

EEA Press Release

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“Landmark Community Partner Redefines Carbon-Neutral Future”

Ettinger Engineering Associates is pleased to announce the launch of a planned new Carbon Neutral-Ready development: **The Variety Boys & Girls Club of Queens Redevelopment Project**. It will be a high-rise, mixed use building containing 229 affordable and supportive housing units in conjunction with the rebirth of a newly constructed landmark of 123,000 sqft Boys & Girls Club space. With a project sponsor like Costa Constantinides, the existing facility is already on an active mission to promote clean energy. However, the redevelopment embodies how a long standing community partner can both, lead the way and actively promote sustainable and cost effective design practices in tandem with advocating for a carbon-neutral future. Architectural design is being provided by Manhattan-based firms, Urban Architectural Initiatives and NK Architects, while Mega Contracting Group, an Astoria-based developer and general contractor, has partnered with the VB&GC as co-developers and is entrusted with constructing the project.



The Variety Boys & Girls Club of Queens Redevelopment Project: Exterior Rendering. Photo credit: Urban Architectural Initiatives

The project will be Carbon Neutral-Ready and will fully electrify all building systems while simultaneously certifying to USGBC’s LEED Gold rating. The apartments will be designed utilizing Passive House principles that vastly improve building envelope performance and drastically reduce heating and cooling energy use. The project will utilize ground-source heat pumps for heating/cooling in the club space and generating project domestic hot water.

Additionally, the initiative will install a 125+ KW rooftop solar photovoltaic system that will offset over 10% of the annual residential electrical demand. The central courtyard will comprise of a vegetable garden for use by both, the club and residential tenants, and will include bio-retention planter boxes that will retain stormwater on-site. MERV 13 and UV filters will be used in select high-traffic locations in both, the club and residential program to maintain improved air quality in the post-COVID landscape.

While in the design phase, the project is actively studying the potential to:

- Deploy an electrical battery system that can either supplant or supplement its code required gas-fired emergency generator, and
- Self-baseline its embodied carbon footprint and reduce this by at least 10%.



NYC Climate Week Announcement by VBGCQ CEO Costa Constantinides, Queens Borough President Donovan Richards, staff from Mega, ICL, Rise Light and Power, Hydro Quebec, EEA and Astoria community leaders.
Photo credit: Queens Borough President Richards' office

The club will use its new STEM labs as a living renewable energy lab to facilitate curricula and programs embodying the above. The club will also use its gymnasium to continue to actively facilitate and cultivate events to promote the goals of Clean Path NY, NYSERDA and any and all likeminded organizations with similar goals and interests. There are early talks considering the use of the building's planetarium and club website as extension of the above by developing a promotional video highlighting the features of the club and its mission towards advocating a carbon neutral future for the community.

On the back of the above, the club is pleased to have been able to submit a proposal for the project to the highly coveted NYSERDA Buildings of Excellence competition and anxiously awaits the release of awards this year.

Most importantly perhaps is that the club will use its redevelopment to build and expand upon its current community standing as a nexus for educating, promoting, and cultivating, etc. sustainable building practices. The club will create an open-to-the-public 'museum-like-moment' in the building lobby, spotlighting real-time building features, energy/water usage, carbon footprint, solar power production and similar via interactive, electronic kiosks and/or live informational walls.



EEA's Managing Principal, Ed Ettinger highlighting the sustainable features of the project at NYC Climate Week Announcement.
Photo credit: VBGCQ