

OCTOBER 7, 2008

Price tag a sticking point in Willets Point project

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Tuesday, October 7th 2008, 6:34 PM

As the Bloomberg administration attempts to sell its plan to redevelop [Willets Point](#), the price tag for the controversial project has become a major sticking point for the City Council.

[Mayor Bloomberg](#) earmarked \$400million in this year's fiscal budget for Willets Point, but the city has refused to provide details about the five land deals it has inked at the gritty industrial zone near [Shea Stadium](#).

The city also has rejected a Daily News request under the Freedom of Information Law seeking information on the deals, saying it would harm ongoing talks.

But Council members are wary of casting a make-or-break vote Nov. 12 without knowing how much the city has spent to acquire the land in question, or where the businesses on it will be relocated to.

As of now, the administration has inked deals with five property owners - about 3 acres of the 62-acre industrial zone.

"Ultimately, we don't know what those costs are going to be," said [City Councilman Hiram Monserrate](#), who has introduced a bill to require financial transparency for city projects involving eminent domain. "Fleshing those numbers out through a hearing or a financial impact statement would be a good thing."

Monserrate (D-[Jackson Heights](#)), whose district includes Willets Point, said the 32 Council members opposed to the plan are also skeptical of voting for the project because a developer has not been named.

Business owners who have yet to sell are seeking leverage in contentious talks with the city. The business leaders have recently begun to attack the plan as an unnecessary expense during a time of economic turmoil.

"It is irresponsible for this administration to continue to promote a project that will cost the city upwards of \$3 billion at a time when budgets are being slashed and services are being curtailed," said [Jerry Antonacci](#), who is talking with the city about selling his Willets Point land.

In his weekly radio address on Sept. 27, Bloomberg said the Willets Point plan would create jobs and turn an "underutilized" area into a "much-needed boost to our local economy."

"City government can't solve the problems on [Wall Street](#)," Bloomberg said in his address. "But we can take steps to ensure that even as the financial services industry stumbles, [New York City](#) continues to move forward."

[Dan Sambucci](#), the first Willets Point business owner to sign a deal, said he sold his salvage yard to ensure it would survive.

"I would rather work with them than against them," he said.

[John Maltz](#), president of the commercial real estate brokerage Greiner-Maltz, said divulging the specifics of those deals would only drive up the asking prices for other businesses.

"They can't start talking about prices," he said. "They have to protect the city against a blown negotiation."

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