

All Interests Will be Safeguarded - PM

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness says steps will be taken to safeguard the interests of all stakeholders, particularly residents, under the Government Circle development project being proposed for National Heroes Park, in Kingston, and surrounding communities.

The project, being spearheaded by the Urban Development Corporation (UDC), will entail the construction of a new building for the Houses of Parliament on a section of the 52-acre Park, new offices for 14 Government Ministries, and improved housing on some 300 acres of land in several communities around the property.

Speaking at a town hall meeting at the Park on October 25, the Prime Minister



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (2nd left) responds to questions posed by residents during the Town Hall Meeting at National Heroes Park in Kingston on October 25. Others from left are: National Security Minister, Hon. Dr. Horace Chang; Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, Hon. Fayval Williams; and Urban Development Corporation (UDC) Chairman, Senator Ransford Braham.

noted that the National Housing Trust (NHT) has commenced the process of acquiring properties around

the Park to undertake residential developments.

While acknowledging that several homes and

householders will have to be relocated, Mr. Holness said residents who will be affected need not fear being disadvantaged, as the Government will pursue a process that is fair and equitable.

"I want to assure you that it is not the Government's intention to relocate [or] take people out of the area and disturb the community... but to provide the opportunity for persons in the community to live under better circumstances and for it to grow," the Prime Minister said.

The Prime Minister pointed out that the development would not "happen overnight," and could take between two and five years.

Additionally, Mr. Holness said it is proposed to improve the area's road, sewerage and water infrastructure, and other key amenities.

IDB to Provide More than US\$50M per Year for Investment Projects in Jamaica

THE INTER-AMERICAN Development Bank (IDB) is making more than US\$50 million a year available for investment in a number of projects in Jamaica, through IDB Invest.

IDB Invest General Manager, James P. Scriven, who made the disclosure recently, said that tourism, infrastructure, transportation, ports, roads, as well as the financial sector, are the areas to benefit. He said the funds will be made available over "a couple of years".

He was speaking at a luncheon hosted by the IDB's new Executive Director for Caribbean countries, Ambassador Selwin Hart, at the organisation's headquarters in Washington DC.

Mr. Scriven told the Caribbean Ambassadors and IDB officials in attendance that IDB Invest is taking keen interest in Jamaica and its development, noting that the funds being made available will support key growth projects.

Jamaica's Ambassador to the United States and Chairman of the CARICOM Caucus of Ambassadors, Her Excellency Audrey P. Marks, welcomed the announcement.

"This latest expanded financial framework from IDB Invest, which will allow projects as small as US\$1 million to be included, will help tremendously in improving small and medium-sized enterprises," she pointed out.

Government Exploring Intergenerational Mortgage Option

PRIME MINISTER the Most Hon. Andrew Holness has announced that the Government is exploring the possibility of introducing an intergenerational or sixty-year mortgage programme, through the National Housing Trust (NHT).

The Prime Minister was speaking on October 24 at the NHT ground-breaking ceremony for Friendship Oaks in Goshen St. Elizabeth.

According to Mr. Holness, the proposed intergenerational mortgage programme would allow for the older members of the population to access a mortgage and have it carried on by a family member.

In that regard, the Prime Minister pointed out that the Government is exploring creative solutions to ensure that all persons in Jamaica are able to access a housing benefit from the NHT.

"We are committed to building houses, homes and communities... in order to build Jamaica," said Prime Minister Holness.



Prime Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness (centre) and Minister without Portfolio in the Ministry of Economic Growth and Job Creation, Hon. Karl Samuda (right), participate in the breaking of ground for phase one of the Friendship Oaks Housing Development in Goshen, St. Elizabeth, on October 24. Others (from left) are Basil Waite, representing Member of Parliament for St. Elizabeth North East, Evon Redman; Managing Director of the National Housing Trust (NHT), Martin Miller; and Director, NHT Board, Doran Dixon.

He stated that with the policy changes to come, the Government is of the view that there should be no discrimination by virtue of age in the pursuit of homeownership.

In the meantime, civil service groups will be

specially facilitated by the NHT.

Prime Minister Holness said he has taken note of the concerns of civil service groups particularly the police.

He noted that the Government is committed to implementing a programme

on the housing front that "will be very enticing and attractive".

The project involves two phases, with the first segment to include 229 serviced lots, with 4.8 hectares of land allotted for commercial use.

UDC to Commence State of the Art Mobay Beach Project in January 2019

THE URBAN Development Corporation (UDC) says construction of a state-of-the-art beach park at the Closed Harbour Beach in St. James will begin in January 2019.



Urban Development Corporation Project Manager, Kerrymoure O'Connor

The 16-acre property, also known as "Dump-up" Beach, will be transformed into a world-class multi-zoned public space within

two years at a projected cost of \$700 million.

Tourism Minister, Hon. Edmund Bartlett, has endorsed the development. Project Manager at the UDC, Kerrymoure O'Connor, made the announcement during the Montego Bay Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Invest MoBay Breakfast Forum at the Sea Gardens Beach Resort recently.

Mr. O'Connor said the National Contracts Commission (NCC) approved the project contract, adding that this will now be submitted to Cabinet for its approval.

"The contractor has about 28 days to submit all his bonds and insurances. So we expect that construction should begin by the first week of January 2019," he disclosed, pointing out that the project timeline is 18 months.

The park will feature a jogging trail, soft and hard landscaping, an outdoor amphitheatre, multipurpose courts, a children's play area, food kiosks, and a boardwalk, among other amenities.

Mr. O'Connor emphasised that access to the facility will be free, and revenue for upkeep will be generated through paid parking and private investment.

New Drainage System for Marcus Garvey Drive

THE GOVERNMENT is finalising plans for construction of a new drainage system to address flooding along Marcus Garvey Drive, in Kingston.

Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie, made the disclosure during a tour of the area on October 24.

The visit was to assess the area in the wake of

heavy rains on October 23 that flooded the busy thoroughfare.

"The Government is prepared to deal with the challenges that we experienced, and steps are underway to improve the drainage system by constructing a new (structure) along similar lines as the Sandy Gully," Minister McKenzie said.

He indicated that he had dialogue with Prime

Minister the Most Hon. Andrew Holness, and that more detailed discussions will take place for a recommendation to go before Cabinet.

He said that the funding for the undertaking will be "substantial", noting that the works will be put to tender.

The project, which will start in the vicinity of Waltham Park Road and entail the Tinson Pen Aerodrome, will be jointly coordinated by the National Works Agency (NWA) and the Port Authority of Jamaica (PAJ).

It is part of a comprehensive upgrading of

drainage systems being planned for the Corporate Area.

Minister McKenzie, in the meantime, assured that Corporate Area drains will be cleaned on a consistent basis, in order to prevent flooding in the event of heavy rainfall.



Minister of Local Government and Community Development, Hon. Desmond McKenzie (right), makes a point to Manager of Communication and Customer Services at the National Works Agency (NWA), Stephen Shaw (left), and Director of Technical Services, NWA, Roger Smith, while on a tour of Marcus Garvey Drive in St. Andrew on October 24.



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