



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

NYC Parks Breaks Ground on \$11 Million Remodel of the Ballfields and Basketball Courts at General Douglas MacArthur Park

ANDREW J. LANZA April 26, 2019

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Spring weather is finally here and baseball season is in full swing. Today is a beautiful day to break ground on the General Douglas MacArthur Park renovations. In the more than 40 years since the last major construction project took place here, tens of thousands of sports minded Staten Islanders have enjoyed this space. The reconstruction of the ballfields and the Cesar Sanchez Jr. Basketball Courts will ensure that future generations of Staten Islanders

have a modern and well maintained recreational park,” said NY State Senator Andrew Lanza. “We owe much thanks to Borough President Oddo, our City Council Representatives, Mayor de Blasio and of course Parks Commissioner Silver and Borough Commissioner Ricciardone for shining a much needed light on making this project a reality.

NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, today joined Staten Island Borough President James Oddo, City Council Member Steven Matteo, representatives from the Under the Lights Basketball League and John Gino the president of the Staten Island Coalition of Softball Leagues and community members to break ground on the reconstruction of the ballfields and basketball courts at General Douglas MacArthur Park.

“The fields and basketball courts at General MacArthur Park are tremendously significant to this community. They are home to leagues, tournaments and parkgoers who cherish the opportunities for recreation,” said Commissioner Silver. “In addition to these upgrades, this project will also bring adult fitness equipment to this park in an effort to promote healthy, fun activity.”

“Since 2001, when as a City Council Member I first allocated money to rehab the fields at the Berry’s, I have been chasing the dream of enhancing this iconic site. So many Staten Islanders are a part of the rich history of the Berry’s,” said Borough President Oddo. “Every mediocre softball player, myself included, who had the chance to play under the lights at the Berry’s has imagined it was a playoff game at Yankee Stadium. That tradition will march on. To know new memories will be forged on a safe, resilient playing surface brings a smile to my face. I am grateful for the collaboration to make this long-awaited project a reality, and when the project is completed in 2020 I will end my softball retirement to play one more game at the Berry’s.”

"This new park, along with the revamped ball fields at the Berry Homes, will provide the community with first rate recreational facilities that residents will be able to enjoy for generations to come. I am extremely pleased to be have been able to allocate capital funding and work with Borough President Oddo and Parks to make this happen," said Council Member Matteo.

"Parks, courts, and fields are centerpieces to our community that bring families and neighbors together in incredible ways," said U.S. Congressman Max Rose. "The revitalization of General MacArthur Park will have a huge impact on the Dongan Hills community and our entire Island."

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The \$11 million transformative project is funded with a \$5.5 million allocation from Borough President Oddo, \$4.5 million from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, \$443,000 from City Council Member Matteo and \$500,000 from Mayor Bill de Blasio. The last major construction project at MacArthur Park was in the 1970s. The new and improved park is expected to be complete by fall 2020.

This project will reconstruct and convert the multi-use ball fields from natural turf to a synthetic turf that can better withstand its heavily programmed use. The basketball courts will also be fully reconstructed. Additionally, the sports light fixtures will be upgraded to LED lights, adult fitness equipment will be installed and the revamped park will feature more passive amenities, such as chess tables and new seating areas.

Last August, the basketball courts at General McArthur Park were officially named in memory of Cesar Sanchez Jr. Cesar, a Staten Island native. He was 20 years old when he was shot and killed in 2014 near his home. He was a talented athlete with a passion for basketball, who spent countless hours at the basketball courts in this park both as a player and a youth coach. Since his passing, his family and local community members have enacted a number of programs in his name including, the “Forever Cesar Day Annual Basketball Tournament” hosted at these very courts.