanitation Department to store trucks on the surrounding sidewalk in what’s a largely residential neighborhood. Residents of both the NYCHA Ravenswood Houses and Queensview and North Queensview co-ops have long complained of dangerous street conditions around the garage, as well as polluted air quality from a constant flow of trucks.

Mayor de Blasio committed \$130 million in 2017 to build a new facility within the community district service by the current garage. Subcommittee members voted 5-0 today on the new Astoria building, which will be accessed by a local truck route along 19th Avenue. The project will advance the City’s ambitious clean energy goals by installing solar panels and electric vehicle charging stations.

The City has also committed to making several improvements throughout Astoria to address past environmental injustices in the community. In partnership with local Council Members, they agreed to:

- **Clean up Luyster Creek:** DSNY will overhaul this once historic waterway directly adjacent to the new garage. The agency will replace invasive plant species with ones natural to the area, which will significantly improve the area’s ecosystem. DSNY will also fortify the shorefront to combat erosion. This will also create enough space to eventually open up the Luyster Creek waterfront for a public pathway as long as 1,000 feet. Sanitation will also make special efforts to open the area for school field trips and other educational initiatives.

- **Replace the old garage with 100% affordable housing:** The Astoria community pushed the City to guarantee public land is kept for the public. Today, the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development promised any redevelopment at the existing garage will be for 100% affordable housing and other community uses. HPD will begin a public input process this spring that will plug into the ongoing efforts by community groups including the Western Queens Community Land Trust and the Ravenswood Tenants Association to create a neighborhood-driven vision for the site. Once that process is complete, HPD plans to issue a request for proposals to make that vision a reality.
- **Improve traffic safety on 21st Street:** The existing Sanitation garage has contributed to the unsafe conditions along 21st Street, which runs from northern Astoria down to the Queensboro Bridge. For too long this heavily trafficked thoroughfare functioned more like a four-lane highway than a neighborhood street. That's why the Department of Transportation agreed today to launch a community outreach program to make it easier for pedestrians, cyclists, and reliable bus service. DOT's efforts should finally ensure 21st Street's functions reflect how western Queens residents get around in 2020.

The terms of today's agreement ensure the area around the existing garage finally gets long-awaited community investments. It also ensures northern Astoria's infrastructure is not unfairly burdened, and this historically over-polluted waterfront community also sees new improvements. Today's announcement also reflects a community driven process, notably from Ravenswood Houses and Queensview residents.

Council Member Costa Constantinides represents the New York City Council's 22nd District, which includes his native Astoria along with parts of Woodside, East Elmhurst, and Jackson Heights. He serves as the chair of the City Council's Environmental Protection Committee and sits on three additional committees: Sanitation, Resiliency, and Technology. For more information, visit [council.nyc.gov/costa](https://council.nyc.gov/costa).