

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Transportation and Public Utilities to hold hearings on the status of Hilco Redevelopment Partners proposed Bellwether District Development Project, formerly known as the Sunoco Refinery Site.

WHEREAS, In January 2020, Hilco Redevelopment Partners, a Chicago-based developer specializing in the redevelopment of industrial sites, agreed to purchase the Refinery Complex. On February 13, 2020, a U.S. Bankruptcy Court judge approved the sale of the complex; and

WHEREAS, Upon the confirmation of sale, Hilco introduced their plans to utilize the site to create the Bellwether District. This will serve as a 1,300-acre multi-modal logistics hub and one of the largest of its kind in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Hilco foresaw this transformation to become an economic engine for the City of Philadelphia in the coming years, as they project the creation of nearly 19,000 permanent jobs over 15 years. The emergence of future job opportunities in e-commerce and logistics serves as beneficial to not only City residents, but the City's economic development; and

WHEREAS, Prior to the purchase, The Refinery Complex was the City's top stationary source of air pollution. The mile-wide explosion and fire that took place in 2019 exposed the community to the environmental risk factors of the site. Hilco has committed to a four-year waste clean-up plan that includes, but is not limited to, the removal of 35,000 tons of asbestos, 850,000 barrels of hydrocarbons, 100 buildings, and 950 miles of underground pipeline; and

WHEREAS, Over 100,000 residents live within one mile of the Refinery Complex, so public health and safety are of the utmost concern. Hilco has pledged that the creation of the Bellwether District will provide a clean and more sustainable workplace for future generations; and

WHEREAS, The impact and scope of the Bellweather project allows the opportunity to create a path to long-term professional opportunities for Philadelphia and the surrounding region's residents. It is important that Hilco remain committed to diversity and inclusion in the development and planning of the project; and

WHEREAS, There is a need for community engagement and a forum for public discussion that surrounds the Bellwether District Development Project. It is crucial that City Council creates a dialogue for the public to voice its concerns regarding development and allows Hilco to provide an update and information on their progress; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, THAT THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, Hereby authorizes the Committee on Transportation and Public to hold hearings on the status of Hilco Redevelopment Partners proposed Bellwether District Development Project, formerly known as the Sunoco Refinery Site.