

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING &
FRANCHISES

----- X

September 9, 2025
Start: 10:10 a.m.
Recess: 2:24 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Kevin C. Riley
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Shaun Abreu
David M. Carr
Kamillah Hanks
Francisco P. Moya
Yusef Salaam
Lynn C. Schulman

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Arturo Espinoza
MTA Real Estate Department

Elizabeth Ernish
Project Administrator in the Environment and
Planning Division of the New York City Department
of Parks and Recreation

Eric Palatnik
Representing JFK Conduit Development

Bishop Mitchell Taylor

Justin Donlon
HPD Government Affairs Division

Lin Zeng
DCP Director of Queens Borough Office

Jasmin Tepale
Senior Lead for Community Planning DCP

Sarit Platkin
Executive Director of Neighborhood Planning at
HPD

Dylan Meagher
Chief of Staff Bureau of Sustainability at DEP

Beth DeFalco
Deputy Commissioner for Public Affairs and
Communications at DEP

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Diniece Mendes
Assistant Commissioner for Transit Development
at DOT

Andrew Arcese
DOT Borough Planner

Reverend Patrick O'Connor
First Presbyterian Church Jamaica

L. Calvin Mercer
First Presbyterian Church Jamaica

Dora Sawh
First Presbyterian Church Jamaica

Tanja Kelly
First Presbyterian Church Jamaica

David Plotka
Venture House

Matthew Flower
Regional Plan

Eric Deutsch
DL Development Partners

Abu Nayeem
Transportation Advocate

Saiku Branch
Executive Director at African Poetry Theater

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Dennis Walcott
President and CEO of Queens Public Library

Christopher Leon Johnson

Lisa Edwards
Jamaica Resident

Lynette Townsley
CBO 12 Youth Committee Chair

Mahirah Billah
Jamaica Resident

Natalie Bump Vena
Urban Studies Queens College Assistant Professor

Vanessa Sparks
Jamaica Resident

Asm Goni

Imogene Williams
First Reformed Church Jamaica

Jahnavi Aluri
Downtown Jamaica Partnership

John Boyd
New Greater Bethel Ministries

Mitchell Sternbach
Greater Jamaica Development Corporation

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

William Scarborough
Addisleigh Park Civic Association

Nyisha Howell
Chief of Staff for CUNY President

Jermaine Sean Smith
Southern Queens Park Association

SERGEANT AT ARMS: good morning and welcome to the New York City Council hearing on Zoning and Franchises. At this time, I would like to remind everyone to silence all electronic devices. Also, at this point, moving forward, no one is approach the dais. If you want to sign up for an in-person testimony or have any questions during this hearing, please see the Sergeant at Arms in the back of the room. Chair, you may begin.

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Good morning and welcome to a meeting of the Subcommittee of Zoning and Franchises. I'm Council Member Kevin Riley, Chair of the Subcommittee. This morning, I'm joined by Council Member Abreu, Council Member Williams, Council Member Nurse, Council Member Brooks-Powers, Council Member Schulman, and remotely by Council Member Moya. Today we are holding a hearing on four proposals. First, a technical amendment to a prior City Council Resolution for an Article XI tax exemption relating to the Ocean Crest Development located in Queens in Majority Whip Brooks-Powers' district. Additionally, a hearing regarding a proposal by the MTA and the NYC Department of Parks

and Recreation known as Broadway Junction Station Map amendment for a change to the City map in Council Member Nurse's district in Brooklyn. Additionally, also a city map amendment, a project known as JFK Conduit Logistics center de-mapping, an application brought by a private applicant for de-mapping and disposition of portions of three mapped unbuilt streets in the Springfield Gardens neighborhood of Queens in Majority Whip Selvena Brooks-Powers' district to facilitate a logistic warehouse. Finally, we will hold a hearing on a neighborhood rezoning known as the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan, a proposal covering approximately 230 block area around downtown Jamaica, as well as surrounding areas within Speaker Adams, Council Member Williams, and Council Member Gennaro's district in Queens. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan seeks to update zoning in this area to allow for additional housing and affordable housing alongside infrastructure and community investments to support growth and improve conditions for all residents. Before going into more details about these proposals, I will now go over the hearing procedures. This meeting is behind held in hybrid format. Members of the public who wish to testify

may testify in-person or through Zoom. Members of the public wishing to testify remotely may register by visiting the New York City Council's website at www.council.nyc.gov/landuse. To sign up and for those of you here in person, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms to prepare and submit a speaker's card. Members of the public may also view a live-stream broadcast of this meeting at the Council's website. When you are called to testify before the Subcommittee, if you are joining us remotely, you will remain muted until recognized by myself to speak. When you are recognized, your microphone will be unmuted. We will limit public testimony to two minutes per witness. If you have additional testimony that would you like the Subcommittee to consider, or if you have written testimony that you would like to submit instead of appearing in-person, please email it to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Written testimony may be submitted up to three days after the hearing is closed. Please indicate the LU number and/or project name in the subject line of your email. Just want to state for the record, we've been joined by Council Member Hanks. We request that witnesses joining us remotely remain in the meeting

until excused by myself as Council Members may have questions. Lastly, for everyone attending today's meeting, this is a government proceeding and decorum must be observed at all times. Members of the public are asked not to speak during the meeting unless you are testifying. The witness table is reserved for people who are called to testify and no video recording or photography is allowed from the witness table. Further, members of the public may not present audio or video recording as testimony, but may submit transcripts of such recording to the Sergeant at Arms for inclusion in the hearing records. I will now open the public hearing on LU 358 for the ULURP #C230375MMK relating to the Broadway Junction Station city map amendment, an application by the MTA and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation to facilitate improvements to the expansion of the Broadway Junction subway station complex in Council Member Nurse's district in the neighborhood of East New York. This action will eliminate approximately 9,600 square feet of the existing Callahan-Kelly Playground to allow for the conversion of Sackman Street to new park land to replace the eliminated portion of the

playground, as well as associated changes of grades and block dimensions. For anyone wishing to testify regarding this proposal remotely, if you have not already done so, you must register online by visiting the Council's website at council.nyc.gov/landuse. For anyone with us in person, please see one of the Sergeants at Arms to submit a speaker's card. If you would prefer to submit written testimony, you can always do so by emailing it to

landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Council Member

Nurse, do you have any opening remarks?

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you, Chair Riley. I wanted to kick off today by saying that I'm not here because I'm excited about a land use call-up. I really don't want to be here, and I bet that the MTA doesn't either. I understand that the scope of this application is limited to amending the city map by removing a portion of Sackman Street, but I've called this up-- I've called up this land use application because of the longstanding unaddressed issues stemming from the MTA Public Works project at Broadway Junction. For years, my constituents have shared with me that this area is routinely overrun with parked MTA cars which has prevented adequate

street cleaning and sanitation. It's also prevented accountability. The result has been an unacceptable build-up of litter and debris despite myself and my staff constant attempt to coordinate between the MTA and DSNY. This is a \$400 million public works project which will dramatically revamp Broadway Junction station, and we're all excited for it. But we need to do better here. This project is supposed to bring public dollars to local businesses and workers to strengthen our local economy, but there are many issues. There is a 20 percent hiring goal for local targeted workers. By definition, a local targeted worker includes any worker across New York State. So as long as they are in an economically disadvantaged area, but this means that anybody who lives in Rochester or Utica would be considered local hire, and the contractor nor MTA has provided local hiring stats in months now on how many people from our community are actually benefitting and working on this project. MTA and NYPD workers have completely taken over local sidewalks, forcing pedestrians, including myself, my staff, my neighbors to talk on the street and dodge between cars. And then lastly, the MTA has done absolutely nothing to keep the area

clean. MTA lots are constantly littered with trash, and despite many calls and emails, and MTA site managers that do not clean their portion of the sidewalks. Workers, cars, obstruct cleaning efforts by DSNY's street sweepers and allow for trash to pile up on the street. I brought you some photos which I will pass to you. This is a regular appearance at Broadway Junction, and this all the time. This is layers-- this is weeks' worth of caked up litter, shit, all under the sidewalks that we constantly ask about, constantly. Sanitation can't get a broom on here, because MTA worker cars safe always there. Weeks ago, we said, hey, I don't want to bring this hearing up. I don't want to do a call-up. Can you present a plan for how you're going to address this? No plan. So, I want to hear today from MTA how you plan to take care of this area and prove to the community that you're competent and capable of doing that, because thus far, we're not seeing it. I also want to note that I think it's really shameful that when DSNY does try to do enforcement and does try to get these streets clean, that MTA workers go to the sanitation garage and try to bully sanitation workers for issuing tickets. I mean, that's just crazy.

Everybody here is a public servant and they don't deserve to be harassed for doing their job. You all need to step up and do better and figure out a solution for this situation, and I would really like to hear what your plans are. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member Nurse. I'm just going to stand at ease for one second. Also, I want to state for the record, we've been joined by Council Member Salaam.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Elizabeth Ernish [sp?], can you-- are you able to hear us in the room here?

ELIZABETH ERNISH: I am, indeed.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member Nurse, for your opening remarks. I will now call on the applicant panel for this proposal which consists of Arturo Espinoza from the MTA, and Elizabeth Ernish from Parks who will be joining us remotely. Counsel, can you please administer the affirmation.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ms. Ernish, Mr. Espinoza, I'm going to ask you a question, and please answer with your right hand raised. Please state your

name for the record and answer the following question. I'll ask you in turn. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this subcommittee and in answer to all Council Member questions? Arturo Espinoza?

ARTURO ESPINOZA: Hello, my name is Arturo Espinoza, and yes, I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Elizabeth Ernish?

ELIZABETH ERNISH: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. For the viewing public, if you need an accessible version of this presentation, please send an email request to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. and now the applicant team may begin. I just ask that you please reinstate your name and organization for the record. You may begin.

ARTURO ESPINOZA: Yes, good morning, esteemed Chair and esteemed Council Members. My name is Arturo Espinoza and I am from the MTA Real Estate Department. I'm here to present a city map change regarding the de-mapping of Sackman Street from Fulton to Truxton Street, and I will explain its

connection to the overall Broadway Junction ADA accessibility project. Next slide, please. So, as part of the, you know, \$400 million project to bring accessibility to full ADA, [inaudible] accessibility to the Broadway Junction Complex which consists of the underground AC and the above-grade JZ lines. We'd be building new aerial bridges and also expanding the station head house at street level which means we're making the building that you enter on from Van Sinderen a little larger, and you know, the station is surrounded by park lands. So, we needed at athor-- we had to achieve legislation in 2022 to permit MTA to alienate park land and accordingly, there is a requirement to provide replacement park land. So, next slide, please. So, this schematic will show you basically the overall program of Callahan-Kelley Playground with the expanded MTA head house. We worked with Parks, actually, to identify, you know, what would be a suitable replacement parcel, and early on in conjunction with Parks identified the street. That is Sackman Street, and we put that into the alienation legislation which result-- which resultingly means that MTA became the lead applicant

with the Parks Department with the co-applicant. So, this city map change will, you know, allow us to fulfill that commitment in the legislation. I'm happy to-- let's go onto the next slide, please, because I just-- shows exactly what Sackman Street looks like today and how it's, you know, incorporated into, you know, Callahan-Kelley Playground which was recent-- you know, whose rehabilitation was completed in 2023. At this point, I'm happy to pass the baton over to Elizabeth Ernish to further elaborate on Parks' programming of this playground.

ELIZABETH ERNISH: Good morning, Chair Riley and members of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. My name is Elizabeth Ernish, and I'm a Project Administrator in the Environment and Planning Division of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. As the MTA just explained, the Broadway Junction Station ADA improvements require expanding the station building north and west into Callahan-Kelley Playground. Fortunately, NYC Parks has coordinated with MTA on its expansion since 2017 when we started the design process for the park reconstruction. In our design, we were able to keep the park element within the expansion footprint

minimal or sacrificial. However, knowing the station expansion would necessitate replacement park land, our design included a wonderfully bold approach: closing down Sackman Street and redeveloping it as new open space. The end result is a much more cohesive park with better pedestrian circulation and improved sight lines. While NYC Parks completed the park reconstruction in 2023, Sackman Street is still technically a mapped park-- it's still technically a mapped street. This city map change action will de-map the street dedicated as park land. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Thank you so much. I'm going to ask a few questions and then I'm going to turn over to Council Member Nurse. When do you anticipate the accessibility improvements to the Broadway Junction Station to be complete?

ARTURO ESPINOZA: It'll be within three years. Construction has already commenced, actually.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. is the 11,000 square foot addition to the playground exclusively from the area being demapped from the Sackman Street, or is the additional-- excuse me. I'll repeat that.

Is the 11,000 square foot addition to the playground exclusively from the area being de-mapped from the Sackman Street or is there additional area from the head house expansion?

ARTURO ESPINOZA: So, the 11,000 square feet is the area between-- it's the area of Sackman Street that's de-mapped. So that's from, you know, northern boundary of Truxton Street and the southern would be Fulton. So that's just the size of the de-mapped street. And the 9,000 is, you know, the sum of all the park land that's taken, both actually temporary and permanently.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Now, I'm going to ask some questions about these pictures now. I'm not from this area, so I'm just going to ask. Is this around the playground or where you guys are trying to do the expansion?

ARTURO ESPINOZA: Well, given that's the first time I'm seeing this--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Okay.

ARTURO ESPINOZA: I know it's within, you know, two or three block radius.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Are you familiar with the area?

ELIZABETH ERNISH: Oh, I can answer that.
The image shown here, that is the Sackman Street area
that was closed down and repurposed as open space.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Is this area
on the property of MTA or is it on the property of
the Parks Department.

ELIZABETH ERNISH: No. Well, currently,
it's the Department of Transportation.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay.

ELIZABETH ERNISH: And once this action
is complete, it will be transferred to the Parks
Department jurisdiction.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: And does the Parks
Department have the capacity with the expansion of
this de-mapping to make sure that this area will be
taken care of?

ELIZABETH ERNISH: Well, currently, we
are maintaining it. We have--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] You are.

ELIZABETH ERNISH: an MOU with DO-- yeah,
we are currently taking care of it. But to your
point, you know, maintenance is always a challenge
for the Parks Department, but in this case, we were
able to absorb it in our regular maintenance

operations for Callahan-Kelley. But thank you for the question.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. I mean, it doesn't look like it's being maintained very well, if Council Member Nurse has these photos. And just from my experience within my community I know when you're taking care of a large park or a large area, you want to make sure that you're able to maintain. It doesn't make any sense that we have these beautiful parks and they're just covered with garbage all the time. So, I'm going to pass it over to Council Member Nurse, because I know she has a little bit more questions regarding this.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you, Chair Riley. So, I understand. Like I said, I understand that the nature of this hearing is limited to this very particular parcel. However, Broadway Junction is a larger area and you are well-aware of that. You have the MTA bus depot. You have this. Like I said, this is \$400 million. There's also a bunch of other projects coming down the pipeline. And as far as I'm understanding, it is MTA that has the responsibility to take care of in front of the station and certain corridors where the Home Depot are. And I feel like

after three years and almost eight months, I feel like pulling my hair out, because I don't have an answer from MTA. The only time that any cleaning happens is if I beg Sanitation to do it, and I will say Sanitation is doing an excellent job. They do the best they can. But MTA has not stepped up. This is-- we have very few opportunities to bring MTA to the table. So, I need to hear from you at some point a plan for keeping this area clean. You did have people on the sidewalks parked. I do appreciate that the service vehicles, MTA vehicles are not, but you need to communicate to your workers that they got to get off the sidewalk. I've asked repeatedly for a coordinated plan between Sanitation and MTA on what are you going to do to coordinate so a broom can hit the street. There is no reason, and I certainly don't believe it's happening in your neighborhood or on your block or on any of the blocks of the people who work for MTA, that three weeks of litter are caked up under cars for blocks. That's not acceptable where you live, correct?

ARTURO ESPINOZA: No, it is not, I agree.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: So, then why is it acceptable for people in East New York?

ARTURO ESPINOZA: No, I concur with you.
It's not--

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: [interposing] If
you concur, then why for three years have we not had
a plan of action?

ARTURO ESPINOZA: Okay, I hear your
concerns loud and clear.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: I don't know how
many times I have to say it. I'm really tired of
asking, and I don't like asking in this kind of
forum. This is not comfortable for me, but I'm not
going to allow MTA to have expansive portfolio and
not be responsible for what they already have. You
have an obligation to my community to clean this area
up and to have a consistent plan for holding your
workers accountable, and your agency needs to step
up. I'm not asking for a favor. I'm asking you all
to do your jobs, and I'm asking you to comply with
the law. So, when can we have a plan from MTA and
with-- and in coordination with DSNY to keep that
area clean?

ARTURO ESPINOZA: I will get to you as
soon as possible.

COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Great. Okay.

Thank you, Chair Riley. I expect to see something.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member Nurse. Are there any other questions? I just want to state for the record we've been joined by Council Member Carr. There being no more questions for this panel, this panel's excused. Are there any members of the public here wanting to testify on LU 358? You're excused. Thank you. Okay. I will now call the next panel of individuals who signed up to-- oh, sorry. There being no other members of the public who wish to testify on LU 358 related to the Broadway Junction Station city map amendment, the public hearing is now closed and the item is laid over. I will now open the public hearing on LU 357 for ULURP #C240151MMQ relating to the JFK Conduit Logistics Center demapping, an application by a private applicant to demap and dispose of portions of three unbuilt streets to facilitate the development of a proposed new logistics warehouse which is allowed as-of-right in the existing M1-1 zoning district. The development site is located in JFK Industrial Business Zone in Majority Whip Brooks-Powers' district. For anyone wishing to testify

regarding this proposal remotely, if you have not already done so, you must register online by visiting the Council's website at council.nyc.gov/landuse. I would now like to recognize Majority Whip Brooks-Powers for any opening remarks if she has. No? Okay. I will now call for the applicant panel which consists of Michael Boden [sp?], Ebony Meeks [sp?], Eric Palatnik. Counsel, can you please administer the affirmation?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Applicant panelists, would you please raise your right hands and state your name for the record?

ERIC PALATNIK: Eric Palatnik.

BISHOP MITCHELL TAYLOR: Bishop Mitchell Taylor.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this subcommittee and in answer to all Council Member questions?

ERIC PALATNIK: I do.

BISHOP MITCHELL TAYLOR: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Alright. Thank you.

For the viewing public, if you need an accessible version of this presentation, please send an email request to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Bishop, Eric, is Michael going to testify? Is he online?

ERIC PALATNIK: No, Michael's not testifying. He's here just in attendance.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No problem. Alright. You may begin, just please reinstate your name and organization for the record.

ERIC PALATNIK: My name is Eric Palatnik. We're here to represent the JFK Conduit Development. And I want to thank this esteemed panel for being here today and taking time out of your busy schedule, and applaud Council Member Nurse for what you just said a few moments ago. It reminded me when I first started practicing and Guiliani was mayor, and I used to have-- be upset about the gum on the sidewalks. That was when we all loved Mayor Guiliani, and he said the gum on the sidewalks is an indication of a community that was in disrepair and that we should clean up the street, and what Ms. Nurse, Council Member Nurse, just spoke to was reminiscent of that. She shouldn't have to ask for the streets to be

clean, and I'm proud to have heard what she said today. With that, as my introduction I want to thank Council Member Selvena Brooks-Powers as well. She has been involved in the application that we're here for today at length. She's been working with us, ownership, at length talking about things such as job creation and creating a better environment for the future here, and we want to thank her, and we're involved in discussions with her, and those are going to be ongoing. You have our commitment after this hearing today and before this acted upon. So, I wanted to let you know that. For the remainder of the Council, what we are here for today is the removal of streets from the street system. The streets are not mapped. You heard a few moments ago-- are mapped, excuse me. You heard a few moments ago about park land being created with mapped streets. Here we're asking to remove the map streets on a very well-known site, Grandpa's Buses. You've all passed it on the Belt Parkway when you're doing about one mile every 10 minutes and stared at the buses. You might wonder why that parking lot's been there all these years, it's because there are three mapped streets running through. You can go to the next

slide, please. And the three mapped streets are shown in pink right there. It's Oak Street, 145th Road, and Byron Street. All three are paper streets. They're on the city maps, but they're not built. This action requests approval to eliminate those streets from the city maps so that we could build the proposed warehouse facility-- which I'll ask whoever's controlling the screen, just click forward if you can to the plan so we can show the warehouse facility. I don't need to bore you with all the details of the remainder of the application, the remainder of the paperwork, but he'll get to the-- whoever's controlling will get to the plan. And the warehouse facility will be 136,000 square feet. It'll be a two-story warehouse, and it'll be approximately 37 feet tall. If you can click forward, there's a couple plan sheets that might show it, and you can click forward to them. So, the application is in essence to put up a warehouse, and in order to achieve the warehouse, we need to remove the streets, and in order to remove the streets, we need the demapping action. We have met with Community Planning Board 13 who is unanimously in support of the action, and we've also met with the local civic associations

and Business Improvement Districts, JFK Gateway BID, all of whom stand alongside us in support of the application. And we, again, thank Council Member Selvena Brooks-Powers for her involvement to-date. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. That's it?

ERIC PALATNIK: That's it.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I love when you do these short and sweet presentations. Thank you. So, I just have a question, and then I'm going to turn it over to the Majority Whip. So, the site is located within 2050 flood plain and is currently at risk of stormwater flooding. What on-site mitigation measures will be implemented to address environmental and flooding concerns?

ERIC PALATNIK: Sure. There'll be a few things. And I was remiss not to mention it after the previous testimony about street conditions. The street system surrounding the property is sort of out of the Wild West. It's a left-over from the last century and the streets have been ignored for the better part of the 20th century. Our action in combination with the New York City Department of

Transportation who has a street improvement program going on on the surrounding streets, we'll add in new sewer systems. We'll add in new curbs, new plantings, new street trees. They'll be bioswells installed as well, and on the property there'll be detention tanks which will capture all the rain water and storm water runoff and hold it to be dispersed at a time when there's less pressure upon the system. So, it's really going to be a substantial upgrade, not just by us, but by independent action being taken by the Department of Transportation.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: How long is this plan anticipated?

ERIC PALATNIK: We expect to break ground-- we're not done for a while with this process. We still have to go through the purchasing agreement for the streets. So, we need about another eight months for that, and we'll be breaking ground in about a year, 14 months we would think.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Thank you.
Majority Whip?

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you, Chair, and thank you for your opening remarks. I appreciate the regular communication we've been able

to maintain around this project, and while it is technically as-of-right, there are some concerns that I have conveyed to the owner and to the team that I am hoping that we can have resolved before this moves forward. I'll start with my questions that I have written and go from there. So, first, I want to know how will the proposed project remediate any soil contamination issues, and will sidewalk improvements be required?

ERIC PALATNIK: Yes, there will. Sidewalk and street improvements are not just required, but are going to be performed including street trees, like I said before, lighting, curbs, and things like that which we all take for granted around the city but do not exist on this block front. With respect to remediation of the site, yes, there'll be a phase one done on the property. If there are any substantial conditions on the properties-- we don't believe there are. It's only been used for surface parking for the better part of the last century which means that whatever buses leaked into the ground is just in the top of the soil. So, we anticipate that'll be a fairly clean

site to clean up and to be put to better use in the future or productive use.

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for that. And what actions will you take to promote the hiring of local residents and engage with locally-based organizations and community groups for outreach, job fairs, and contracting opportunities for this project?

ERIC PALATNIK: Well, a couple of different things. First of all, this project is being proposed by Wild Flower. Many of you in the room acted upon and have worked with Wild Flower in Astoria on a movie studio that they've created in Astoria. That was open to quite some fanfare, I believe, in job creation and things of the like. They are also working with economic-- New York City Economic Development Corporation, breaking ground now on one of the largest charging stations in combination with the City. So, they have a very strong outreach program, which I'm trying to demonstrate, that's already in place. They are New York City-based. It's a well-known New York City person that's involved behind them, and they are New York City-centric, so they're not going anywhere. To

make it even further, we've had the benefit of partnering with Urban Upbound, and Bishop Taylor is here today who can speak a little bit more about that.

BISHOP TAYLOR: Yes, thank you to Chair Riley, to all of the Council Members that are here on today. And those of you that don't know me. I am the Co-founder and CEO of Urban Upbound an organization that was developed to break cycles of poverty in public housing neighborhoods and other low-income communities by giving residents the tools and resources they need for economic mobility and self-sufficiency. I'm not going to bore you with all of the exciting details about Urban Upbound, but we are celebrating 21 years of doing this work, and we have extensive experience with working with developers around the City, helping them devise employment plans and strategies and outreach methodology in order to impact local communities. The team asked me to come on board because of my experience with them in the Astoria project. We were very successful in job creation and career development. And having had a positive experience with this group and having extensive experience working in the Far Rockaway

where we have two offices, one in Hammel Houses and one at 1907 Mott Avenue, who we've worked extensively with you, Council Member, on other projects to ensure that the residents in your zip codes are persons that are hired by developers. I want to use that same methodology to ensure and hold these developers accountable to that same objective, even as we did in the Astoria project and other projects that we've done with other developers. And so, my team has already been working on an extensive plan to present and to execute. The team, I think, is working with you, their team, their development team is working with you to work out the details and what have you. My job is to execute on those details that you require from them and to ensure that our residents get good paying jobs, not only temporary jobs, but hopefully we can morph that into permanent jobs when the project is finished.

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you, and I appreciate the emphasis on good paying jobs, and I'm going to come back to that at some point in my line of questioning. Will the applicant provide electric vehicle charging on-site, and will they take

steps to incentivize electric vehicle usage with future tenants?

ERIC PALATNIK: Yes, there will be. The site is designed and being built specifically as warehousing to support JFK. The vehicles that are going to be used are ideal for it to be electric vehicles. They're short-term trips. They'll be spending their unused time in this parking lot, and we have every reason to believe-- and within the building. So, we're going to be applying the expertise that Wild Flower is creating right now in the numerous electric vehicle charging stations they're constructing around the city at this moment, and there will be some included within the proposed development.

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: How will the applicant ensure that the facility does not further exacerbate truck parking and congestion issues in my district?

ERIC PALATNIK: Well, truck parking, I think it's going-- it's going to help dramatically. Number one, you saw the images and you know the parking lot better than anybody does. There are-- I'm amazed every time I go there that somebody could

1 even manipulate all those-- maneuver all those buses
2 into that lot. They're sandwiched in there, and it's
3 well over a couple hundred I would think are in
4 there. That means every single day you got 200 old-
5 school diesel-- no pun intended-- diesel buses
6 turning on and roaming the streets as they wind their
7 way out. They're probably on some sort of defined
8 path, but I could imagine that's not very well
9 regulated as it is a school bus system. It's not a
10 corporate America, so to speak, business entity that
11 has a little more control over their employees. So,
12 I think that the current bus situation is probably a
13 drag for people that live in the area. It's probably
14 creating quite a bit of congestion in addition to the
15 noise and the diesel fumes that are associated with
16 it, as well as a number of people that need to get to
17 the facility every day to and from to drive the
18 buses. So, we think that this warehouse facility,
19 which at the most is probably going to attract 75.
20 They'll probably have 75 trucks, if that many.
21 Probably even less that'll be servicing this
22 warehouse every single day, and it's mostly making
23 circles and loops directly to the airport to a
24 defined area. So, there's a defined traffic pattern
25

that the employees will be following. It'll be a routine pattern. It'll follow routine hours, and it'll operate at much scattered hours throughout the day, as opposed to the bus operation which I'm sure-- I haven't been there, but I'm sure they crank up the buses at five/six o'clock in the morning and then come back in the evening every day. So, you get that influx of buses and traffic all at once, whereas this'll be throughout the day. I hope that helped.

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: And I know Wild Flower was a part of the consortium that developed the Amazon site in my district in Rosedale as well, and after that facility was built, it created a lot of flooding in that area. However it was built, the infrastructure suffered as a result of it, and we are in close proximity to marshland. So, what is the applicant looking to do to ensure that they are able to quickly rectify or reconcile any type of infrastructure impacts from the construction?

ERIC PALATNIK: Sure, and I'm not familiar with the other location that you're speaking of, but I could tell you that they've over-designed the stormwater detention tanks on this property, and there is also a water-collecting roof, and there is

also going to be-- are also going to be landscaped areas that could absorb the water. The idea is that every single bit of rain that lands on this property will end up in the stormwater detention system on this property and the rain water will be held in a controlled environment until the incident passes and it could be dispersed into the public sewer system at a modest rate and it's been designed to attend to that. I don't know what went wrong at the Amazon facility, but I do know that Michael is here with us today, Michael Bowden [sp?]. You've met with him already and he's signed-- he's a civil engineer himself and he's looked at all these issues.

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: I just want to make sure that the applicant has put in place something to quickly be able to react if, as a result of the construction, we may see that there's flooding where there wasn't flooding before. Because while Amazon did course correct, it did take a little bit of time to do, and so I just want to make sure that is being thought of in advance. How many jobs and what kind of occupations do you expect this project to generate?

ERIC PALATNIK: It's probably going to generate somewhere in the neighborhood of-- [inaudible] 150 jobs full-time? 150 construction jobs. How many full-time [inaudible] 65-- it's probably in the presentation, but 65 full-time jobs and about 100 construction jobs.

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: And what is your plan to ensure workers on this project are compensated fairly for their labor? And before you answer, I just want to be on record as I've publicly said all the time, proper wages is something that is critically important to me, making sure that people have livable wages, especially when they're doing labor such as construction. So, \$15 an hour, \$20 an hour, \$22 an hour is not sufficient in my eyes to do hard labor, especially for a job that will end at a certain point. We want to make sure people can feed their families. And so, I am interested in understanding that dynamic, and also if there's any intentions for this to be an open shop or a labor project.

ERIC PALATNIK: I'll let Bishop Taylor speak to the job creation. It will be an open shop.

So, everybody's welcome to bid on it. With respect to the first question, Bishop?

BISHOP TAYLOR: Yes. So, we-- you know, one of the priorities for Urban Upbound, we're a citywide nonprofit with offices all over the city, and one of the things that we specialize in is career development, good jobs, safe jobs, good-paying jobs, and jobs that lead to ongoing careers. We've experienced in Far Rockaway, in your district, we had an average wage floor of about \$46 an hour between the folks that were placed on jobs in the construction and the permanent jobs. I do not place people in minimum wage construction jobs, period, end of story, period. I've suggested to this team before I even got on board that I would not entertain a \$20 an hour job, a \$21 dollar an hour job. We have to be somewhere between \$22 and \$27 an hour for these workers. And I've got an affirmation from this team that they will follow my directives on that, and I feel comfortable that we can deliver on those type of jobs with those type of salaries. And of course, the permanent jobs will expand the wage average as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: And then in terms of like benefits, will you be offering benefits, or is this just the wages?

BISHOP TAYLOR: On the construction jobs, typically, subcontractors usually do not provide extreme fringe. You know, I've seen in, you know, some of our jobs that there are limited fringe packages for temporary construction workers, but in the permanent jobs, of course, there'll be a complete fringe package. We intend to. Of course, the developer is not the end user, but they committed to connecting us to the end user to work with them on placing folks in those jobs as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you for that. And you know, I know we still have a little bit of road ahead of us in terms of the conversations, but I am glad to hear that there's conversations about a more livable wage. And thank you, Bishop, for, you know, highlighting that there are some construction jobs that have limited fringe benefits. So, I would like to explore that as well, considering it is open shop. If it's not going to be union, that means people are not being guaranteed to having benefits, and the people who are working on

this project, whether they live in the 31st District which I hope all of them if possible, if not most of them come from my district, of course.

ERIC PALATNIK: That's my objective.

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Right. We want to make sure that they're able to provide for their families, because I think back to one of the sites that was up in running in my district and there was a laborer that got hurt, and something fell on him that day, ended up in the hospital, no insurance, off the job now. Someone else filled that position, and you know, they're living literally not even check to check, and so that's not the type of quality of life that we want to have in the 31st district or in the city of New York. And so, I just want to make sure that I'm on record on my position on that, but I do appreciate the applicant in all of its candor and willingness to walk this road with me on this so that we can have the most optimal outcome for this project. So, thank you. Thank you, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Majority Whip. There being no more questions for this panel, this panel's excused. Thank you so much, gentlemen. Is there anyone here willing to testify on this

presentation from JFK? Okay, there being no members of the public who wish to testify on LU 357 relating to the JFK Conduit Logistics Center demapping, the public hearing is now closed and the item is laid over. As a reminder for the viewing public, the Council will accept written testimony on any of the items on today's agenda. Please include the project name in the subject line of your email, and please send your email to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

I will now open the public hearing on Pre-considered LU item for the application #G250081CCQ relating to the Ocean Crest Article XI tax exemption, an application by the NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development for a technical amendment to Council Resolution 950 for the year 2025. As background, the Council has previously approved an Article XI tax exemption pursuant to Section 577 of the Private Housing Finance Law for a project in Queens in Majority Whip Brooks-Powers' district. This prior resolution is proposed to be amended with respect to the subject property's block and lot information, and the project ownership structure. I will now call the applicant panel for this proposal which consists of Justin Donlon from

HPD. Counsel, can we please administer the affirmation?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Donlon, would you please raise your right hand and state your name for the record?

JUSTIN DONLON: Justin Donlon.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this subcommittee and in answer to all Council Member questions?

JUSTIN DONLON: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. The applicant team may begin. I just ask that you please restate your name and organization for the record.

JUSTIN DONLON: Sure. Justin Donlon, senior Project Manager at HPD Government Affairs Division. So, in reference to the previous Council action on June 11th of this year, so due to error from HPD, the exemption area and ownership structure as defined in the prior resolution were erroneous. So, therefore on behalf of the project sponsor, HPD is requesting that the prior resolution be amended to correct these errors. So, for the record, the co-op

HDFC referenced in the resolution should be identified as Ocean Crest Homeownership Housing Development Fund. The HDFC should be identified as Restored Homes Housing Development Fund Corporation, and partnership should be identified as TCB Beach Channel Drive Limited Partnership. The exemption area should be corrected to Queens block 15744, lot 17.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: That's it?

JUSTIN DONLON: That's it.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Oh, man, that's great. Thank you. Alright, I have no questions. Majority Whip? Okay. there being no questions, this panel's ex--

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS:

[interposing] Oh, wait. No, I do. Do we have an idea of when this project is going to be in the pipeline for HPD? Is there anyway for us to understand the status of it? I know we had to do this technical change, but--

JUSTIN DONLON: The closing timeline you're referring to?

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Yes.

JUSTIN DONLON: Yeah, I'm-- let me get back to you on that. I'm going to check with our preservation-- not preservation team, sorry, our development team, but we are looking to close it very soon.

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: this year?

JUSTIN DONLON: I believe so. Let me get back to you on that.

COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.

JUSTIN DONLON: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Alright, thank you.

There being no questions, you're excused. There being no other members of the public who wish to testify on the Pre-considered LU relating to the Ocean Crest Article XI tax exemption for application #G250081CCQ, the public hearing is now closed and the item is laid over. Alright, party is going to start now. I will now open the public hearing on Pre-considered LU relating to the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan, an exciting proposal by DCP and other city agencies to rezone an approximately 230-block area including downtown Jamaica. The industrial areas to the south and east and portions of Jamaica's key corridor, including Hillside Avenue, Jamaica Avenue,

Liberty Avenue, Sutphin Boulevard, Guy R. Brewer Boulevard, and Merrick Boulevard. This project is located in the districts of Speaker Adams, Council Member Williams, and Council Member Gennaro. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan looks to bring additional housing and affordable housing as well as new commercial community facilities and targeted industrial space to downtown Jamaica and the surrounding area along the infrastructure and necessary community investments. With updated zoning and improved coordinated-- excuse me-- improved coordinated interagency planning, downtown Jamaica has great potential to grow into a live work/play center for all of eastern and central Queens and today. Today, we will have an opportunity to discuss with the administration how we can secure these resources. As I have said repeatedly, it is not enough to simply build market-rate housing. We have to build housing that our constituents can actually afford and provide the needed infrastructure and resources that our residents deserve. As other neighborhood rezonings, this one involved multiple land use actions. In brief, the proposed action we are considering today include a zoning map amendment

to update the zoning district to allow for incrementally more housing and to support the development of new commercial and light industrial businesses, a zoning text amendment to modify the special downtown Jamaica's rule, as well as establish affordability requirements known as MIH, the designation of urban development action area, approval of the urban development action area project, and disposition of city-owned properties for parcels owned and managed by HPD, and finally, amendments to the city map to facilitate the construction of two pedestrian plazas. I will let DCP describe each of these actions in more detail. On a technical note, I want to note that while the related city map application has been approved by the City Planning Commission, it is not yet been introduced by the Council. We will have the application on a future meeting agenda to take public testimony, but because it is related to the overall Jamaica Neighborhood Plan, it will be included as part of today's presentation and discussion. For anyone wishing to testify regarding the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan remotely, if you have not already done so, you must register online by visiting the

Council's website at council.nyc.gov/landuse. For anyone with us in-person, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms and submit a speaker's card. Please submit if you are in favor or in opposition of the plan. I would now like to recognize Council Member Williams for her opening remarks.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you so much, Chair. Good morning. My name is Nantasha Williams and I am honored to represent Council District 27 and join this meeting today alongside my colleagues. Together our districts cover downtown and the surrounding communities to the south and east. We share the goal to make Jamaica a place where people can live, work, and play, and all residents can prosper. At the start of my term as a Council Member, I recognize the potential of a neighborhood plan to not only update zoning, but to bring more housing, affordable housing specifically, and economic development to Jamaica, but also to secure long overdue capital investments in housing, schools, parks, libraries, streets, and the critical water and sewer infrastructure that supports growth. We have now reached an important milestone with the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan officially before the

Council, and I appreciate the involvement of everyone who has contributed to bringing us to this point.

Throughout this two-year process, we've heard directly from the people of Jamaica through town halls, steering committee meetings, one-on-one conversations, youth symposiums, grassroot outreach, ensuring that this plan reflects the voices of those who live in New York, specifically the Jamaica area, who work, worship and raise families here. We convened 52 steering committee members for monthly meetings and held over 30 public meetings and events.

I am grateful to the Department of City Planning, Chair Garodnick, Laura, Danielle, Sarah, Shavon [sp?], Elizabeth, Jasmine Lin [sp?]. Sorry if I forgot anybody. You know I care about you guys so much. I feel like I talk to them almost every single week for two years, so I feel like they're a part of the team of it-- for your tireless work on this plan, as well as the members of the Jamaica area-wide rezoning steering committee. I know some people are here today-- executive committee that was comprised of every single elected official from state to federal that touched the area for generously volunteering their time and caring so deeply about

Jamaica's future. I also want to extend my gratitude to our Council Planning and Land Use Team and to my own incredible staff, Whitney and Amir [sp?].

However, this work is not done. My final support is tied directly to the City's willingness to translate our community's needs into real tangible investments.

Our priorities are clear: infrastructure improvements

to address long overdue issues with sewer capacity

and basement flooding, investments to improve the

environment and public space of downtown Jamaica,

expanding and improving our parks, schools, health

and cultural facilities to better serve existing

residents and accommodate new growth, and supporting

affordable homeownership opportunities, and our

faith-based institutions who want to build affordable

housing for families and seniors. And our work

doesn't finish with a simple press release. Planning

must continue through an ongoing downtown Jamaica

Oversight Taskforce to ensure that all commitments

are upheld with transparency and accountability. I

look forward to finalizing commitments on these

issues over the coming weeks before the Council's

vote. We have an opportunity to set a model example

of planning that not only addresses the City's

housing needs, but does so in a way that centers local priorities and delivers real lasting value for our neighborhoods. I will continue to listen. I will continue to show up, and I will continue to make sure this process belongs to the people of Jamaica. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member Williams. Thank you, Council Member Williams, for your opening remarks. I would now like to recognize our Madam Speaker, Adrienne Adams, for her opening remarks.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Good morning, everyone. Thank you so much, Chair Riley, for leading today's public hearing on the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan, a neighborhood rezoning in southeast Queens, and thank you also to Council Member Williams for your leadership on this plan and everyone who has joined us today. As a longtime resident of Jamaica and a former co-chair of the Jamaica Now Leadership Council, this neighborhood rezoning, this proposal is deeply important to me and to my community. Our Jamaica is a thriving and vibrant community whose success is pivotal to the prosperity of southeast Queens and to our entire city. Its growth and

transformation to a bustling residential, commercial and transportation hub with opportunities to advance careers, build homes, and raise families has always been a top priority. I'm hopeful the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan can build on the progress we've achieved over the last decade. Throughout my term as the Speaker of the New York City Council , I have encouraged my colleagues, land use applicants, city agencies, our communities, and all stakeholders in the process to engage in proactive community planning. That means working together to understand our community's needs, identify shared goal-- identify shared goals and principles and deliver better outcomes for the city, the neighborhoods we represent and our constituents. With community planning, we can ensure our city is confronting the housing crisis by creating new homes while also securing investments in economic opportunity, infrastructure, and other community benefits that align with our community's needs and goals. It's not always an easy process, but when it's done with thought, with care, and with consideration of the feedback from community members, we can advance housing solutions and investments for all New

Yorkers. I'm very proud to support Council Member Williams in bringing this model of community planning to downtown Jamaica and the surrounding areas through the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan. Through sustained community engagement with the Department of City Planning, other agencies, and the steering committee comprised of community leaders and stakeholders, we have begun to shape a proposal that can update the zoning in this community to deliver more affordable housing by creating the largest Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Zone in the City, new economic development opportunities, and investments to improve the local parks, schools, and much-needed infrastructure. This proposal can also support homeownership, improve public transportation and increase opportunities for our faith-based organizations to expand their work and develop much-needed affordable and senior housing. There is still much more work to be done to finalize and strengthen the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan. Most urgently, southeast Queens residents deserve updated water and sewer infrastructure to address longstanding and chronic issues with flooding. While we are already making important capital investments, including

additional funds we secured through the council's City for All Housing Plan, we must ensure these improvements come to fruition. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan must also ensure funding to address school capacity and other goals identified through our community planning process, like increasing and preserving affordable homeownership, improving our parks and open spaces, and investing in our public health. It's important to note that none of these investments in community benefits would be possible without the City Council's direct role within the land use process to negotiate and secure commitments that fulfil community needs. New Yorkers, through their democratically-elected representatives, deserve the ability to fight for more affordable housing and neighborhood investments. As we consider the future of downtown Jamaica in our city, this is what is at stake. Our communities deserve to be included and heard with real influence when new development is being planned in their neighborhoods. Over the coming weeks, we will continue to examine this neighborhood rezoning and work towards crafting a final plan that meets the needs of Jamaica and its residents. I look forward to hearing from the

administration and members fo the public during today's hearing and throughout this einter process. Thank you all once again. I turn it back over to Chair Riley.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will now call the applicant panel for this proposal which consists of Lin Zeng, the Director of the Department of City Planning, Queens Borough Office, Jasmin Tapale, a Senior Lead for Community Planning for DCP, Sarit Platkin, Executive Director of Neighborhood and Planning and Equity Initiatives from HPD, Dylan Meagher, Chief of Staff Bureau of Sustainability from DEP, Beth DeFalco, Deputy Commissioner for Public Affairs and Communications from DEP, Diniece Mendes, Assistant Commissioner for Transit Development from DOT, and Andrew Arcese, Borough Planner for DOT. Counsel, can you please administer the affirmation?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would you please raise your right hand? I will ask you in turn to answer the following. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this subcommittee and in answer to all Council Member questions? Lin Zeng?

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 57

DIRECTOR ZENG: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Jasmin Tepale?

JASMIN TEPALE: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sarit Platkin?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLATKIN: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Dylan Meagher?

CHIEF OF STAFF MEAGHER: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Beth DeFalco?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Diniece Mendes?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDES: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Andrew Arcese?

ANDREW ARCESE: I do.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. And now
the applicant team may begin. I just that you please
reinstate your name and organization for the record.
You may begin.

DIRECTOR ZENG: Sure. Good morning, Chair
Riley and members of the Subcommittee. My name is
Lin Zeng, Director of the Queens Office at the
Department of City Planning, and I'm joined here
today by Jasmin Tepale, Senior Planner and Project
Lead for the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan. We're also
joined by our colleagues from the Department of

Environmental Protection, Department of Transportation, and the Department of Housing Preservation and Development. We will all be available for questions after this brief presentation. We're excited to be here today to present the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan. This is the culmination of years of study and research, dozens of engagement activities with the local community and hundreds of hours of team meetings with our partner agencies and elected officials. We want to particularly thank Council Member Dr. Nantasha Williams for her leadership and partnership along with Speaker Adrienne Adams, Council Member James Gennaro, and Queens Borough President Donovan Richards as we continue to refine the plan through this ULURP Process. Next slide, please. Jamaica is a community with rich historical and cultural significance and serves as a key local and regional transportation hub. It is one of Queens major regional business districts and includes one of the city's 21 industrial business zones. Jamaica has long been home to many multigenerational multicultural residents. As we have heard from the community and local stakeholders, their vision for

the future of Jamaica builds on these strengths. As such, the plan supports more housing, jobs across different industries and investments by considering land use changes, capital programs, services, and policy changes to support growth. Next slide, please. The proposal we're presenting today updates zoning that would help Jamaica grow and thrive. Represented through numbers, this plan would create more than 12,000 new homes, including around 4,000 permanently income-restricted homes under what would be the City's largest MIH area. The plan would also create over two million square feet of new commercial and community facility spaces, adding more than 7,000 jobs in the area. Next slide, please. To achieve this, the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan includes four proposed land use actions. Jasmin will speak in more detail these actions, but I do want to speak more globally the goals of these actions, what they aim to do. One, they will expand housing opportunities by requiring permanently income-restricted housing through the City's MIH program that will support and maintain diversity in the neighborhood, and it would develop 100 percent income-restricted affordable housing on underutilized city-owned land, including

home ownership units as well. Two, it will reinforce the area as a regional business district by strengthening the existing businesses while also promoting the development of new job-generating uses through updated districts with increased industrial and commercial densities. Three, they will strengthen the quality of the streetscape and increase appropriate densities along key corridors. And lastly, the support a comprehensive neighborhood plan that aligns zoning framework with capital investments, infrastructure needs, and services with current and future Jamaica residents. I will now turn this over to Jasmin. She'll walk us through the specifics of the plan. Next slide, please.

JASMIN TEPALE: So, the study area is expansive and covers approximately 300 blocks in Jamaica, covering two community districts and primarily across three City Council districts. Next slide. Oh, sorry. Next slide. On the screen is a map showing the study area. It focuses on Jamaica Center and surrounding corridors that mainly include Hillside Avenue, Sutphin Boulevard, Liberty Avenue, Merrick Boulevard, and Guy R. Brewer Boulevard. Next slide. So, over the past two years with strong

partnership with Council Member Dr. Nantasha Williams, we've held 38 public meetings, met monthly with the steering committee made up of over 50 leaders from local groups and the executive committee of city, state and federal elected officials convened by Council Member Williams. Hundreds of hours of meaningful discussions resulted in a community vision for Jamaica that is prosperous based on its affordability and inclusivity, its diversity and its business and investment opportunities. Next slide. So, next, we'll talk about the proposal which we believe supports that community-created vision. Next slide? The zoning framework includes a number of strategies to address challenges we've heard summarized here, but we're going to go into more detail describing these strategies in different areas of Jamaica. Next slide. As shown on this map, the proposed zoning map amendment would update zoning districts across a 230-block area in Jamaica. In the next few slides I will briefly go over different areas of Jamaica and how the proposed zoning changes could look like in those areas. Next slide. So, we'll start with this area we're calling the downtown core. This is generally known as Jamaica Center.

Next slide. Today, Jamaica Center is mapped with high-density commercial zoning districts such as the C62 district seen here at Sutphin Boulevard and Archer Avenue. The zoning facilitated the newer mixed-use buildings that have developed along Jamaica Avenue and around this area. However, there are no requirements for affordable housing under current zoning. There's only a voluntary option. Our goal here is to encourage the growth of new housing with permanently affordable units through MIH and support the ground floor uses with job-generating uses close to transit-rich corridors. Next slide. So, our proposal is to map high-density districts such as the C64, C63 that supports more space for offices, retail, and entertainment uses, creating opportunities for new jobs and businesses in the area. Lastly, any new residential development would be required to include permanently affordable income-restricted housing. Next slide. So, next, we're going to take a look at this area that's north of Jamaica Avenue going towards Hillside Avenue. Next slide. This area of Hillside Avenue and 150th Street allows for medium-sized buildings that could have commercial uses on the ground floor and housing

above. Similar to Jamaica Center, this area has no requirement for affordable housing. Our goal is to require permanently affordable housing in new developments and expand active ground floor uses that support job growth and community-supporting services. Next slide. The proposal would encourage mixed-use developments with new housing, commercial activity and ground floor uses to the corridor. It also allows a higher FAR for community facilities, creating opportunities for larger schools, libraries, and health care centers, and unlike today's zoning, the proposal would require a permanently affordable income-restricted housing as part of any new housing in this area. Next slide. So, next, we'll focus on major corridors south of the LAR tracks that include portions of Merrick, Guy R., Sutphin Boulevard, and Liberty Avenue. Next slide. These corridors are lined with a mix of low-scale homes, local businesses, auto shops and further along faith-based groups that own large properties that often include large parking lots or vacant lots. Our goal is to require contextual mixed-use buildings to help activate pedestrian experiences on the ground level, while also requiring new developments to provide

permanently affordable housing. Next slide. The proposed changes would continue to allow all the uses permitted today like homes, small businesses, community spaces, but would make room for more. By allowing mid-rise buildings with ground floor businesses, the proposal creates opportunities for new permanently affordable income-restricted housing and more space for community-serving uses, helping these corridors better support nearby neighborhoods, especially in an area that is not served by trains where many rely on buses or cars for daily needs. Next slide. So, next, we'll look at this area south of the LAR tracks and east of Sutphin Boulevard that we're calling the south core. Next slide. Today, zoning south of the LAR tracks is generally allows low-scale, non-residential uses like light manufacturing, various types of businesses and some community facilities. There are existing homes that predate zoning, but currently new homes are not allowed today. Our goal with zoning is to allow these neighborhoods to continue to build the way that they've naturally built over time with a mix of homes and businesses while allowing space for light manufacturing to support job growth. Next slide.

We're specifically proposing pair [sic] districts which combine residential with light manufacturing uses. This approach would allow new housing in the area for the first time to coexist with local jobs, especially in an area with strong transit access.

Next slide. And lastly, we'll look at Jamaica's industrial areas generally along Liberty Avenue.

Next slide. So, east of Liberty Avenue, near Detective Keith William Park allows for low-rise non-residential buildings. This area including the former Elmer's Dairy site is part of the Jamaica's industrial business zone where under current city policy housing is not permitted. Most of the area has seen limited growth due to outdated zoning and broader industrial trends. Our goal is to help bolster businesses and job growth within Jamaica by supporting industrial growth in manufacturing districts within the industrial business zones. Next slide. The proposed zoning changes introduce a mix of districts tailored to different area needs. The M12A districts near residential areas to create a buffer, the M23A district to help existing businesses grow and attract new ones, and the M32A district to continue supporting the operations of the LAR

Hillside Rail Yard. Next slide. So, to further our goal to strengthen downtown Jamaica in its nearby major corridors, we are proposing to expand the boundaries of the Special Downtown Jamaica District established in 2007. Next slide. Through the zoning text amendment action, we will update the regulations in Downtown Jamaica Special District to help address some of the challenges we've been hearing. some of the changes include rules to exempt school floor area to encourage more space for schools on privately-owned lots, rules to allow an open space bonus around Jamaica Center, as well as enclosure rules for industrial businesses near homes. Next slide. So, I'm now going to discuss very briefly two site-specific actions in the study area that would add affordable housing and improve the public realm. Next slide. The City is proposing a UDAP designation project approval and disposition of five vacant and under-utilized city-owned sites located along Union Hall Street and Guy R. Brewer Boulevard between 108th Avenue and 110th Avenue that are eligible to be urban development action area projects. Next slide. In the scatter site cluster one, the approved action would result in approximately 34 affordable home

ownership units. Next slide. And scatter site cluster two has four development sites, and the approved project would result in approximately 83 affordable and rent-restricted rental units. The developers would be selected by HPD. Next slide. The second site-specific action is the development of Station Plaza. The New York City Department of Transportation with support from the New York City Economic Development Corporation is proposing a city map change to modify the boundary lines of a previously-planned plaza project, Station Plaza. Next slide. Since the 2007 approval, the scope and design of the plaza have changed. So, the proposed mapping amendment is needed to accommodate the latest designs. Next slide. This mapping action would support two new public plazas totaling approximately 0.45 acres to enhance pedestrian access and safety, improve traffic flow, accommodate bus volumes and provide new public open space in downtown Jamaica. Next slide. So, the City Planning Commission approved the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan with three modifications. First, vesting provisions were approved to allow projects filed before the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan is adopted and that received DOB

approval within one year after adoption can proceed under the existing zoning rules. Second, the M18A-R9X pair districts was updated to an M18A-R91. This cleanup action prevents confusion around the applicability of tower regulations. And lastly, we clarified the streetscape regulations under ZR sections 115-14 and 3230 are not applicable to the conditions of certain zoning lots with frontages along unbuilt map streets. Next slide. So, with Jamaica many strengths and assets the proposed actions hope to advance the communities vision to create a Jamaica that is more prosperous thanks to its affordability and inclusivity, its diversity and its business and investment opportunities. We look forward to continuing the conversation through this ULURP process, and thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. I'm just going to ask a few questions, and then I'm going to turn it over to Madam Speaker and then Council Member Williams. So, downtown Jamaica was rezoned in 2007 plan during the Bloomberg administration. What has been the result of the 2007 plan rezoning and what were the shortcomings of this new Jamaica plan seeking to address it?

JASMIN TEPALE: Thank you for your question, Chair Riley. In 2007, as you mentioned, there was a rezoning in a portion of the area that we're looking at today. Since then, there has been development since 2007, but there was many challenges throughout that period of time. As you know, that there was a-- the housing bubble kind of burst around that time. There was economic challenges, and so, you know, rethinking what we're doing through the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan and how we're building-- I think as Speaker Adams mentioned before, we want to build on a lot of the progress that's already happened since those years of 2007. Jamaica is a major transit hub. There are many strengths in Jamaica that, you know, we want to continue to build on, and so this-- the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan now is really trying to think about how do we continue to create those opportunities that started in 2007, but you know, we obviously know that there's much, much more that can be done. Like Council Member Williams mentioned, there is still challenges in the neighborhood that we are trying to actively address through the Neighborhood Plan.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: How did DCP decide on the proposed zonings and densities?

JASMIN TEPALE: So, thank you for that question. A lot of these areas, you know, we carefully took a look at to make sure that, you know, the densities made sense in those areas. And so, we specifically wanted to focus in on areas like these major corridors. They're important corridors for people. They use them for transit. They take buses along there to go to downtown Jamaica and other neighborhoods and they serve people's daily needs, and so another big thing about how we chose these districts was really for us to be able to map Mandatory Inclusionary Housing. As we mentioned before, this is the largest mapping of MIH here in Jamaica, so that was also a big factor in like how we were thinking about creating opportunities for new homes while also respecting the lower density areas.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Some parts of this plan like Station Plaza are very long overdue ideas which originated in 2007. Why has it taken EDC so long to implement the Station Plaza project?

JASMIN TEPALE: So, thank you for your question. Even though EDC isn't here today, you know, Station Plaza was a-- as you mentioned, a project that was imagined as early as the 2007 rezoning. And now we're back here today with actions for Station Plaza, because they do need to update their design which requires the mapping action that we have. I can pass it to DOT, if you have more to add on just kind of the-- a little bit more of the history there.

ANDREW ARCESE: Sure. Andrew Arcese, Borough Planner with New York City DOT. Just to add to that, Jasmin-- to add the Station Plaza project since the great recession, as the scope has since changed, funding levels have changed. I think it-- it underwent a value engineering exercise, so this action reflects the new current scope.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. The Community Board 12 voted to disapprove the plan despite the extensive outreach and community engagement that preceded the ULURP. God bless you. In hindsight, is there anything DCP could have done to better engage with CB12?

DIRECTOR ZENG: Thank you for that questions. Yes, both Community Boards did vote not in support of this plan. But I'd like to add that this plan is, as we had prefaced by saying, it's two years of community engagement, and this is outside of the Community Boards. You know, we definitely have invited the Community Boards to a lot of workshops, community events. The Councilwoman started a steering committee, an executive committee. So this plan is not without public feedback and public comments. And I think even though their role in the ULURP process has ended, you know, per this proposal, but we are, the administration and the agency, still open to working with Community Board 12 and any specific areas that they want to highlight that we can look to to help broker conversations with other agencies or any specific blocks that they want us to reconsider. We are definitely open to speaking to public, you know, during this public review process as well as beyond, so.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Could you just share with me what was the concerns that the Community Board has regarding this plan?

DIRECTOR ZENG: They've highlighted-- there are several things. They have their resolution that they submitted. They have linked, you know, some of the proposed heights along the corridors, the southern corridors as too high in mostly sort of one and two-family homes right next to it. So, I think specifically, although I don't think it's in the resolution, but I'm-- you know, I'm guessing it's Sutphin, Merrick, Guy R. Brewer, so those southern tentacles going down. So those are areas that kind of they feel that, you know, the proposed density that we have there would impact negatively to the existing fabric of those homes nearby.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, thank you. It is upsetting that EDC is not here. Usually, I think with plans like this, EDC should be here. 7,000 new jobs is certainly very important. I think Council Members would have questions regarding that. But I do have some economic development questions. So, downtown Jamaica continues to struggle with a higher number of storefront vacancies than most commercial areas. Is SBS or the administration proposing any programs to help reactivate vacant spaces?

JASMIN TEPALE: So, thank you for that question. We know that Jamaica is an important commercial hub historically and today, and many people have shared with us throughout this process that, you know, they really want to see Jamaica kind of live out its glory days from the past. But we also know that what's happening there today, you know, on the ground right now the downtown Jamaica BID has done tremendous work to try to, you know, support the economic vitality of that area. But we know that there's more work to be done. So, we are going to continue to work with Small Business Services, SBS, and other city agencies to think about strategies here in downtown Jamaica, and you know, we continue looking forward to working with the Council on what makes sense here in Jamaica.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: There's been concerns from the community and elected officials about the overabundance of hotels being used as temporary shelters, rather than just to support tourism and economic growth in the area. Is the administration working on transitioning these buildings back to hotel use?

DIRECTOR ZENG: Thank you for the question Chair Riley. As you know, the City has a legal obligation to find homes for our neighbors that are currently without shelter, and so partners across the City, across government are doing just that. They are-- you know, where we can find permanent homes, they are placed in shelters. So, I-- so really, one of the permanent solution that we have is permanent housing, and we do believe this plan creates a number of units. Although it may not be a silver bullet, but it will-- it works towards that cause, and I think-- and we welcome-- continue to work with you or any other Council Member's office on identifying specific sites and see where the issues are connect them with the right agencies to address those concerns.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Well, you could understand the concerns of the constituents that live in the area.

DIRECTOR ZENG: Absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Especially with buildings going up. Sometimes buildings are going up and they're supposed to be housing, and then they mysteriously turn into shelters. So, when we're

1 talking about all this density within a specific
2 space, the hotel use is turning in shelters,
3 buildings turning into shelters. Not saying that
4 this plan is calling for that, but sometimes that
5 technically happens. So, I think there needs to be a
6 little bit more, you know, guidance from the City to
7 make sure that this is happening in the specific
8 area. I'm going to yield my time to Madam Speaker to
9 ask a questions. Then we'll go to Council Member
10 Willlliams.
11

12 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you so much, Chair
13 Riley. Thank you for those questions, also. Very
14 powerful. Do you live in Jamaica? You live with us?

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No, I walked there
16 the other day. It was beautiful.

17 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay. Thank you all for
18 being here today. Appreciate your testimony and your
19 time. As you all know, lifelong resident of
20 southeast Queens. Council Member for Jamaica for
21 almost 10 years now. This plan is extremely critical
22 and important to myself, to-- obviously to Council
23 Member Williams who has put her heart and her soul
24 and her brain power into all of this for so many
25 months, and I thank her again for all the diligent

work on this plan. You know, a lot of you know I come out of the Jamaica Now project many years ago, and when we initiated that project, we had very, very strong intentions about what we wanted done in the Jamaica Core, revitalization and other things around the Jamaica Core. A lot was invested, community workshops and a lot of other things, much like what is being done now and what has been done with the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan, and I'm so happy to see the expansion of that now in real, real, concrete thought and work and intentionality in this particular plan. Let's talk a little bit about school. I am an education advocate from way back when, and this-- the IES for this project does show potential significant adverse impacts to elementary school capacity in sub-districts one and two of community school district 28. In plain English, this means that the added population from the projected new development spurred by this rezoning would push school capacity above 100 percent, generating an estimated 755 new students above full capacity. Is DCP and the administration working with the School Construction Authority to address this need with a

new school siting or expansion? And have any specific sites been identified and evaluated?

DIRECTOR ZENG: Thank you so much for that question. Yes, schools is-- we, as planners, are definitely, you know, in-tune with the importance of schools. When you bring more population to an area, they're going to have families. You want people to have families and grow and schools is definitely a part of that. Yes, we have been working with the School Construction Authority throughout this process. As you know, there's already overcrowding in some of the schools within the two school districts that you, you know, noted, District 28 and 29. And so the School Construction Authority, they're working with their existing challenges. They're finding sites now. They're trying to expand the schools-- existing schools now to accommodate that. On top of that, there is also a class size reduction legislation that they have to comply with. So, they're working hard to do that. And so is-- when this plan was formed and we started talking with the SCA, we knew that the projections on the EIS, it's a 15-year projection. So, while, you know, at adoption, if this plan gets adopted on day one, we're

not going to see all that population come in. But over time, in the next 10-15 years, it may come in. So, we'll, you know, City will continue to monitor that. I think what we're proposing as part of this plan, we have a school floor area exemption on private sites. So that expands-- it gives the City another tool. It expands our options for sites on private sites that could be appropriate, could be the right location for the School Construction Authority to site a school. So, this is any site that is at least 20,000 square feet. They get exempted 150,000 of floor area for school if they want to work with the City, and if the School Construction Authority agrees to that site that is safe for their kids, for our kids, then that is another option. So that's one. And although we have not identified sites that would utilize this exemption, we have-- we're continuing to work with the SCA, and when developers come to us, we have continued to kind of float those sites and they've been extremely good partners in due diligencing [sic] those sites to see whether they're appropriate or not. So, that is happening. And of course, you know, we are always looking at our public sites to see if there's any appropriate public sites,

but this is-- schools is something we would monitor definitely and we'll continue to work with the SCA, and any ideas that your office may have we will look at, you know, any school sites that you have come forth with.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you. It's refreshing to hear that. We don't want to play catch-up after the fact. 755 is a significant number, and you're right, we're going to see things progress as the years go on, and we just want to be ahead of the eight ball. So, it's good to know that all of your communication is ongoing with SCA, so that's good to hear. The IES for this project also shows this is a significant impact on the open space ratio, the amount of open space per capita. What projects and proposals are being looked at to improve parks and open spaces in the area to better serve current and future residents. We know that southeast Queens, particularly in this area, has been deficient. As far as open spaces, parks, we've tried to find spaces to accommodate more and more parks and open spaces. Now with this particular rezoning, which is massive, what are you all looking to make sure that this plan is encompassing all of that need

as well? There are many parks in Districts 27 and 28 that are in need of improvement and should be improved as part of this plan, notably Rufus King Park, Archie Spigner Park, Baisley Pond Park, and Charles Drew Parks. Furthermore, we should look at whether it's possible to create new public open space beyond the gateway plaza at the Sutphin train station. So, what are your thoughts on that?

JASMIN TEPALE: Thank you for your question, Speaker Adams. Like you mentioned, I think one of the biggest things we heard throughout this process is about not only care for the existing spaces because they matter so tremendously to everybody about how we're maintaining those spaces, but also creating new spaces. When it comes to new spaces, as you I think alluded to, it's very challenging to find new park spaces. There's not a lot of vacant public land in Jamaica, and so, you know, we have a number of strategies that we're thinking through, through this proposal. Like you mentioned, we are creating two public plazas across the street from the LAR Station through Station Plaza Project in one of the densest areas of Jamaica as another way to bring open spaces to an area that

desperately needs it. In addition, our special district text did include an open space bonus, again, trying to expand the options that we have in order to create open spaces. It would allow private development to, you know, do their part and add open space in that area of Jamaica. And lastly, you know, we are continuing to work with Parks. We know that they are walk-- walk the park gaps in Jamaica and that is a big priority for parks on how to close those gaps. So, we definitely want to continue working with both you, Speaker Adams, with you, Council Member Williams, on thinking about where those right opportunities to create new parks.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you for that. I know for me, in District 28 in particular, it's been quite a challenge. We've been trying to be very, very creative. So again, this is something else that I would like to see us getting out in front of, because this is definitely an issue. Okay, let's talk about infrastructure, southeast Queens infrastructure, one of our favorite topics of life: sewer capacity. And I know Council Member Williams' questions are going to go into detail about our concerns with the DEP infrastructure in the area, and

the frustrations that residents have experienced with flooding issues for decades. So, I'm not going to belabor questions in this area, but instead what I will say is that the infrastructure of our sewers and streets must, must, must be improved before we build more, and certainly needs to be able to accommodate increased density and more people, accommodating more people. This was one of the flashpoints for me in negotiating City of Yes, City for All, in that ginormous proposal that was so successful. This was a sticking point for me to making sure that we did have funding necessary to take care of infrastructure issues that have been so pervasive for so long. So, this has to be top of mind, particularly for this area that continues to suffer because of flooding. Alright, DOT, let's take a look at some of the things that we need to talk about. Community members have raised consistent concerns about pedestrian safety along Jamaica Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard, noting dangerous crossing and traffic congestion. Liberty Avenue was also in need of improvement. How will DOT prioritize pedestrian safety improvements, including new crosswalks, signal timing adjustments and curb extension as part of the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan?

ANDREW ARCESE: So, hi, Council Speaker.
Thank you for the question.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Good to see you.

ANDREW ARCESE: So, when it comes to safety, DOT is very committed to improving pedestrian safety and really safety for all roadway users, building out robust connections and expanding pedestrian space. And so specifically on some corridors you mentioned, there's Jamaica Avenue, of course, as a result of the Jamaica Now planning initiative and streetscape report that DOT put forward. There is a reconstruction of Jamaica Avenue from Sutphin to 168th Street, and this includes a number of pedestrian safety elements I mentioned, curb extensions, also raised crosswalks, and enhanced signal timing, things of that nature, and that project is being planned and it's in development now. And then in particular, Liberty Avenue you do have a street improvement project, an announced project, that DOT is developing, again, with the same intention in mind, improving pedestrian safety, crossing that wide east/west corridor, and that's between 150th Street, going out to 168th.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay, that's good to hear. Let's talk a little bit about the bus lanes and the quality of life issues that my constituents, Council Member Williams' constituents have spoken to us about ad nauseum over the past few years, and taking a look at the way that the bus designs, the new bus designs were made, and quite frankly with, you know, to our surprise. Literally, I was in a parade one morning, and coming back in the afternoon, Chair Riley, there was a new bus lane down Merrick Boulevard. So, I just want to be assured that in this plan that our constituents and our elected officials are not blindsided by anything new coming up. We watched the new bus lanes come up on Merrick Avenue, which were problematic. The new traffic-- the modes of traffic movement on-- because in the middle of Jamaica Station, Sutphin Boulevard, Archer Avenue, all that right by Jamaica Station. I know because that was my commute for a really long time, and trying to drive down there didn't happen anymore because of all the prevention because of the new bus lanes. So, the-- and it-- to this day, it still does create tremendous back-up along side streets. So, in looking at this plan, how are we going to assure

residents and our constituents that their quality of life, because of transportation issues, buses, and other modes of transportation will not be significantly impacted in the negative for us?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDES: Thank you for your question, Speaker Adams. Diniece Mendes, Assistant Commissioner for Transit Development, DOT. And so we work very closely with the MTA, particularly in coordinating the improvements particularly around the Queens network redesign and the complementary service that's being added as part of that effort to increase service, in particular for routes that are going to Jamaica, and that has to be complemented with street design improvements to really help make sure that bus service is reliable, more dependable, faster for folks who are commuting. We know that Jamaica is an intense sort of hub for commuters going to and from other parts of the City, and so it's going to be very critical for us to ensure that any improvements that we put forward are aligned with the future growth that we expect to see in this area with the increased density, and then also ensuing that there's appropriate access to jobs and opportunities, right? So, it's not only for the

existing demand, but also for sort of that new demand as well. And so that is a part of our effort. We are also-- we recognize the concerns from residents, businesses, and communities alike across-- and since the implementation and the pandemic, but we are also going to be kicking off a study next year to look at overall changes in traffic patterns, and we hope to make sure that we're engaging with you as well as Council Member Williams to understand how things have changed and also to inform that adjustments need to be made as well.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Yeah, that's good to hear. Council Member Riley referenced Community Board interaction. As former Chair of Community Board 12, I was happy to hear Community Board 12 being brought up in this conversation, understanding the needs of the residents, and continuing, you know, needs. But also appreciating the fact that there have been numerous and significant community meetings, and what we like to see from our community partners are solutions, you know, to our proposals, proposals that we work in partnership with, you know, with our agencies, and we're going to continue to work closely with our Community Board to make sure

that if nothing else that our Community Board are informed, that they do have input because we need it and we value that. Another line of questioning that was brought up had to do with hotels and, you know, hotel occupancy and being used for shelters, and that's something else that's been a significant issue and has impacted quality of life in the Jamaica area. I'm just going to say for the record, it would help if our CityPHEPS package were not interfered with consistently. Perhaps we could start to move some people into permanent housing. Just saying. What I would like to just kind of piggyback off of Council Member Riley's line of questioning with that is do you foresee-- and I know this is difficult, but do you foresee any movement because of the census movement, you know, the downward census numbers of shelters because of the migrant crisis that we've had. and do you foresee that impacting any of-- anything surrounding housing as it pertains to the Jamaica Plan?

JASMIN TEPALE: No, I think for the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan we are really aiming to create the opportunity for this housing to happen. You know, our numbers could potentially over 15 years

be over 12,000 units, and again, with our Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, it really does expand options for housing in this area that's very close to transit, and so we can take that back and get more information on like the-- how the administration is kind of planning forward knowing that things are changing and changing rapidly, and we can follow up with you.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Great. Thank you. Okay, let's take a look at health care. Throughout my term I focused on increasing the breadth and depth of public health and social services, and I firmly believe that physical locations for services in the neighborhoods, including community centers and various types of resource centers, are key to accomplishing this. How are these needs being approached in the Jamaica Plan? Or are they being approached in the Jamaica Plan?

JASMIN TEPALE: So, thank you for the question. We know that health care is a big priority, not only for yourself, also for Council Member Williams and for many community members. We know that many community members felt like there was a gap ever since the closure of Mary Immaculate

Hospital, and looking for, you know, what is the City going to do to help fill that gap. So, a big, you know, focus for this neighborhood plan was thinking about how do we expand health care infrastructure here in Jamaica. You know, we are continuing to explore those options. We're, you know, trying to better understand the landscape up there today and what opportunities there are to really support and strengthen what's there today. There are clinics there like the Gotham Health Clinics. There are hospitals there including Queens Hospital and Jamaica Hospital. I know that sometimes either there's a lack of access to those places or lack of awareness that they even exist. I know some folks mentioned that they didn't even know that the Gotham clinics were right there in downtown Jamaica. So, those are all things that we're trying to explore again, creating those better access and connections to places that already exist today and, again, trying to find new opportunities also.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay, very important, because as you referenced-- you know, we've seen closures, you know, disproportionately affecting our area. You reference Mary Immaculate-- tremendous loss

to our community. So, please do, you know, keep that in mind as well. It's very important. Okay. York College, another subject that's near and dear to my heart. It sits just south of downtown Jamaica and it is a tremendous public asset. I spent my first year and a half in my collegiate life at York College back in the day when it didn't look like it looks right now. How is this plan proposing to improve both physical and visual connections between York College and downtown Jamaica to build stronger intellectual, cultural, and economic ties between the campus community and downtown? This has been a disconnect that has been, you know, happening for such a long time, and this piece of CUNY is such an important part of the CUNY engine. It has to be an integral part of the Jamaica plan built-in and connected to it. Adding to the vitalization-- revitalization of this area. So, what are your intentions for York College?

JASMIN TEPALE: Thank you for your question. York College, you know, they have been a part of our planning process. They are part of our steering committee. So, they have been involved throughout this two-year process. You know, for York

College, you know, they have a massive campus. They have a lot of space, and you know, they are now in a space where they really want to think about the future of their campus, and so we're excited to continue working with them as they embark on, like, their planning processes to really holistically think about the entire campus. I think outside of that, though, as you mentioned, there is challenges, especially for the students trying to connect from the downtown area into York College. I want to pass it to my colleagues at DOT, because there is work that came out of Jamaica Now that specifically focused on that connection.

SPEAKER ADAMS: I remember.

ANDREW ARCESE: Yeah, so that's something that DOT is very excited to have this opportunity through this neighborhood planning process to deliver on projects identified through Jamaica Now. So specifically on Archer Avenue, improvements to what's known as the teardrop space, you know, a large, you know, great opportunity for a robust public space with amenities and seating and things of that nature, as well as broadening out and expanding the connection to their entrances to York further east of

Parson's Boulevard. There was, you know, already that Parson's Boulevard public space expansion right outside the train there. So that was one of those projects, but of course, there are more improvements through this neighborhood plan that we look forward to developing further.

SPEAKER ADAMS: Yeah. I'm looking forward to seeing that. All of those things that you mentioned, we had great hopes, you know, and here we sit some years later going what the heck happened? You know, everything just kind of went dormant. So, it's really important to make sure that that stuff really does come to fruition. And again, I know that Council Member Williams has questions about the basement flooding. Those issues at York that have been persistent for decades now, but I just want to put an exclamation point on this, because the Jamaica Plan must leave York College in a better condition, and that includes addressing its flooding issues. So, let's keep that in mind, also. My last line of questioning has to do with density and height, something that you referenced, something that Community Board 12 of course is very concerned about, and I'd be remiss not to bring it up here during this

hearing. some community members have raised concerns about the scale of new development proposed by the rezoning. In particular, they're concerned about the impacts on low-scale residential blocks with small homes. We're in a housing crisis and that does require the creation of significantly more housing, and my record on housing, once again, has been crystal clear, as a Council Member and as Speaker, and I've been trying to live by example, and hopefully I'm doing that. But that said, we've heard the concerns and we are concerned about the concerns, and we want to make sure that they are taken into account some of the proposed heights of buildings on portions of Liberty Avenue and Sutphin Boulevard. What is DCP's response to these concerns being expressed? I know we touched on it in the beginning, but what is your direct response to that concern?

DIRECTOR ZENG: Thank you, Speaker Adams, and I think you've hit a lot of my talking points. We are in a housing crisis, and we know the numbers, 1.4 vacancy rate across the City and even less in Queens, about 0.8. And so, while we are forming this proposal in Jamaica, we identified those corridors that are-- as appropriate places for this density.

All these corridors do have bus connections, and also certain under-developed sites that could benefit, you know, with additional density, that would allow for development to happen, because we want to see the housing get developed. We want to see the affordable housing, the MIH units being built. And also to note, some of the HPD sites, the UDAP sites, are along Union Hall as well as Guy R. Brewer. So, they're part of those corridors that we talked about. So-- and we also believe this rezoning proposal that includes a commercial overlay would also invite businesses, small local businesses, that could be supported with more housing above and more residents above. That would really activate those corridors, allow people to walk and get to different shops from home, from jobs. So, that's one thing. But to respond to your constituent's concerns and CB12's concerns, there are also rules, zoning rules, where sites are required to step down where you have two different zoning districts. If you have a low zoning district from R1 to R3 and within 50 feet of a zoning district that's higher. And what we're proposing here is an R7A, I believe, along this corridor. They're required to step down. So, there was thought into

1 how do we make sure that they're not eyesores, that
2 it could be created in a way that when you're
3 walking on the street it doesn't overwhelm the
4 pedestrian, but we get the benefits of the housing.
5 We get the MIH units. I think that was-- that's a
6 major, major core reason of why we're here. And so--
7 but again, open to hearing more about specific areas
8 where we think this density, these heights do not
9 make sense, and open to hearing from you and your
10 office and how best to respond in a different way.
11 But we do think it is appropriate on these corridors
12 to have those districts.

14 SPEAKER ADAMS: Okay, thank you very much
15 for your responses, for your testimony. It's just so
16 important to us that this plan is successful. It's
17 overdue. It's a long time in the works, and we
18 deserve so much more than what we have been delivered
19 over these years, and our expectations for this plan
20 are very, very high, but not at the cost of quality
21 of life for our constituents for our neighborhood.
22 So, let's all continue to talk about it, work with
23 it, and make sure that it is the best plan that it
24 can be for Jamaica. Thank you all.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Council Member Williams?

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you, and thank you, Madam Speaker for your support and trust in my leadership over the last two years. I know I have a lot of conversations with you guys over the last years, so, some of the questions-- disclaimer-- I'm sure we've talked about, but you know, this is a public hearing, so I just want to have a public conversation about many of the things that I've been saying repeatedly for the last two years. So, our community process, the stakeholder input made it clear that this plan cannot end with the Council's vote. We need an ongoing oversight taskforce to monitor implementation of the complex interagency projects in the downtown Jamaica area. Can you commit to supporting a Downtown Jamaica Oversight Taskforce to help coordinate the implementation of this plan and prior ongoing projects and interagency commitments similar to the Gowanus framework?

DIRECTOR ZENG: thank you. Thank you for your question, Council Member Williams. Without sounding too repetitive, thank you for your partnership. This-- the oversight taskforce

committee, that's something you have brought up a while back. The letter-- you know, what you're speaking to is the letter that you sent to our Chair back in January of this year. We're already in fall, so this is something that you've been steadfast on and you believe in, that we also believe in, that there needs to be accountability, and that the success of this plan doesn't come at the adoption of the plan. It's what happens to Jamaica 10-15 years from now, and we fully recognize that. And so the vision that you laid out in your letter, we want to continue to work on that and refine it so that there is a meaningful process, and that we are, you know, we are accounting for the things that matter to you and your constituents. Obviously, this application is just land use ap-- you know, we're talking about zoning districts. But what we're concerned about here is quality of life issues. So, we definitely want to continue that conversation and be open to your suggestions. You have a grand vision for the taskforce, and we really appreciate that. That really is very helpful for us to continue that with our partner agencies.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, thank you. So, my next question is around the hill that I will die on, and you know I said that two years ago. This is the hill I will die on, which is sewer capacity. So, the EIS for this project officially states that there are no anticipated significant adverse impacts to the City's wastewater and stormwater commands and treatment infrastructure from the new development added by this proposal. Is that correct?

JASMIN TEPALE: thank you, Council Member. Like you mentioned, we know that this is a top priority for you. It is a top priority for the community and like the Speaker mentioned is a top priority for everyone probably in this room. When it comes to the EIS, the EIS studied a very specific scope. That scope-- part of that scope studied the Jamaica Wastewater Treatment Plant that I think is really part of a regional southeast Queens system, and that regional system, the EIS showed that there was no impact, but that doesn't mean that there aren't local challenges. And so you know, the City does recognize that there are these local challenges, you know, these longstanding local challenges which

1 is why there is that initial over \$300 million
2 investment that came from City of Yes that the
3 Speaker negotiated to support, you know, starting to
4 upgrade the sewer system. There is over \$2 billion
5 being invested in stormwater management in southeast
6 Queens.
7

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. And
9 yes, I appreciate the City recognizing the challenges
10 despite what the EIS said. Can you explain how this
11 is possible, as you mention considering the well-
12 known challenges with the sewer capacity? Is that
13 it's only studying what? Like, what is the criteria
14 of the study?

15 JASMIN TEPALE: Yeah, so it studies a
16 couple of different things, but I think the really
17 sum of it is that it's setting the regional system.
18 There is a treatment plant that it services the
19 greater part of southeast Queens. It's a very large
20 treatment plant. It's a very large service area. So,
21 I think-- and another way to say it, it's not
22 studying like individual pipes by block by block. But
23 again, that doesn't mean that the City doesn't have
24 processes in place to really look at capacity and
25 make sure that there is capacity within pipes and

that we're, you know, intentionally developing and not just letting development happen for the sake of it happening.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. So, just to be clear, the EIS only studied the treatment plan. It didn't necessarily study the capacity of sewer lines?

JASMIN TEPALE: That is part of what it studied, that's correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. Could you provide more detail about best management practices that the SCIS states DEP will implement to manage increased stormwater flows?

JASMIN TEPALE: Sure. I'd like to pass it to my colleagues at DEP to talk more about their practices.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Hi, Councilwoman, how you doing? Good to see you again. I think one of the biggest things that I know we've talked about before certainly and that will have a big impact in any rezoning is the unified stormwater rule. So, any new development that touches 20,000 square feet of property will now be forced to manage an inch and a half of stormwater on that property.

1 So, all of the different properties that currently
2 don't manage any stormwater at all, as they're being
3 developed, we'll start to manage stormwater, and that
4 really means less stormwater going into the current
5 system. That's probably one of the biggest things
6 that comes from any new development or rezoning in
7 addition to the expanded sewer projects that we're
8 working on.

10 CHIEF OF STAFF MEAGHER: Yeah, thanks,
11 Deputy Commissioner. And yeah, I can add to that.
12 DEP's process also looks at the sewer connection
13 permit. So, any property that will need to get a
14 sewer connection permit before it can get certificate
15 of occupancy. In Jamaica and across the City in
16 large buildings, say 10 and larger units, it's not
17 uncommon-- well, not always required. It depends a
18 little bit on the case and the conditions of the
19 sewer. Those properties will need to do a hydraulic
20 analysis, and that is a kind of amplified more
21 detailed assessment of the sewer flows coming from
22 that building into our system, and based upon that,
23 private developers may need to make an upgrade to the
24 smaller sewers which we call laterals that kind of
25 connect to the bigger sewers. So, may need to make a

1 block or two upgrade in the sewer to be able to
2 convey those flows. Along with that, we also have our
3 water reuse incentives which are citywide and we're
4 looking to really amplify the message of this
5 opportunity within Jamaica with developers, and the
6 water reuse incentive is that water can be reused,
7 and stormwater/wastewater can be reused within a
8 building for non-potable reuses, for example, for
9 cooling and for irrigation, and that can-- it reduces
10 the amount of water a building will use. So,
11 properties will save on the actual numbers of gallons
12 that they pay for, and it will also reduce the amount
13 of flows into our sewers so that-- because it's being
14 reused, so it has less flows going to our sewer. So
15 it's kind of really a win/win for developers and for
16 the city, and we really want to work on increasing
17 the understanding of that within the rezoning area.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. I
19 think that's a nice lineup for my next question,
20 because I feel like the EIS seems to punt questions
21 of sewer capacity to future site connection proposals
22 which is kind of what you're saying. wherein
23 individual developers will work with DEP to determine
24 whether or not the existing sewer system is capable
25

of supporting higher density development and related increase in wastewater flow, or whether there will be a need to upgrade the existing sewer system. We already know that there are issues with capacity and SEPs in certain parts of this land with prospective developers facing significant and in some cases infeasible costs to upgrade sewers. I know of one developer in particular who was required to put down new sewer line pursuant to him being able to build his property. So, what steps are we taking to improve sewer capacity and ensure that it's not a barrier to development?

CHIEF OF STAFF MEAGHER: Sure. Thank you for that question. So, in terms of having to build out those new sewers that the developer that you mentioned had to do, that's something that we do citywide. So, it's not just focused on Jamaica and southeast Queens. It's citywide. The developers need to assess if they need to build-out sewers and it does happen. Along with that \$315 million investment that the Council worked with the administration to identify following City of Yes is going to be critical for providing increased capacity within Jamaica. We are already planning on how to

1 start to use that funding. We already have an
2 amended drainage plan for Jamaica and that's where we
3 analyze the drainage considering the new zoning and
4 how that will impact our sewers and what we should
5 upgrade. I want to know that is-- this is ahead of
6 schedule. Typically, we do that after a rezoning so
7 that we have certainty on the number of units that
8 goes into a new area following a rezoning, but we
9 understand the critical nature of this for the
10 council, for the community, and for ourselves at DEP.
11 So, we're already planning the first phase of that
12 which is going to be a trunk leading up into the
13 downtown Jamaica area, and we'll also serve the south
14 core, too, and it's going to be a trunk sewer. So if
15 you think of a tree, a trunk holds up the tree and
16 the branches are-- the sewers that I mentioned are
17 called laterals that the developers may need to
18 upgrade laterals. They do not need to upgrade the
19 trunks. So, we're already planning that first phase,
20 and that's going to be multi-phase process where it
21 starts at Jamaica plant going up into the downtown
22 core.
23

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. The
25 SCIS describes multiple infrastructure projects being

planned, designed, or in construction within the project area, including an ongoing storm sewer build-out project covering 21 blocks in southeast Queens and including a new double-barrel storm sewer system. Could you concisely explain these projects and how they related to the project area? like we're five, because I feel like DEP uses very technical language. So, explain it like we're five years old.

CHIEF OF STAFF MEAGHER: Oh, okay. I'll do my best, and Deputy Commissioner can chime in to help translate if I get too technical. I'm sorry for that. So, that's part of the southeast Queens storm sewer build-out program I believe that you're speaking about. That's our \$2.7 billion program to increase storm sewers, and those are just to carry stormwater and not the sanitary flows. And so that is to basically allow the stormwater to flow through the sewers into either our plants or through into other water bodies and not go into the ground and flow-- and will flow through the sewers. And we've already made hundreds of millions of dollars investments to build out those projects. We have about 19 that have been completed-- or 14 have been completed projects in southeast Queens and we have another six that are

in planning phase. And I don't know, Deputy Commissioner, if you want to add to that.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah, and I just want to make sure, because I've said this, too. I don't want existing projects that were funded in previous administrations and even what the Speaker was able to negotiate in City for All last year to be conflated with the much-needed additional investments through the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan, because those investments were to address existing issues. We know with increased capacity, naturally you are going to be taxing all of our infrastructures. And so, I just want to make sure, because I know it gets mentioned, and yes, we're very thankful for the \$2 billion. We're very thankful. I'm very thankful to the Speaker for negotiating additional money for sewer infrastructure, but I just want to make sure that while we are talking about existing projects, that it's not being conflated with what we know we still need to address capacity issues for the future.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Well, Council Member, all of these projects are interconnected, right, just like our sewer systems. So, while we've been focusing-- first of all, we're

1 spending \$2.8 billion in southeast Queens. That is
2 more money than we are spending in any other place in
3 the City, and it's a massive project. Those double-
4 barrel sewers are bigger than I am tall, and that is
5 really going to change the way and the drainage
6 system for all of southeast Queens and certainly
7 Jamaica. Like I said, we're already working on a
8 massive trunk sewer that will help Jamaica. One of
9 the big things that we're focusing to start on those
10 massive trunk sewers-- if you think of it like a
11 tree, right, and then we'll go from there to build
12 out the laterals, but you can't-- or the smaller
13 branches of the sewer system, but until we do those
14 big portions, those big trunk portions, we can't
15 build-out and upsize some of those lateral parts of
16 the sewer system. The plan that we have, the \$2.8
17 billion plan in southeast Queens that we're doing for
18 storm sewers is going to help on multiple fronts. It
19 will certainly-- there'll be a ground water benefit
20 to that, because we're going to be taking water off
21 the street that would have had nowhere to go but in
22 the ground and move that into the sewer system. In
23 addition to easing up the constraints on the sanitary
24 sewer system, because again, we're going to have more
25

water that we're taking off the ground and certainly helping with ground water mitigation issues as well. If that helps a little more.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yep. So, I won't ask any more questions right now about the sewer and street infrastructure on that particular point, because I do kind of hear what you're saying. A part of how you plan to address the south core is through this trunk line. So, another question I have is, specific water infrastructure commitments were made by the administration to southeast Queens as part of their approval of City of Yes, City for All for Housing Opportunity Zoning Text Amendments. Could you please summarize those commitments for this hearing? because I know I've had some internal conversations. It's not clear how you all plan to use those resources. Specific to southeast Queens.

CHIEF OF STAFF MEAGHER: Yeah, so the best bang for the buck is building out the trunk sewer that's going to lead up into downtown Jamaica.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: So, is that what you're using the \$300 million for?

CHIEF OF STAFF MEAGHER: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. Thank you. So, residents rank flooding as a top concern citing York College, Alan [sic] senior residents and Carter senior residents, and let me just take a step back. We also have a ground water flooding issue, and so if I could divert a bit, because I know sewer capacity and ground water flooding are two different things, and so I just listed some of these facilities, and I know we've been in conversation with you all probably well over a year about this. So how will DEP fund retrofits and pumping infrastructure to immediately address this ongoing crisis of ground water flooding?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Well, part of it, as I said, there's going to be a big benefit that we see from the \$2.8 billion investment in southeast Queens which is to build storm sewers. So you're taking the water that would otherwise gone into the ground and moving that into the sewer system. So, that will add some benefit. In terms of pumping ground water, I think we've sort of talked about this, especially in Jamaica. That's not something-- ground water is not specifically part of

DEP's purview. However, adding storm sewers will help the ground water issue. So, we're--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing]

And do you have any updates on the retrofitting?

Because I know that you all went out to look at these sites. You hired a person that was working on these sites. The retrofitting for the institutions that we sent to you all, like I don't even know-- Jasmin's shaking her head because she knows I sent them. It's been a conversation. I just wanted to know if there are any updates on the retrofitting program. And I understand DEP wants to be on record and say that they're not necessarily like responsible, etcetera, etcetera, but I think community members would think differently. Very old hearing reports would say differently that both the City and the State admitted to their obligation to address what they knew would be a problem when the Jamaica water supply company was closed. So, I hear you. I, you know, respectfully disagree. I do think it is government's responsibility to address ground water flooding. Who does it? I'm happy to have that debate, but I do think it is part government responsibility. So just wanted an update on the retrofitting. Because we

1 talked about not necessarily systematically
2 addressing ground water flooding issues, but provide
3 some type of reprieve and relief for the main
4 institutions that are suffering from this. Like York
5 College that has to pay MTA to pump out water out of
6 their basement. That's ridiculous to me. So, I had
7 asked you all to review these locations to determine
8 what type of retrofitting could be done.

10 JASMIN TEPALE: So, thank you, Council
11 Member. You know, fully acknowledging that you did
12 send the letter. Nodding my head because I was like,
13 right, there is a list of nonprofits. You're
14 absolutely right. DEP did send out an engineer to,
15 like, help work with those nonprofits to really look
16 at their conditions. I think we're still continuing
17 to explore what options those nonprofits have,
18 because you know, we do want to be able to support
19 them, but we need to continue to like really explore
20 what resources the City has to support them. So, we--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing]
22 Okay.

23 JASMIN TEPALE: will share an update with
24 you. We will follow up with you.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Just reminding you guys, this is the hill I will die on on this project. Alright. So, the community strongly supports exploring a Blue Belt diversion to Baisley Pond. Has DEP studied this solution, and will it be included in the plan?

CHIEF OF STAFF MEAGHER: Thank you for the question, Council Member. Yes, so DEP is looking at assessing the sewers across southeast Queens, not just in Jamaica, but across southeast Queens, and that's called an amended drainage plan. So, we're looking at how to plan for updating the sewers, and an important component of that is using natural systems to manage and store storm water, and Baisley Pond will definitely be assessed within that larger analysis. And it's going to be-- it's a multi-year effort. So, as the effort progresses, we will engage with the community. I also want to note that next to Baisley Pond Park, DEP along with the Speaker and the Borough President and the Trust for Public Land opened a renovated school yard at-- I do believe it's PS223-- which manages storm water and manages 1.8 million gallons of storm water per year and also renovated the school yard to be like a really great,

you know, engaging space for the kids and for also this community. So, I know that's not in the park, but it's right bordering on the park. So, we have already made some investments there, and we're definitely looking at the park as in Blue Belt.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yes, I do appreciate y'all putting on the record existing investments, but I just want to make sure that we continue to talk about additional future investments because of the influx of people due to growth. So, I stated in my past letters and what I just said about your college, they currently bear monthly pumping costs close to a million dollars. Will DEP assume responsibility for these costs so that the institution is not financially penalized for a citywide infrastructure failure?

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: So, this isn't an infrastructure failure. Some of this is a climate change problem that we're seeing with ground water. It's not just-- ground water isn't just a problem in southeast Queens, certainly a problem in many other parts of the City, that we're having to deal with. York College is unique in so much that it's got a-- all of its electrical system 40 feet

underground which is one of the deepest places, I think, anybody's gotten electrical system, and also foundational and other problems with-- that would allow ground water seepage into the area. We're looking--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing]
Yes, the foundation wall of their main building I saw with my own eyes is corroded by ground water.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Yes, as any building that's got foundational problems inevitably in a high ground water table area will also have ground water flooding. So, they like everybody else is-- and we're working with them on the pumping costs, but in fact our-- the chief engineer for CUNY is a former top DEP advisor. So, we have been working very closely with them. We've certainly been working. We've got a study with USGS on ground water table to help inform. That's expected to be done in 2027 to help--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing]
The 10th study in like 20 years.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: No, in 2027.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: No, I know.

But I feel like there's been like three or four plus studies on ground water within the last two decades that this has been an issue. I'm just flagging that it's been study after study and no real tangible solution to address the issue.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Addressing the issue of ground water is multifaceted, and climate change is going to be a big part of this. First of all, we couldn't start-- in terms of like Jamaica water slide, we couldn't start repumping if we wanted to. DEC wouldn't-- has indicated they wouldn't allow us to start doing that. There are no functional pumps. That would be another billion-plus dollars to be able to artificially lower the ground water tables. In addition to the fact that--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing]

Which is why through like the bill we just passed and through this specific retrofitting, I have tried to meet the agency where you are, and I understand it's very expensive, maybe even virtually impossible to create a new infrastructure system that would actually pump out all of the water, but I've asked to think innovatively about how we could at least-- you

1 know, if someone breaks their arm, you put a splint
2 in it and they can use their arm for the rest of
3 their lives, but did you really fix the break? No.
4 And so I've asked to figure out like are there some
5 tangible things we could do to relieve some of the
6 harm of ground water? And I just-- you know, you
7 retrofitting your own house. I asked if there could
8 be certain things that DEP could offer homeowners. I
9 know we're not focused on homeowners right now. I
10 even relegated my request to the large institutions
11 in the district. You, yourself, which I love to
12 learn about all the things you did, proactively on
13 your own as a person who owns a home, like,
14 retrofitted their home to deal with many of the
15 different flooding issues you have, but a lot of
16 people don't have the resources to do that,
17 especially in this particular area where we know
18 while climate change is a part of the problem, that
19 the problem originated from a government decision.

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Not a
22 government decision alone. The ground water table is
23 not-- the ground water problem in southeast Queens is
24 not only because we stopped pumping.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: I know, but that was a part of where it originated from. The water table has increased significantly since close of the Jamaica water supply company. Like, that is like factual.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: That's part of what we're-- that's part of what we're looking at with the USGS study--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing] Right.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: to be able to measure just how much and where the ground water table is now. We're also-- understanding that this is-- and nobody understands ground water flooding like me, I promise you. I've watched it come up through my walls and my foundation in storms as well--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing] I know, that's why I'm saying--

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: [interposing] I know.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: you understand.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: But also, part of what we're working with, with York College,

1 is how do you move an electrical system that's 40
2 feet underground into a place that's going to be more
3 resilient, something that buildings all across the
4 City are having to think about and do. York College
5 has a study themselves right now, and we encourage
6 you to check back in with them. They've got \$30
7 million earmarked in terms of improvements and things
8 that they are going to be doing to that building.
9 And so it's not that we're not working with them. I
10 think it's not as easy as just saying you can pump
11 for free and that's going to solve the problem,
12 because it's not especially as we see ground water
13 and water tables rise with climate change. It's a
14 more complex problem.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah, I don't
17 think pumping for free is going to solve the problem.
18 I definitely think that it requires the real building
19 infrastructure changes to the York College academic
20 core, but I do think relieving them of a million
21 dollars considering their fiscal challenges within
22 the CUNY system itself is one way to demonstrate that
23 we are trying to address this longstanding issue.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: also,
25 trying to find a way that we can get people to stop

1 pump-- having to even have the need to pump water,
2 right, into a system that then takes the capacity
3 away from other areas that we want to be able to use
4 that sewer capacity for.

5
6 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. I'll
7 leave DEP alone for now. Turning my attention to the
8 streetscape and transportation. For many years
9 Archer Avenue has been a chaotic, unattractive
10 corridor with poorly-designed public spaces and bus
11 infrastructure. Our public spaces in downtown
12 Jamaica should be attractive public square, not
13 places you can't wait to escape from. In addition to
14 the long planned Station Plaza, is the administration
15 working with the MTA to finally approve the bus
16 shelters and public space along the Long Island
17 Railroad on Archer?

18 ANDREW ARCESE: Okay. thank you, Council
19 Member for that question. So, through this
20 neighborhood planning process, DOT, Department of
21 City Planning, and MTA are exploring the feasibility
22 of removing the existing MTA-owned canopies and
23 replacement with new bus shelters. A project that
24 features new shelters would also consider things such
25 as sidewalk spacing, pedestrian crossings, way-

finding, lighting, bus stop spacing, layovers, etcetera, and any improvements to the bus terminal, of course, would complement the Jamaica Now streetscape projects in the area such as the Archer Teardrop proposal, and vice versa. And of course, maintenance of these spaces is a key factor when it comes to informing design decisions.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. What other aspects of the Jamaica Now public space plan to improve Archer and Jamaica Avenues are either already funded or contemplated as a part of this plan?

ANDREW ARCESE: Yeah, so I've mentioned them a few times. So, but of course, the plan that resulted from Jamaica Now effort, it recommended five projects, all of which have elements that include removal of brick sidewalk pavers, replacing them with standard concrete, as well as upgrading accessibility, pedestrian ramps and bus stops, adding things like bus pads, bus bulbs, increased impervious areas and planting areas, new trees, and then streetscape amenities such as benches, bus stop seating, and pedestrian safety elements like raised crosswalks and curb extensions, and so I mentioned

Parson's Boulevard public space project that was completed already, but then of course, the remaining projects, Jamaica Avenue reconstruction, 153rd Street, as well as the Archer Teardrop and L space that's in front of York College's entrance. And then in the same spirit, the 165th Street pedestrian mall or shared street, aka as many know as the Colley [sp?] Block, is being considered in the same matter via this neighborhood planning process.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Because I know Andrew, it like really represents southeast Queens, using our language. I love it. Thank you so much. Okay. So, it's fair to say that you're committed to funding the modernization of the Parson's Archer Bus Terminal in partnership with the MTA, of course?

ANDREW ARCESE: Yes, it's fair to say we're exploring that feasibility.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay, great. So, I continue to hear from business owners and the Speaker mentioned this and our residents, that the current layout and schedule for bus lanes in downtown Jamaica is not ordeal. The Speaker talked about Merrick Boulevard, but you also just created a bus lane on Hillside right when school came back which is

like-- y'all are diabolical for that. So, is DOT willing to study-- and I know I did hear you say that-- and re-evaluate the bus lanes and traffic patterns in downtown Jamaica on a wider scale? Similarly, the rollout of bus lanes along Hillside Avenue has reinforced the perception that DOT is disregarding local input by moving forward with unwanted infrastructure despite strong opposition. How can residents trust that their voices are valued in the planning process when their concerns have been dismissed twice in such quick succession?

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDES: Thank you for your question, Council Member. First, I want to sort of acknowledge that as part of the Jamaica busway project, we have made adjustments based on community input, and so-- and it was initially 24/7. We've adjusted those hours to Monday through Friday, weekdays, 6:00 a.m. to--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing]
Like 7:00 p.m.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDES: 8:00 p.m.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Oh, 8:00 p.m., even worse, okay.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDES: Right.

So those were adjustments that we've made. We've also introduced additional loading metered spaces, etcetera, and made additional adjustments to turn restrictions and other things. Just to demonstrate our responsiveness as we typically do for other projects across the city-- so I do want to acknowledge that we are responsive to input that we do get from the community and make adjustments as warranted. And so again, community voices are central to our process, not only for design but also through implementation and the refinements that we make post implementation. We certainly-- particularly as we're in the middle of implementation, yes, we expect to have some adjustment periods as we're working to wrap up that implementation. We started early in the summer and we're hoping to wrap up this month. And again, we'll make sure we take some feedback and make adjustments as needed or as warranted. We'll continue to monitor those locations. As I mentioned earlier in response to Speaker Adams' question, we are looking to launch a transportation study, and we really thank you for your partnership on really looking to explore the

broader effects more generally. We acknowledge that a lot of those changes might bring concern and we want to make sure that we're as transparent as possible in sharing what we're seeing about the changes in traffic patterns and any adjustments that need to be made after that. So, we look forward to working with you next year once we launch the study.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: And I do know, as you know, because again, we've had extensive conversations, that the goal is to speed up the buses down the main corridors and as a car driver myself, I actually took the bus a few times, and I do know how important-- there was a lot of people on the bus. I was like shocked that so many people got on this bus, but I do recognize that it's important whether you have a car, whether you're relying on public transportation to be able to get there as efficiently as possible, but I also have said to you all and want to just say for the record that unlike many other places in New York City, my district has majority of the people owning at least one car. And so while there are a ton of people that do rely on public transportation, and I do believe wholeheartedly-- and I am committed to making sure that they can get

1 around the City just as effectively. I also just
2 want to acknowledge the reality that we do have a
3 community that most of the people drive a car. I
4 also want to acknowledge while we do have buses and,
5 you know, the redesign has caused some headaches, you
6 know, we do have various modes of transportation. It
7 isn't mass transit. And so most of the people in the
8 district, if you're not in the downtown core, you
9 have to travel at least 30+ minutes to get to a
10 train. And so, I understand what you all are trying
11 to achieve. I do feel that it often misses the
12 uniqueness of southeast Queens where we do have more
13 people driving the cars and going into suburban
14 areas, and I do think that it should be reconsidered.
15 And let me ask you this random question I just
16 thought about based off of a constituency complaint
17 we just got last week. Was it your intention to with
18 the bus lanes to take a person's commute time from 15
19 minutes to an hour by car driving down Hillside? Is
20 that-- was that the intention?

22 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDES: No, that
23 was never the intention.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay.
25

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDES:

Obviously, like, when you're implementing a project, it can be disruptive, and we acknowledge that it takes some time for that traffic to dissipate and folks get accustomed to the new sort of routine, etcetera.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yeah.

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDES: And so--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: [interposing]

But I feel like a commute that took 15 minutes that now takes an hour is egregious, and I don't know how you solve for that while also solving for getting buses to travel down Hillside Avenue faster. I mean, there's amazing engineers and very smart people at DOT that could perhaps figure it out and maybe through the study-- thank you so much for committing to this study-- you can really start to see how these bus lanes and busways-- I always tell people, Jamaica Avenue, Archer Avenue, you can't travel down the street period. It's not even a bus lane. The entire street, both sides-- what is that-- east and west, all the lanes are all bus lanes. So, what I've said to you guys repeatedly is that now if you-- your GPS, where it was routing, this is why Hillside now is

1 taking people an hour, because you can't drive on
2 Jamaica. You can't drive on Archer. You can, you
3 know, Parson's is through street, and so what happens
4 is the GPS, if you're in that area and you need to
5 travel east or west and you're in that core, it
6 reroutes you either to Hillside Avenue or Liberty.
7 And so now what I've seen as a person who has spent a
8 lot of time down there is that there is so much
9 traffic on Hillside Avenue before the bus lanes,
10 because your GPS rightfully so is rerouting you to a
11 street where you can actually drive on. It is-- you
12 said this word, and intense hub. It is an intense
13 hub for everybody, for people who are using public
14 transportation, for people who are biking, for people
15 who are using scooters-- I don't even want to get
16 started on the scooters-- for people who are driving,
17 for people who live down there, for people who are
18 traveling into downtown Jamaica to work, for
19 students, it's such a big hub for students, for
20 student who are traveling down there it is a mess,
21 and I do not think that DOT sincerely looked at the
22 area comprehensively to make real educated,
23 intelligent decisions on how to address traffic
24 pattern and bus flow.
25

ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER MENDES: Thank you for your comment, Council Member. Again, you know, we at DOT, we are invested in thinking about how to balance the demands on our streets and make it work for everyone, and particularly for the folks that rely on it the most. When you think about folks who do not necessarily have access to a car, we have to think about how to make priority improvements in terms of our infrastructure to support them. We think about the balance across all modes, of course, in giving folks as many options as they can to get from point A to point B. We look forward to working with you. Obviously, there are a lot of experts at the DOT, but we rely on community experts and folks that are on the ground as well to round out our assessments and really think about what works best for the community. So, we look forward to working with you.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. Alright. I could ask more questions, but I won't, but I will just say poor lighting is something that we've discussed and just reliability with the new density as to not overwhelm transportation infrastructure. So, making sure there is true

coordination between DOT, MTA, etcetera. So, the Speaker and I have been very clear about increasing opportunities for homeownership as a top priority, similar to my analysis about cars. Unlike many districts in New York City, we represent communities that are majority homeowners and homeownership is so important to our community. How can the City support expansion of homeownership opportunities? We appreciate the HPD scatter sites, but we really want to see more. So, if you could share a little bit more about how you could support expansion.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLATKIN: thank you, Council Member. Sarit Platkin, Executive Director of Neighborhood Planning and Equity Initiatives at the Department of Housing Preservation and Development. We greatly appreciate the strong focus on homeownership that we've heard, you know, throughout the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan from you, from local stakeholders, from the Community Board. Expanding homeownership is one of this administration's highest priorities as a way to really generate and support wealth-building as well as create housing choice for New Yorkers, including in Jamaica. To support homeownership and create more homeownership

opportunities in Jamaica, we have three key strategies. The first is to connect homeowners to existing resources. So that's retaining and stabilizing existing homeowners of which you've described, and we know there are many in Jamaica. Our key tool for this is the City's renewed commitment to the homeowner help desk, a \$10 million commitment that provides one-on-one support for homeowners if they're facing foreclosure, deed theft, tax liens and maintenance issues. This program is a partnership between the Center for New York City Neighborhoods and local community-based organizations that are funded to work directly with homeowners. The local community-based organizations in Jamaica, our neighborhood housing services of Jamaica, JASA [sic], and Queens Legal Services. We also recently relaunched our home fix program that offers low or no interest loans for home repairs. It will serve up to 450 households per year. So that's another key tool for supporting existing homeowners. When it comes to creating opportunities for more first-time homebuyers to access home loans, we have a program called the Home First program. This is, you know, HPD's new tool that allocates up to \$100,000 towards a

downpayment or closing costs for first-time homebuyers, and what we want to do in Jamaica is make sure that we are doing outreach to local residents to connect them to this program. So, we're thinking-- or we're planning to connect prospective homeowners through a first-time homebuyer class in partnership with local organizations and do a first-time homebuyer resource fairs. And then kind of moving on to creating new homeownership, as you noted we do have the sites on Guy R. Brewer Boulevard. There is the 34-unit Open Door Program project, the South Jamaica Rising which is a partnership with Fulcrum Properties in Briarwood that's going to be 34 100 percent affordable homeownership units serving moderate income households between-- or serving low and moderate income households between 80 to 100 percent AMI. In addition, we are also exploring other opportunities for our Open Door Program that, you know, builds affordable homeownership for moderate income households. And ensures long-term affordability by limiting the resale value. There, you know, are several public sites that we are looking at for additional homeownership opportunities. You know, we're aware of the Parson's

1 site in downtown Jamaica that has multiple public
2 sites within it, looking at opportunities for
3 homeownership there, as well as the Farmer's
4 Boulevard site and others. So, we are taking a close
5 look, trying to identify opportunities and also, you
6 know, open to any private developers who are
7 interested in homeownership who want to approach HPD
8 as well.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. I love
11 that comprehensive answer, because I definitely was
12 going to ask about outreach, because one thing that
13 sucks is that the City has a lot of great things and
14 various agencies, but people actually knowing about
15 them and taking advantage of them is the issue. So,
16 I love that you are thinking about outreach. That
17 was going to be my question, like making sure that
18 outreach is a critical component of your plan here.
19 You didn't mention neighborhood pillars. Are you
20 also looking at neighborhood pillars in any way to
21 incentivize homeownership?

22 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLATKIN: Yeah, so I
23 just want to clarify before we jump into that as a
24 homeowner ship tool, just want to clarify what the
25 Neighborhood Pillars Program is. So, you know, this

program is a preservation program that supports acquisition and rehabilitation of physically or financially distressed buildings. It typically focuses on rent stabilized and unregulated buildings. It-- we have other programs that-- other preservation programs that can support existing co-op buildings. So, HPD has several programs that can support existing co-op buildings, our housing rehabilitation loan program, participation loan program, housing preservation opportunities, and we're-- you know, happy to work with local Jamaica landlords who are interested in taking advantage of those opportunities, but the pillars really is more of a rent regulated rental program, preservation program.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. And I know I've spoken to you all directly about this as well, but if you could talk a little bit more about any resources and support for displacement? So, naturally, we understand that people get displaced when there are changes in a community, naturally, but we want to make sure that people that want to stay in Jamaica can stay in Jamaica and that they are supported in doing that.

JASMIN TEPALE: So, thank you for your question, Council Member. I think with displacement, it's a very complex issue, and we also want to approach it in all its complexity. And so, I think through the Neighborhood Plan itself, you know, we are creating the largest MIH mapped area here in Jamaica to really expand those opportunities for income restricted housing. You know, eventually we will find out kind of what those levels are, but it is one of the tools that we have to make sure that people can, you know, continue to live here in Jamaica. And also, as like that being just one kind of tool that we have other tools, you know, passing it to you, Sarit, just to talk about kind of like the other ways that we support people being able to thrive in their neighborhood.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLATKIN: Absolutely. So, yeah, I do first just want to reinforce what Jasmin said about MIH, because you know, we'll be creating almost 4,000 MIH units in Jamaica. These are permanently rent-stabilized affordable homes that are income restricted so that, you know, comes along with a range of tenant protections, and you know, we think that permanent rent stabilization is a huge

asset to prevent future displacement. But you know, jumping into tools for residents, beyond that, you know, one of our key programs that we'll be bringing to the Jamaica area is the Partners in Preservation Program that funds local community-based organizations to support tenant organizing, outreach, and support. This was added through actually the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity and expanded to additional neighborhoods. I'm excited to announce today that a subcontractor for the Jamaica area has been identified and approved, and it's starting work. That's the Catholic Migration Services. So, they're already going to be starting work, and we, you know, can speak more with you, Council Member, and other local stakeholders about how to make sure that we're tailoring this program to the local area, but this initiative is directly targeted towards residents, tenants who are facing harassment, displacement, poor living conditions in rent-regulated buildings, and it is designed to help them access city resources and kind of create tenant-- do tenant organizing and take collective action. I think also important to note beyond tenants, of course, that supporting homeowners facing displacement is key which has been an issue in

Jamaica since the foreclosure crisis and continues to be. many Jamaica residents do face deed theft and foreclosure risks. I already talked about the homeowner help desk, so I'm not kind of focus too much on that again, but we'll just highlight that Jamaica was actually one of the first neighborhoods where this program was originally established as a pilot and now a citywide program. We're excited to continue funding that there. And then I'll note one more thing which is just that all of HPD's new housing-- so in addition to MIH, all of our 100 percent affordable buildings, of course, are designed for long-term affordability, and all of our regulatory agreements have strong tenant protections build in them and rent stabilization. So, we're taking a comprehensive approach.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Love that. I'm trying to be quicker so we can get to the testimonies. Other question I ha was around faith-based organizations in the rezoning area who are very interested in building affordable housing and expanding their community facilities. We really need to find a way to help them move these developments forward as expeditiously as possible, whether it's

technical assistance, closing funding gaps or whatever these organizations need to make their projects a reality. So, how is HPD looking at assisting faith-based organizations in this area to take advantage of this potential?

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLATKIN: Absolutely. So, supporting faith-based organizations and affordable housing development initiatives is a high priority for this administration, and we know is a high-priority for the Jamaica area where there are so many faith-based organizations who can tap into housing opportunities. The City has two main tools that we're going to be implementing for faith-based organizations, both to educate them and improve and support technical assistance in a project-specific way. So, the first is a series of quarterly seminars for faith-based organizations and other mission-driven organizations, you know, nonprofits, CBOs and alike. This is going to be designed for ensuring that they have a step-by-step understanding of the development process and that they can establish connections with city agencies that they might encounter when they're developing a housing project. So multiple city agencies will be involved in this seminar series, and

that's a citywide initiative. However, we're going to be doing targeted outreach to faith-based organizations and around in the Jamaica rezoning area to ensure that Jamaica faith-based organizations are aware of this program and can take full advantage of it. Our other key tool, more in the technical assistance are is that we plan to release later this year a request for proposals for a third-party organization to provide technical assistance for faith-based and other mission-driven organizations to assist them with project specific pre-development needs so they can advance affordable housing development towards financial closing and construction. And that prospective technical assistance provider, would also do outreach, targeted outreach to Jamaica, again, citywide program but we'll be doing targeted outreach in the Jamaica area what will be built into the contract.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you. I know that EDC isn't here, so I won't ask too many questions, but I do hope you guys can answer the questions. I believe we sent them to you around overarching economic development strategies, constituents who are concerned about the proposed new

manufacturing zones and the potential increase of truck traffic and undesirable, unhealthy uses like private waste transfer stations and hauling scrap yards and cement plants. Actually, we should ask that question. So, does the new proposed M1A-M2A districts allow expansion of open industrial uses and is enclosure required? And what about the existing grandfathered businesses? How is the administration looking at any other tools to encourage enclosure or redevelopment of uses like scrap yards and waste transfer stations?

JASMIN TEAPLE: Thank you for the question. We, through this process, have been working with some of your constituents who live near that area. So, going east along Liberty Avenue towards 180th Street and Dunkirk, you know, the-- with the concerns we definitely wanted to create a balance through this plan, a balance to be able to grow industrial jobs that we know are important for Jamaica's economic success in the future, but also ensuring that there is an environmentally just Jamaica for these residents to live in. and so to create that balance, we added those enclosure rules that you had mentioned. They are a part of the

1 application. So industrial-- certain industrial
2 businesses that are opening up near homes need to
3 operate fully-enclosed. when it comes to-- so those
4 are rules that really address these new businesses,
5 but what we do know is that the big concerns that
6 we've heard from residents are existing businesses.
7 So, those businesses that you describe, the waste
8 transfer station, the concrete batching plants, for
9 those businesses, you know, an important thing about
10 the enclosure rules is if they ever decide to expand
11 in the future, they will need to enclose whatever
12 expansion they decide to do. So, that's another big
13 thing that is available in the future. But going back
14 to the businesses today, you know, we are continuing
15 to work with EDC, SBS, and a whole range of other
16 city agencies to really look at the City's toolbox in
17 order to support these businesses modernizing. You
18 know, I know you had a question about kind of like
19 economic strategy, but when it comes to these
20 industrial areas, one thing that we do know, and
21 especially with the zoning that we're proposing is
22 it's really expanding the types of businesses that
23 come-- that can come to Jamaica, and we know that
24 could include industrial businesses, but industrial
25

businesses operate under a different landscape than they used to many, many decades ago. They're operating much cleaner and more modernized and so, you know, the industrial piece of all of this we are really hoping to bring that kind of-- those important jobs in Jamaica to connect them to the residents who need them.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thanks, Jasmin. Jasmin, you're supposed to lead with, "I live in the study map." You didn't even say that today. As the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan anticipates thousands of new housing units, residents have raised concerns that our already over-burdened sanitation system will be stretched even thinner. Currently, mountains of garbage pileup along the narrow sidewalks of downtown Jamaica outside of apartment buildings. Also, illegal dumping continues to be a problem in the area. I know Department of Sanitation isn't here, but if anyone can talk about how you all are making assessments around resources needed for equitable trash pickup as well as general resources for cleanup, which I've learned is two separate things.

JASMIN TEPALE: So, thank you for that. I mean, like you mentioned, DSNY isn't here today.

1
2 However, we know that Sanitation has been one of your
3 key priorities. Like you mentioned, you sent the
4 administration a letter earlier regarding illegal
5 dumping. You know, we really appreciate that there's
6 been a lot of key meetings on this. I know you
7 recently had a walk-through with many city agencies
8 and are just continuing those conversations with
9 DSNY. We know how important the BID is here in the
10 role of like enhancing sanitation in the downtown
11 area and like all the incredible work that they do.
12 And so, all that to say is that we are going to
13 continue those conversations with you and to work
14 with you and DSNY to make sure that Sanitation is
15 part of this plan, because we know that maintenance
16 is very key to this.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Alright. We're
18 coming to almost an end. Same thing, I know NYPD
19 isn't here, but I know I've had a lot of extensive
20 conversations to your point. I just did a walk-
21 through where we had like four Deputy Mayors, so that
22 was nice. Thank you to the administration for coming
23 to Jamaica and really walking the community to see a
24 lot of the issues that I've been writing tons of
25 letters about over the last couple of years. And so,

is there any assessments or plans for additional resources to the 103rd precinct to address existing public safety issues, as well as new ones that might come, because of the density in the downtown Jamaica area.

DIRECTOR ZENG: Thank you for the question, Councilwoman. Yeah, safety is a key aspect of this-- any area. So, with that, we will continue to work with the NYPD and understand where the problem spots are, and obviously continue those conversations at your office and see where we can-- where the City can provide more resources at those particular locations.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Okay. Last very convoluted common question. Do with it what you want. We're just getting it here for the hearing. I also have been talking about the Queens STEAM Center, and I know I've spoken to the administration about this separately outside of the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan, but it also has been a part of a lot of internal conversations for it to be weaved into the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan. You know, how do you all envision this? Even thinking about existing high school capacity and the class size policy that came

down from the state and how that would help in transitioning to off-site learning centers as a way to increase capacity and expand academic opportunities for local high school students? And then, let me just keep asking, so just take notes. In the same realm of community facilities, I know that I've also had a conversation with you all about JCAL [sic]. I know I've also had a conversation-- and this is more so HPD really, but like India Home, and the fact that they're proposing a 94-unit scatter site of senior affordable housing in Jamaica. Would love to see and understand how HPD is prioritizing important projects like that, as well as Venture House Health [sic], and mental health services have come up. And Venture House does operate a clubhouse that I believe is in the study map on Hillside, and they have also been looking to increase their capacity that I do feel would service the residents of Jamaica, especially around mental health. So, yeah, all those questions, comments.

JASMIN TEPALE: So, maybe starting with the STEAM Center. You know, we know that the STEAM Center is a very important project for you, and I think you perfectly described a lot of the

complexities about it. There are a lot of different factors that need to get considered in there. You know, there is a STEAM Center up in the Bronx, and we know that a successful STEAM Center requires a lot of different components including a very strong anchor partner. You know, I know that there has been a lot of key conversations around the STEAM Center, and I know that one of-- I think your biggest desire out of this process is progress. So, we definitely want to take that back to our partners at DOE and SCA and get you an update on progress.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yes, and the other project, same thing, Venture House, India Home, JCAL.

JASMIN TEPALE: So, with Venture House, JCAL, I think, you know, it's an understatement to say how many times throughout this planning process we've heard how important they are to the community, the resources that they bring. You know, JCAL especially being one of the major cultural institution next to Kings Manor, next to all these small organization like the African Poetry Feeder, they are what makes Jamaica's culture what it is today in Jamaica. And so I think especially when it

comes to cultural institutions, you know, we know that they are another top priority for you, and you similarly have shared that throughout this process, and we definitely look forward to continuing to share those updates on what we're thinking through and definitely want to continue to keep planning with your office on that. I know that there are other key sites that you mentioned. I think passing it to you, HPD, on just some of the more local housing projects that are being imagined.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLATKIN: Sure, and thank you Council Member, for that question. I actually don't-- you know, I don't have all the details about the specific projects, so I'm happy to follow up on that, but you know, I can let you know that when it comes to kind of private sites in HPD's pipeline, we do-- we do have an impacted pipeline, work to, you know, prioritize those sites according to a number of factors. As I look-- you know, if I look into better understanding which programs those projects are taking advantage of, I could have some more insight into what's going on there. Some of our projects do have geographic criteria around prioritizing limited affordability areas, which

Jamaica is not, but I can take a look and better understand what's going on.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you, and thank you so much, Chair, and thank you all for fielding all of my questions. I do hope that as we continue to be in conversation that we really look at both the social and physical infrastructure that really would make this community a place to work. We didn't talk about the CARES program and the fact that some city agencies potentially are going to be moved to Long Island City which is a problem, because then that means we are limiting opportunities for people to come to Jamaica to work. We didn't have extensive conversations about cultural institutions, but we did allude to it. Nor did we really talk about the entertainment sort of aspect of things which really impacts people's ability to play. And last but not least, all the different things that I do feel like we focused on really is living and making sure that people have a great quality of life. There's not trash piling up. They are-- they feel safe in their communities, and they can actually afford to live there. So, I do hope that we can continue to address the different buckets that, again, will make Jamaica

a place to work, play and live, and I do appreciate DCP's leadership in corralling a lot of the sister agencies around the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan and all that you did to dedicate to community outreach and all of my requests to do more. I appreciate it, and I do feel like collectively we have tried our best to make sure that we were as inclusive as possible in terms of community engagement, and again, I just want to thank you all so much, and I want to thank the Chair for allowing me such extensive time to ask questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No problem, Council Member Williams. There being no questions for this panel, this panel is excused. Now we're going to start public testimony. The first panel I'm going to call up consists of Patrick O'Connor-- excuse me-- Reverend Patrick O'Connor, Leonard Jacobs, L. Calvin Mercer, Dora Sawh, Tanja Kelly. The following panel will consist of-- the following panel will consist of David Plotka, Matthew Flower, Maddie DeCerbo , Eric Deutsch, and Alma Reyes. Members of the public will be given two minutes to testify. Once you hear the bell ring, please wrap up your testimony and you're able to give a written testimony to the Council as

well. So, once again, this first panel will consists of Reverend Patrick O'Connor, Leonard Jacobs, L. Calvin Mercer, Dora Sawh, Tanja Kelly, David Plotka, and-- oh, sorry, that's the following panel. Excuse me. So, we'll begin first with Patrick O'Connor. Reverend Patrick O'Connor?

REVEREND PATRICK O'CONNOR: Good afternoon. Thank you, Chairman Riley for the opportunity to testify in support of the Jamaica Plan. I'm Pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica and Co-Chair of Queens Borough. Our leaders, some of whom have to go back to work, have done 10,000 meetings over the last year in Queens. The number one issue-- 10,000 individual meetings, the number one issue in Queens is the lack of affordable housing. The Jamaica Plan because of its scale and the commitment to 12,000 new homes, 4,000 in the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program provides a real opportunity for families in our community. We want to congratulate DCP on what has been a very open and thorough process. I've been at this church since 1992. The first rezoning in 2007 was not as an inclusive as this process is. We hosted workshops at our church. DCP attempted to get a cross-section of

the community to participate. We're in a housing emergency, and the possibility of making a significant impact in Jamaica and this the largest rezoning in the history of the City should be brought-- pushed through as a matter of great urgency. And so, we ask the Council to support the Jamaica Plan. Lastly, I want to thank Council Member Nantasha Williams for being a real advocate for the people and the people's voices being heard in this process. It has been a really good process. Dr. Williams, thank you for your leadership.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Reverend. Next, we're going to hear from Leonard Jacobs. Leonard Jacobs? None of your names is Leonard? Okay. Alright, no problem. Mr. Jacobs had to leave. Next, we'll hear from L. Calvin Mercer.

L. CALVIN MERCER: Good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Good afternoon.

L. CALVIN MERCER: My name is Calvin Mercer. I have been a member of First Presbyterian Church for 51 years. I have lived in Jamaica, Queens for 65 years. I am in support of Jamaica's Plan in that it brings 100 percent affordability for housing

and jobs to Queens expeditiously. Thank you for the time for my testimony.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear from Dora Sawh. I'm sorry if I mispronounced your last name.

DORA SAWH: Good afternoon. My name is Dora Sawh, and I've been at First-- I've been a member of First Presbyterian Church for 39 years. I have lived in Queens for the same amount of years, for 39 years, and I'm in support of the Jamaica Plan. You see--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Mr.-- I'm sorry, Mr. Mercer, you have to be excused by us. So, just give me one second, alright? You have to go to work? Okay, Council Member Williams, are you going to have questions for Mr. Mercer? No? No problem, you're excused. I'm sorry, Ms. Sawh. You can start her time over.

DORA SAWH: I'm 100 percent in support of Jamaica Plan for affordable housing. You see, I have a daughter who's 45 years old, can't afford an apartment. She lives with me. I have family I have who have left the City, because they can't afford to live here. So, I am in favor of this plan for 100

percent affordable housing and which would also bring jobs to our community. I thank you for hearing me.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much.

Next, we'll hear from Tanja Kelly.

TANJA KELLY: Good afternoon. Yes, my name is Tanja Kelly, and I was born in Jamaica Hospital, and I also have bought a home and raised two children in Jamaica, and I'd like to see young people be able to do the same. My church is very active in getting affordable homes, and I support them. I'm a member of First. I've been going to First Presbyterian Church for decades, and they're very, very, very active in getting supportive homes in Queens, and I support them 100 percent.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Ms. Kelly.

David?

DAVID PLOTKA: Correct, yes.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead, David.

DAVID PLOTKA: Hello, my name is David Plotka, and it is my honor to speak with you today as the Director of Venture House, a 38-year-old community-based mental health program in Jamaica, Queens whose mission is to help people living with mental health challenges recover through access to

employment, education, housing, civic engagement, and the arts. Venture House utilizes an evidence-based approach to psychiatric rehabilitation known as the clubhouse model, and we serve over 450 active members and more than 2,000 lifetime members, helping hundreds of people stay out of the hospital, off the streets, and out of jail. Our cost-effective service where one year of a clubhouse membership equals the cost of two weeks in a psychiatric hospital, leads to better health outcomes, better employment rates, stable housing, and a better quality of life. Embedded within our clubhouse is our supportive housing program which serves up to 117 people. Investing in supportive housing is essential. We know that housing stability and mental health go together, and investments in supportive housing programs are critical to help people live with dignity, maintain recovery, and be a part of their community. Supportive housing must be paired with accessible wraparound services, including mental health care, workforce training, and peer support. Venture House firmly believes in the idea of promoting equity in neighborhood investments. Just as Jamaica needs better schools, parks, and transit

service, it also needs a strong network of human services. Equitable funding should include plans that address mental health needs while providing wellness and recovery services. Local institutions like Venture House are best-suited to deliver these services because of our trust and track record with the community. Venture House supports the downtown Jamaica Oversight Taskforce as a mechanism to ensure that commitments to housing and human services are honored. In closing, we believe in a future for Jamaica in which supportive housing is vital. Those living with mental health challenges are supported and where the community grows stronger by ensuring that no one is left behind. Thank you for your time. We are in support of this plan and thank you, Dr. Williams, for your support in championing this.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much for your testimony. There being no questions for this panel, this panel is excused. Thank you. The next panel I'm going to call up will consist of Matthew Flower, Maddie DeCerbo, Eric Deutsch, Alma Reyes. The following panel will consist of Abu Nayeem, Saiku Branch, and Dennis Walcott. If I did not just call your name, that means I do not have it to testify.

If you are in the chambers and would like to testify, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms to submit a speaker's card. I would like to also call up Abu Nayeem could actually come up now. Saiku Branch, and Dennis Walcott. Okay, first we'll begin with Matthew Flower. Matthew, can you please press the button? Thank you.

MATTHEW FLOWER: Good afternoon. My name is Matthew Flower, research intern at the Regional Plan Association. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan. RPA has long advocated for more housing in central transit-rich areas such as downtown Jamaica. We've also been a long-time partner in this neighborhood and have advocated for many of the specific components of this proposed rezoning. As such, we strongly support this proposal. In particular, we support the mapping of a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing zone which would deliver up to 4,000 affordable housing units as part of the development of over 12,000 total housing units. This will provide much-needed new housing to a transit-rich neighborhood that currently lacks affordable options. Last year, RPA published the Homes on Track Report

which advocates for thriving communities near transit. Downtown Jamaica ranked high on RPA's opportunity score for transit-oriented development, also known as TOD. It is considered a TOD-ready location. The Jamaica study area has many of the basic characteristics that drive successful transit-oriented development. With numerous subways, rail lines and bus routes, residents can access about 640,000 jobs within a 45-minute multi-modal commute. In addition to better balancing the needs between new affordable housing manufacturing uses and commercial business owners, the proposal seeks to map new manufacturing districts recently created by the City of Yes for Economic Opportunity Text Amendment. Finally, RPA would like to commend the modifications made to the proposal by the City Planning Commission. We know that the project's goals have been updated to articulate a clearer focus on mixed-use and transit-oriented development. In addition to clarifying that new housing options should be accessible to households across the income spectrum. We believe that these changes address many of the community concerns raised at CPC and have led to a stronger proposal. As such, we recommend that the

Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises adopt this measure. As always, RPA is available to discuss concerns or offer insights to help realize our shared priorities.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Matt.

Next, we'll hear from Maddie DeCerbo. Do we have a Maddie DeCerbo here? No? Okay. Eric?

ERIC DEUTSCH: Thank you, Council Member Riley and the rest of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. My name is Eric Deutsch. I am the Co-founder of DL Development Partners. DL is a partner in a large site approximate to Jamaica Station, Just south of the Long Island Railroad tracks. I'm delighted to be here today to speak in support of the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan. This plan will encourage the continued growth of downtown Jamaica, allowing for much-needed new housing space for jobs and spur both public and private investment in the infrastructure and public realm that will support this thriving part of the City. I commend the leadership of Speaker Adams and Council Member Dr. Nantasha Williams, and the effort conducted in conjunction with the Queens Office of the Department of City Planning. The years of work and significant

1 outreach to the community and numerous stakeholders
2 is apparent in this well-thought-out plan. I spent a
3 significant amount of my early career in public
4 sector and nonprofit economic development roles.
5 Downtown Jamaica is also a special interest to me, as
6 my parents played important roles in the nonprofit
7 support of the continued vitality of downtown
8 Jamaica. I learned at a young age that Jamaica with
9 its transportation infrastructure, geographic
10 advantages, and historically important retail
11 corridors is a place that should attract significant
12 continued investment. It is one of the most transit-
13 rich neighborhoods in the country, making it ideal
14 for transit-oriented development. Jamaica Station is
15 unique in all of New York. It's the one place you
16 can have a one-seat 20-minute ride to JFK, Grand
17 Central, Penn Station, and Atlantic Terminal. This
18 plus the Long Island Railroad station that serves all
19 but one of the railroad's lines means there's no
20 better place to be connected to all points in the
21 city and Long Island. Rather than the well-used line,
22 Change it Jamaica, we can also say, Live in Jamaica,
23 work in Jamaica, and shop in Jamaica, and play in
24 Jamaica. It's clear that Jamaica Neighborhood Plan
25

provides a thoughtful land use plan that will encourage the investment to achieve those goals. I urge you to support the plan. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear from Alma Reyes. Alma Reyes? Okay, next we'll hear from Abu Nayeem.

ABU NAYEEM: Hi, my name is Abu Nayeem. I'm a community and transportation advocate. I was raised in Hollis [sic] Queens and a current Jamaica Resident. I support the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan and would like to advocate for further transportation improvements such as secure bike parking and sidewalk extensions along Archer Avenue. Jamaica is a transportation hub, covering the final stops of the F Line, EJ Line, JFK Air Train, and a central bus terminal, making it a critical transfer zone for many communities. We need to expand micromobility options for reliable and quick access for local residents and that starts with secure public bike parking at subway stations and bus terminals. When I attended Brooklyn Tech High School, I relied on the Q110 bus to get to the subway. The bus was so unreliable that I was often late to my first class. The frustration of packed buses skipping you is something no student

should have to experience. With secure bike parking residents could reliably reach their train, improve their health through exercise and cut commute times. Though, bike parking is not enough. We also need to install protected bike lanes along with proper daylighting along key corridors to support micromobility users and maintain safety for all commuters. Also, did you know that Jamaica within District 27 is the hottest district in the City. I've regularly walked long Archer Avenue near Merrick Boulevard and seen numerous bus passengers on the southern side being exposed to extreme heat. Currently, the streets are too narrow, prohibiting any possibility of bus shelters. So I recommend a sidewalk extension along Archer's Avenue enabling these improvements. Also, I would like to ask a question for DOT where a lot of outside drivers are using Jamaica as a park-and-ride which reduce parking availability for local drivers and commercial users. So, final thought, thank you for your time and let's work together to improve transit equity in Jamaica, Queens.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next,
we'll hear from Saiku Branch.

SAIKU BRANCH: Good afternoon, Council Member Riley and Council Member Williams. My name is Saiku Branch. I'm Executive Director of the African Poetry Theater. We're a cultural arts organization that's been around for about 49 years, about 46 as a nonprofit, and we specialize in cultural arts, dance, music, visual arts, acting, movies, so forth. We are definitely in support of this plan. We was on the original steering committee for the Jamaica Now Action Plan, and we're excited that it's reached this point here. Unfortunately, for us, in 2018 we had a fire that took out the second floor of our building, so we haven't really recovered from the fire, though we have been operating with the help of other community organizations that lend us their space. And we're ready to get back to work properly. What we are proposing for the community is a multimedia building, shared workspace building that will house STEAM programs, STEM programs, robotics for children, acting programs, film, photo studio, film studio, 75-seat theater, boiler room, smart classes, everything in this one facility that the creators of our community, we come very a creative community with a very long history of creative people, and we want to

keep that going in our institution, and to add to it above the institution, we want to add affordable housing. Affordable housing for artists. The artists can live above the facility and work downstairs and also display their work in the same facility, as well as other community members who need affordability. And we're asking for the City Council to help us in this effort. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much.

Dennis Walcott?

DENNIS WALCOTT: Good afternoon, Chair Riley a Council Member Dr. Williams. It's an honor to be here. I'm Dennis Walcott, President and CEO of the Queens Public Library, and a lifelong Queens resident. Our Central library is located on Merrick Boulevard in the heart of Jamaica, where in fiscal year 25 more than 710,000 visitors walked through its doors, and our circulation is over 728,000 books and materials. Our 234,000 square foot library consists of our children's library, our Discovery Center, our dedicated Teen Center, our Computer Center, the archives and auditorium, and a robust library collection. It is also the base of our operations, housing court Department, such as library services,

our IT Department, our capital projects, our facilities, our security, and our HR which is supportive of all of our libraries throughout the borough Queens. The Department is vital to our daily function systemwide allowing us to welcome 6.6 million visits and circulate 10.9 million items. Since 2000, the population surrounding the central library has jumped 25 percent, and City Planning anticipates the rezoning will create up to 12,000 new housing units that will increase the local population even more. In order to effectively serve the neighborhood and the borough well into the future, the central Library needs to expand and modernize. A vertical expansion of 50,000 square feet and comprehensive renovation of the entire facility both public and staff spaces will enhance our experience with patrons and improve critical systemwide logistics and operational support. According to our calculations, the project estimates currently around \$168 million. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan is building a future for the region to thrive, and we fully support it. Strong libraries make strong communities. We thank you for your

leadership and support, and we look forward to the investment in some type of expansion. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you all. I know you've been a part of the steering committee for two years, so this is also large part in your work and dedication. So, I just wanted to thank everybody for coming.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Thank you so much for this panel. The last panel I'm going to call in person consists of Christopher Leon Johnson and Maureen Grey. We will be transitioning to online testimony. The next panel I'll be calling after this consists of Lynette Townsley, Lisa Edwards, Myhira Belisle [sic], Natalie Vena, and Vanessa Sparks. So, we will go to that testimony right after this. You may begin, Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah. Hello, Chairs Riley and Chairs Williams. My name is Christopher Leon Johnson. I'm here to show support to the plan. I'm not against more housing in the community. I'm not against more housing in the district, but I'm asking the Council Member Nantasha Williams, is there a way that she find a way to clear out Sutphin and Archer between-- Sutphin and Archer

and Sutphin and Jamaica, because over there is like a-- it's like Skid Row over there. I think you know what I'm talking about. Right by the Long Island Railroad Station is like Skid Row, drug dealers, crackheads, homeless, all the vagrants. I feel unsafe walking up there. I never know what's going to happen to me when I walk up there. I'm not a gang member. I'm none of that. I'm none of those type of people, so I'm-- 95 percent chance I might get hurt, robbed, shot, stabbed, killed around that, on that block. I don't know, Mr. Riley, you never walked up there before, but I think you should walk up there. Take the E Train or the J Train or take Long Island Railroad Jamaica, or Jamaica Sutphin-- what is it? Jamaica, Archer, and you see that I'm talking about. Up there on that corner right across from the Q30 and the Q20A there's a lot of drug dealers and all these vagrants around there, and I'm calling on the Council Member, including you, Mr. Riley, to find a way to put in the plan to increase funding for the NYPD and the way to increase the quality of life over there because that block in general is hell. And I'm-- I hope that this plan with this Jamaica Plan really gets those guys and gals out of there. I hope they

find a way-- and we got 25 seconds left-- to get a developer or you get a developer, Mr. Riley, to upzone that building, upzone that block in general. Upzone Sutphin between Archer and Jamaica, because if we upzone that area and get rid of those pre-war buildings and put the glass buildings there, we can get all those vagrants and all those weirdos out of there. So, I'm saying this plan-- I hope that this plan goes through. I'm for pro-housing, but we need to add more police and more public safety around there. So, thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Ms. Maureen?

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Can I go? Got to go now? Can I be excused?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, you're excused.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Thank you. Thank you.

MAUREEN GREY: Good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Can you press the button? Thank you. Go ahead.

MAUREEN GREY: Good afternoon. Thank you. Thank you so much for having these meetings and these hearings. Good afternoon, Council Members,

Chair Riley and Councilperson Dr. Williams. I am a history teacher and I'm also becoming a local historian, so that is why I'm here. I'm representing residents, homeowners of southeast Queens who feel that this Jamaica Neighborhood Plan may supplant their history, also give them a lack of opportunity to do further research on that which is just being discovered, especially about enslaved Africans. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan is part of development. At one point there was a plan to bring the bay into Jamaica so as to increase business, but the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan, however, has its issues, including overpopulation of an area that is intended to give residents the option of a suburban life, increasing environmental pollution, destroying the vista, and demolishing the remaining 17th to 20th century structures known and unknown in southeast Queens, and replacing the structures with new buildings that do not reflect historical input from local historians or society. Because of all those problems, including the omission of providing multiple museums south of Jamaica Avenue for residents and visitors to learn about the importance of Jamaica, southeast Queens, to American, African-American immigrant history, I am

not in favor of the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan. After attending several meetings in-person and online where I informed the JNP representatives about the need for museums and historical education, the certified JNP plan calls for remembering history through oral recordings and festivals. Nowhere does the JNP call for writing, documenting, exhibiting, or educating the community about the history of southeast Queens. The JNP's ideas for preserving southeast Queens sites and histories are insufficient because the certified JNP plans calls for recording voices on memory box. I do want to emphasize that Jamaica has an extensive history from Dutch, the indigenous Native American groups, the Dutch, the English. We're a site of the American Revolution. We're the site of the oldest Presbyterian Church in the entire nation. We're the site the Episcopal Church of which many of the founding fathers were a part of. And I believe that we should have historical markers on buildings that maybe through this development may be destroyed, but they should know that this building existed and this is why it's important. You will find it in Manhattan all over, but Quens doesn't seem to get that respect. A lot of our buildings are not being landmarked

because we don't seem to be that important, but it turns out it is important to the people who live in Queens for over 400 years. As this is the 400th anniversary of the Dutch settling, we should also understand it's the 400th anniversary of enslaved people coming to Queens, and to-- you know, being part of Manhattan, that we should have the opportunity to research. I have been involved with a house called the Ketcham House, in which the property was used to create Holis [sic]. The house has a room that's been filled in, and it's under threat of demolition, and if it is filled and demolished, we won't have the opportunity to research the Underground Railroad, which the Ketcham family on Long Island was involved with. There's a lot more that I would like to say concerning the housing prices. We are not encouraging ownership, but leasing, and every statistic that I have found through the help for the central library archives which I've spent a lot of time in. We found that Black people who come out to Queens or were enslaved in Queens which was Sout Jamaica, that they are proud that they have had homeownership. All of these statistics written by historians. Also mention that,

I'm not seeing that. We're not seeing that in Queens that you're encouraging homeownership, but rather it seems that rental is being encouraged, and I think that might be defeating for groups of people and people of color who look forward to this American dream. I believe that this is reflective of the photos that you see at Archer where many of those photos came from the library. There is not one picture of any African-Americans on that Archer by the bus stop, not one, and I think that's because we are not-- I didn't realize this until 2019 that Africans were here for 400 years. And of course, there's nothing there of the indigenous people. Queens is known more for jazz. It's known for its music. It's known for history--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Excuse me, Ms.

Maureen--

MAUREEN GREY: [inaudible] and that's what we need to know. I just want to reflect that there is a history to Jamaica, and people who live here in Jamaica don't tend to know it or realize it, including myself, a lifelong history buff and history teacher. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Well, thank you for educating myself, who's not from Queens, on a lot. We do appreciate you coming down and testifying. I don't think we have any questions for you, so you're excused. Thank you so much. I will now transition to online testimony. The first panel I will call up will consist of Lynette Townsley, Lisa Edwards, Mahira Belau [sic], Natalia [sic] Vena, and Vanessa Sparks. We'll begin first with Ms. Lynette Townsley. Lynette Townsley, if you can hear me, please unmute. Okay, if we do not have Lynette, can I have Lisa Edwards?

LISA EDWARDS: Hi. There might be difficulty unmuting as we transition to Zoom. So, I'm sure Lynette will be back. Her hand is raised, I don't know if you want to take her now before you start my time.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No, you can begin, Ms. Lisa, while we have you. Go ahead.

LISA EDWARDS: Okay. Thank you so much. Hi, my name's Lisa Edwards, and I'm going to be moving fast. And I've been a resident of Jamaica, Queens for 25 years. I raised my children here, and they are being priced out of the neighborhood they

were born in. I'm against this plan. I grew up in Harlem. I've seen how rezonings there and in other Black and Brown communities have impacted neighborhoods like ours with displacement, huge increases in rents and property taxes, and the loss of small businesses and culture. The City Planning Commission and HPD, etcetera, are trying to sell this plan with promising of affordable rental units, homes, jobs, and improvements in quality of life, but affordable to who? Not the majority of residents in the next generation of Jamaica's current renters and homeowners. These units are priced far above what local residents can afford. There is no 100 percent affordability. We know that both adults and young adults, including college graduates, are struggling to secure good-paying jobs that would allow people to pay for the units in the plan that DCP says are affordable. The majority of the units being created are unaffordable luxury units. There's been no meaningful outreach to individuals Jamaica residents. When many spoke against it, DCP responded with, "No decisions have been made yet, and we will look into that for you." The same things they are saying today. They've had two years to look into

things. Our concerns and objections were strategically edited out of the same promotional video presentations prepared by DCP. There should have been leafletting and tabling at every transportation hub in the zone, and other direct outreach efforts to homeowners and renters with mailings throughout this process, and there's no [inaudible] holding multiple meetings without outreach--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you for your testimony. Your time is expired.

LISA EDWARDS: Okay, let me finish up with this. I urge city officials to pause this rezoning, center real community input and create housing that matches the actual needs and income of the residents. Why do resources that--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Thank you, Ms. Edwards. Next we're going to--

LISA EDWARDS: [interposing] Okay, can I finish up one thing?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: We have to move along 'cause we have a lot of people signed up to testify. So you can submit the rest of your testimony to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Next, we're going

to hear from Ms. Lynette Townsley. Lynette, if you can hear me, please unmute and you may begin.

LYNETTE TOWNSLEY: Hello, can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we hear you, Ms. Lynette, go ahead.

LYNETTE TOWNSLEY: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Lynette Townsley and I'm the Community Board 12 Youth Committee Chair. I come before you not in opposition, but in love, love for my community, for our shared future, and for the generations we hope to protect. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan speaks of growth, but growth without stewardship is not progress. It's peril. This rezoning will allow buildings to rise 18 stories high, casting shadows over homes that have stood for decades, and over lives that have quietly carried the weight of systemic neglect. We are not against development. We are against being erased. And now, we've learned that Con-Edison, in response to the energy demands of this plan is building a new substation. But what they did not tell us, what we had to uncover ourselves is that this expansion included a lithium battery facility in the heart of

the residential community. This is not just a technical detail. This is a morale one. Lithium battery fires are violent, toxic, and notorious difficult to contain. New York City has only four Hazmat units trained to respond to such fires. The closest one is in Long Island City and Brooklyn, miles away from our community, and if something goes wrong, we are left vulnerable, we are left behind. We are a community of elders, children, families who have weathered storms with grace. We deserve transparency. We deserve safety, and we deserve to be seen. This is not just about--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you for your testimony. Your time is expired.

LYNETTE TOWNSLEY: thank you for hearing us, and may be your decisions be guided by courage, by conscience, and by care. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next we're going to from Mahirah Billah

MAHIRAH BILLAH: Hi. My name is Mahirah Billah and I'm a lifelong resident of Jamaica, Queens. I am also in strong opposition to the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan. While I can see that it may be well-intentioned, I do not believe that this effect

will benefit current residents and business owners in Jamaica. After seeing the firsthand effects of gentrification in Black and Brown neighborhoods throughout my lifetime, I do not see the proper precautions in place to protect the current people living in Jamaica. I am 28 years old, a college graduate, and I've been working since I've graduated. Yet as a young adult I do not see a future in which I can continue to live in Jamaica affordably. I still live with my parents, and I don't see a future in which I can live by myself in Jamaica. There are promises of affordable housing but deliver-- but these units are priced far above what local residents can afford. Many Jamaica residents earn under 50 percent of the area median income, but these rezonings target people earning 80 to 20-- or 120 percent of the AMI. Furthermore, I'd like to add that community members have not been as part of the process as it's advertised that they have been. Even this meeting was announced very last minute with not nearly enough time to properly include the community. This is a practice that we have gotten used to very much over the last two years. My primary concern is protecting myself and my neighbors, specifically my

older disabled and unhoused neighbors. I've learned that this plan is in place to secure funds necessary to improve Jamaica. I urge that City Council find alternate ways to uphold cultural integrity, invest in green spaces, and provide affordable housing for all without throwing current residents under the bus. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we're going to hear from Natalie Bump Vena followed by Vanessa Sparks.

NATALIE BUMP VENA: Hi, can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you.

NATALIE BUMP VENA: Great. My name is Natalie Bump Vena. I'm Assistant Professor in the Queens College Department of Urban Studies. I am testifying against the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan, because it will accelerate gentrification while failing to provide enough units of real affordable housing for the neighborhood's Black and Brown residents designed to entice real estate development. This plan is a bad deal for Jamaica residents. The Jamaica rezoning's boosters misleading assert that its provision for Mandatory Inclusionary Housing will prevent residents displacement. Donovan Richards and

Dan Garodnick state the rezoning will create 4,000 income-restricted units. However, the draft Environmental Impact Statement gives different figures, stating approximately 2,500 to 3,744 such units will be built. This range reflects the four different MIH options that City Council could apply. The highest affordable percentage would be available under MIH option 2 at 30 percent of floor area. Richards, though, has repeatedly advocated for MIH option one reserving 25 percent floor area for income-restricted apartments. Option one would fail to create enough affordable units for Jamaica residents. Only 10 percent of floor area would be set aside for residents making 40 percent of the AMI. The Jamaica neighborhood's median household income is just under \$60,000; 41 percent of Jamaica households make under \$50,000. Ten percent of floor area is woefully inadequate when luxury development will continue to fuel rising rents, eradicating the neighborhood's affordable market rate units. Moreover, since the Noelle [sp?], settlement rolled back community preference, Jamaica residents would only have access to 600 to 800 apartments under Garodnick and Richards' high estimates. HPD also

plans to develop 34 apartments for affordable homeownership and 83 affordable rental units on city-owned properties.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you for your testimony. Your time is expired.

NATALIE BUMP VENA: [inaudible] Keep on cutting off people are testifying against this plan and not the people who are in support. So, I'm just going note this, that HPD also-- that this development by only under the Noelle settlement only [inaudible] five to seven affordable homes would go to Jamaica residents, and only 12 to 16 affordable rentals would be for Jamaica residents. And I also want to state for the record, that this important hearing was not sufficiently advertised to the community. DCP did not send out a notice over the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan email list, and DCP only posted about it on Instagram on Friday.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Ms. Vena. Next, we'll hear from Vanessa Sparks. And just for the record, Ms. Vena, DCP doesn't promote this, City Council does. So, next time for the hearing, you can look at the City Council's calendar. Next--

NATALIE BUMP VENA: [interposing] But we need to be notified of that, because not everyone has [inaudible] website.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: we'll hear from Vanessa Sparks. Thank you.

VANESSA SPARKS: Good afternoon. I'm not-- I'm not going to do like my-- the people that spoke before me. I am absolutely against this Jamaica project. I am a lifelong resident with my family coming to the borough of Queens from the south, as many African-Americans did during the Great Migration in the 1950s. This plan is going to displace and disenfranchise existing homeowners in the community. I have to say I am sorely disappointed in this City Council and the way that they've gone about shoving down the throats of the residents of southeast Queens, in particular Jamaica. Yes, I have attended many, probably most, of the hearings in the past two years. I can see that none of the opposition's comments have been considered or included, and this lets me know that the City, DCP, and all other agencies involved, HPD and DCP in particular, have no intent on protecting existing homeowners, particularly Black long-existing

homeowners. I am absolutely against this plan. I wish all of the elected officials from our area were there to hear, because we're going to remember this if and when people should want to run for office again. I am against this. No one is listening to the residents. And as far as homeownership, people that can afford homes are not going to buy this bull-job [sic], matchbook units that they're going to be putting out. People that can afford to purchase a home are going to opt to move to Long Island, which many of them, including young people, have done, where they're getting a better quality of life. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Council Member Williams, you have any questions for this panel or comments?

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Trying to gather my thoughts since I'm on the record. For over two years we have done a mixture of things, and outside of the official things that DCP has done, that my office has done separately from DCP, one thing that my office has always said and one thing that I've heard DCP say repeatedly is that we're always available to have conversations to present

1 this plan, to take feedback. I don't know, Ms.
2 Sparks, like what particular things you are talking
3 about that you don't see reflected in the plan. I
4 know you mentioned homeownership, and I do believe
5 that homeownership was mentioned by myself. It was
6 mentioned by the Speaker and it was also mentioned
7 both by DCP and HPD, and I would say this plan is not
8 yet fully-formulized. So, there are spaces to still
9 shape the plan. So, I do appreciate everyone's
10 feedback. So that's one question. I don't know what
11 you're saying you don't see and what you want to see.
12 If you can share what you want to see specifically,
13 that would be helpful. I think a lot of my
14 engagement-- and I'm not one to attack community
15 members, but I do feel from my personal perspective
16 as a human being, the frustration that I have is not
17 that community members are disagreeing with the plan,
18 it's the nature in which they're disagreeing with the
19 plan and the lack of clear submissions or feedback
20 around what you want to see. And so, if anybody has
21 any very clear, succinct things that they want to
22 see, totally open to hearing it as we work to
23 finalize the plan. The professor from Queens
24 College, I believe you might have came to one meeting

out of 52, and I do appreciate your feedback and would love to take a deeper dive into some of the things you mentioned around the MIH options, and the fact that the ability for people in southeast Queens to actually take advantage of these affordable units somehow isn't really as expansive as I know I would like to see. So, I look forward if you can email me, nwilliams@council.nyc.gov, whatever research or things you have. Would love to take that into consideration, but my increased frustration has been the lack of people meaningfully engaging in all the opportunities that we've given them, and then again, the lack of like clear thing that you want to see. So, if anybody on this call has any clear things that they want to see, would love to hear it, again, as we work to finalize the plan.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member Williams. The following--

LYNETTE TOWNSLEY: [interposing] Can we respond to that?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, Ms. Lynette, go ahead.

LYNETTE TOWNSLEY: Thank you so much, and thank you, Dr. Williams, who is my City Council

person. As the Community Board 12 Youth Committee, I think we have to be honest. I mean, as I heard them doing this presentation, I was so stressed, because they said-- they sat up here and said that, oh, they're working with the School Construction Authority throughout the whole process. No, they're not. They lied a lot of the stuff that they said. We-- and this is the thing-- and I thank you, Dr. Nantasha Williams and Speaker Adrienne Adams, because y'all asked the hard questions today that we have been asking for the last two years, and they still didn't give y'all answers. They still going to see the feasibility. They came-- I invited them to my youth committee meeting, and that's the reason-- the testimony came out of my youth committee meeting, because when we would ask them about all of this building, through the whole process we said, well, what about the schools? What about the safety. We know that the 103rd precinct is already stressed. You know what they told us? Oh, that's not our area. Then, all of a sudden, at the next meeting, they came back with, "Oh, yeah, we going to do schools." So, we said, okay, you listening to us. Where are you going to do them? "Oh, we're not sure. We're going

to leave it up to the developer." We know that-- I've been living here since 1989. We have had ground water issues since then. This project-- we should not have to say yes to our health and our quality of life to get a right sewer system. And I think that is the frustration. We know that you're out there fighting for us, Dr. Nantasha Williams, but we're saying we need to pause [sic], because this is not how we help our community. They didn't answer yours or Speaker Adams' questions, and it's been so long we've been asking them. Just like you was frustrated earlier, we're frustrated now, and that's why we're asking y'all to be on the right side of history and say no.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much.

VANESSA SPARKS: May I-- may I-- this is Ms. Sparks. I would like to answer Dr. Williams, and Dr. Williams it is no disrespect to you, because I do believe that your intent is in the absolute right place. However, the city agencies of what you have to work with have been dishonest. As Ms. Townsley stated, we-- and I for one have been to most of those 51 meetings over the past two years. We have specifically asked DCP regarding their work with the

School Construction Authority, and we got no definitive answer just as you got no definitive answer today. We have asked questions about who is going to be able to avail themselves to these apartments or these units, and again, we received no definitive answer. When I spoke about homeownership, I'm going to tell you, I do not trust DCP or HPD, because what you considered home, what they would consider a home in terms of residents, in particular our young residents, being able to buy, it is not going to be worth it. We've spoken and asked specifically about height requirements. We have buildings that are towering over one-family units. This is a one and two-family residential community. If people wanted to live in the apartment buildings, they would have stayed in the apartment building that they were once in. So, our frustration, or at least my frustration is not so much with you, Dr. Williams, because I do know what your intent is. My frustration is with the lack of full transparency from city agencies that you have to rely on in order for you to make an education and informed vote, and we sat and listened to this testimony today, and they

are not telling the truth. So, thank you for this opportunity.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

MAHIRAH BILLAH: I have a suggestion, if I can add, in answer to Dr. Williams.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, go ahead, Ms. Billah.

MAHIRAH BILLAH: So, my suggestion was to pause it, but to pause it specifically to demand that some of the things that we are requesting and that our city representatives or our council people are requesting is included in the plan. No more broken promises and no more kick it down the road. We want to see schools in the plan. We want to see infrastructure in the plan. We want to see jobs in the plan, and that will resolve, and we want to see-- you know, we want to see affordability in the plan. And I think that will resolve it. That's why we're asking for a pause. We're not asking for them to consider it or get back to us. That's what we're asking for. We're asking for the same things. And that's basically what I want to say, and one last thing. You know, at the town halls they had tabling about how to preserve the culture of Jamaica while

rezoning takes place. I found it interesting that that would be a question that needed to be addressed. To me, it was very telling. It acknowledges that with the rezoning by these profitable-- by these private developers comes displacement and gentrification and the loss of our culture, and we can't have that happening. It's happening nationally and it should not happen in Jamaica, Queens. So, I oppose it, and I hope you guys oppose it, too, unless they address your questions now, not later after it's done. Because like you said, since 2007 promises have been made, but where we are, and I can't even get up to Hillside because they put a bus lane in. So, thank you for raising that. It's ridiculous.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Council Member Williams, you have a response for that?

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Yes. I just want to thank you all so much. I know you dedicated most of your day to be on this hearing, and I always say I appreciate the people that I represent, because they care so deeply about the community. So, I do want to just thank you for all of your feedback. I did take notes, and I just also want to sympathize with you that government agencies tend to not be

transparent, and so I don't want to undermine that. I agree there always can be more transparency, and again, hopefully we can get there.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. This panel is excused. The next panel I'm going to call up consists of Asm Goni, Iman Imogene Williams, Jahnavi Aluri, John Boyd [sp?], and Mitchell Sterngack [sp?]. We'll begin first with Asm Goni. Excuse me if mispronounce your name.

ASM GONI: Noon everyone and thank you to Chair Riley, Department of City Planning, Council Member Nantasha Williams, Speaker Adrienne Adams, and the Subcommittee and everyone else [inaudible]. My name is -- you can pronounce it "awesome". My name is Asm Goni.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Oh, nice.

ASM GONI: I've been living in Jamaica, Queens for over 12 years. I grew up here, attended school here, and I currently work within the community as well, and I'm in support of the Jamaica city plan. So, I recently joined Pollo [sp?] as program manager. We're a local nonprofit serving our neighborhood, and also a grantee of The Avenue [sic] NYC to the City's Department of Small Business

Services. We work to commercially revitalize the Jamaica Hillside [inaudible] corridor which serves over 60,000 residents. I presented our research report, the commercial district needs assessment, to Community Board Eight, and I'm glad we're having the discussion about the Jamaica city planning here in the Council, because it signals the growing interest on our neighborhood, especially with the rising population that requires more housing. And I believe that we need more increased investments that thoughtfully considers the needs of the local residents, small business owners, and the broader community. And from my personal experience growing up and attending schools here, I went to the specialized high school right inside York College. And there were very few public spaces for young people, after school students who had to chain establishments like Planet Fitness [sic], Chipotle, Burger King, Subway. None of these are small local businesses. So, when we had increased housing, we have more people. We need to also pay attention to the businesses in this neighborhood. So, any time we wanted to use [inaudible] facilities, we had to go far away, for example to the Flushing Recreation

Center or we had to go to plaza in other neighborhoods, Diversity Plaza in Jackson Heights. So, I later discovered that there's recreation center inside Jamaica, but I visited there, and there is poor infrastructure, and this shows a common pattern in our neighborhood, that we need that more city investment in this area. So, overall we need more public spaces where--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you for your testimony. Your time is expired.

ASM GONI: Okay. so overall, I mean-- last thing. The question isn't just about how Jamaica will change, but also about whether the change will truly serve the people who call this community home. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. And just a reminder, when you guys hear the Sergeant at Arms say your time is expired, you guys can start wrapping up. That doesn't mean you can just stop right there. Just start wrapping up your comments, please. The next person we're going to hear from is Imogene Williams. Imogene Williams, if you can hear me, please unmute and you may begin.

IMOGENE WILLIAMS: Good afternoon. Good afternoon. My name is Imogene Williams, and I represent the First Reformed Church of Jamaica, and we are in support of Jamaica Plan. As a institution, as a faith-based institution, we are working with the development, housing development, to truly building affordable housing for the Jamaica area. We want to truly bring 100 percent affordable housing to our neighbors and congregates who feel that they have been just priced out of the community. Where they live-- most of their-- where they've lived most of their lives. We're planning on a 258-unit affordable housing project. Our church, First Reformed Church of Jamaica, has been a part of the community for 323 years. Our original building is a historic landmark building on Jamaica Avenue. Our original-- our building that we have is at 15929, although that has been demolished as we plan to build this new project. Our church has provided services for the community for as many years as we've been in existence. We want to remain a vital part of the Jamaica community, and with the support of the Queens Borough President Office and Council Member Nantasha Williams and community leaders and city agencies, our project will

allow our neighbors, seniors, and young growing families to remain in the Jamaica community [inaudible] community close to transportation, shopping and all the amenities that the Jamaica has to offer now and will offer in the future with the revitalization of the area. It will allow our church the financial resources to continue to grow and to serve our community of 323 years far into the future. So, we do support the program, and I thank you for your time and your consideration. Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear from Jahnavi Aluri.

JAHNAVI ALURI: Hello. On behalf of the Downtown Jamaica Partnership Business Improvement District and the businesses, property owners and stakeholders we support and represent, we support this plan and share suggested measures to address the primary issues impacting quality of life in downtown Jamaica. First, we need better, brighter and more reliable street lighting, especially along main thoroughfares in and around the L Train and under the LIRR. Lighting is a critical part of both the perception and the reality of public safety. We need more greenery including trees, planters, hanging

flower baskets, green roofs, and planted building setbacks should be incorporated into every new development that results from this rezoning. We continue to request the removal of or a serious modification to the Jamaica Avenue busway. We would like more investment in public spaces to include shading seating, play structures, splash guards, dog runs, water refilling stations, event spaces, way-finding signage, and community garden spaces. We want to ensure our small businesses aren't priced out as Jamaica changes and advocate for broader small business incubation. We suggest the redevelopment of the Jamaica Market to enable smaller entrepreneurs to get a foothold in their business to go and to scale up as desired. We'd like to see a redesign of 156th Street Mall to make more permanent feature to promote pedestrian users and elements to enable community building events and activities. We support a managed street vending program with designated locations, enforceable standards, vendor education, and consistent enforcement. A pilot modeled on Corona Plaza at an estimated \$300,000 annually would fund staffing, infrastructure and operations. This balanced approach can support vendors, protect

businesses, and ensure a clean space and include a public realm. To strengthen public safety and to address perceptions of safety, we advocate for improved street lighting, event programming, and targeted enforcement near subway stations.

Complementary investments in street furniture, public garden [inaudible] can create a safer, more vibrant public space. While we launch a public safety ambassador program this year, tripling staff at a cost of \$500,000 annually is needed to effectively serve the high-traffic hub in partnership with [inaudible] city agencies and the community.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you for your testimony. Your time is expired.

JAHNAVI ALURI: DCP works to beautify our neighborhood, support our small businesses, and this rezoning is a tremendous opportunity to not only improve the quality of experience of being in Jamaica in any context, but to position Jamaica as a beacon for other communities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear from John Boyd.

JOHN BOYD: Good afternoon. My name is Doctor John H. Boyd, II. I serve as the Senior

Pastor of the New Greater Bethel Ministries and the Chair of the Art Community Development Faith-based Organizations that have faithfully served the southeast Queens for over 50 years. I want to first thank the City Council Speaker Adams, the Chair Riley, and especially Doctor Nantasha Williams for her incredible leadership on this initiative, and that she has my full support on the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan. Our ministry was founded in 1972 by my father Apostle John H. Boyd, Senior. Our ministry was built on a vision of spiritual leadership and social responsibility. As a point of reference, when my parents moved into St. Albans community back in 1951, the cost of our one-family home was only \$13,500. Now it is valued at over \$700,000. Throughout the decades of our mission, it has remained steadfast to meet both the spiritual and practical needs of our neighbors. We have operated a Christian school serving students from pre-K to 12th grade, established a food pantry, and first-time home-buyer seminars, and launched numerous programs to uplift our community. Churches are uniquely positioned to lead the way in developing deeply affordable housing on church-owned land. these

projects should reflect the real incomes of congregates, neighbors and ensuring seniors and working families an remain rooted in Jamaica. Beyond Housing, the church buildings and properties can serve as a hub with services that strengthen families and improve daily lives such as childcare, after school programs, food assistance, and senior support. For us, southeast Queens is more than just a place we serve. It is our home. I was raised in this community. I was educated here, and I've coached, mentored, and ministered to generations of children and families who call this neighborhood our home. I learned the greatest vision of my father was to develop affordable senior housing right here in southeast Queens, ensuring that families who built their lives here could remain here, that they could pass on generational wealth and stability to their children and grandchildren.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you for your testimony. Your time is expired.

JOHN BOYD: [inaudible] say that dream lives on through our ministry. It is my sincere desire to see this vision fulfilled, to see a project that offers dignity, opportunity and long over-due

investment to our community that has given so much to this city. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Doctor Boyd. Next, we're going to hear from Mitchell Sternbach. Mr. Sternbach, please press star six to unmute yourself.

MITCHELL STERNBACH: Okay, good afternoon. you can hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can.

MITCHELL STERNBACH: Thank you. My name is Mitchell Sternbach. I am from Greater Jamaica Development Corporation. We're now celebrating our 58th year of service to this community, and we're thankful for the ability to testify today in strong favor of the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan. The strength of this plan is its comprehensive nature. It thoughtfully touches on a wide variety of issues, zoning, affordable housing, shopping, community space, retail shopping, commercial corridors, industrial development, investment, neighborhood character, and local infrastructure. The housing element meets the real needs of the community. It stresses the importance of deeply-affordable housing tied to actual neighborhood incomes. It calls for

more homeownership opportunities. It emphasizes that new housing must be matched with investments, schools, parks, health centers, transit, infrastructure upgrades so that the increased population density also improves quality of life. There's an oversight and accountability aspect to it. It respects the neighborhood character. It encourages development that encourages the scale of our neighborhoods while addressing the gaps in development and provides a clear vision for Jamaica's future. We stand in strong support of this plan. Thank you, Council Member, Dr. Williams, and Speaker Adams. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. There being no questions for this panel, this panel is excused. The last panel I'm going to call up consists of Nyisha Howell and William Scarborough. If I did not call your name, please use the raise hand function on Zoom if you would like to testify on this item. If you are in the chambers and want to testify, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms. Nyisha Howell, you may begin. Ms. Howell, can you please accept the promotion so you could begin? While

Ms. Howell accepts the promotion, Mr. William Scarborough, would you like to start?

WILLIAM SCARBOROUGH: Yes. Thank you, Chairperson Riley and Council Member Williams. My name is William Scarborough and I'm the President of Addisleigh Park Civic Organization. I'm here to testify in support of the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan with some important caveats. I'm a lifelong resident of southeast Queens, having grown up on what is now Guy Brewer Boulevard. I witnessed the highs and lows in the Jamaica community, including downtown Jamaica. I remember when Jamaica had three department stores, Macys, Mays [sp?], and Gertz [sp?], and three movie theaters. I also witnessed the disinvestment in Jamaica when all of these retailers and movie theaters left Jamaica and the neighborhood became crime-ridden, [inaudible] services and plagued by vacant stores and general helplessness and hopelessness and negativity. It is from this vantage point that I view the recent and current development of Jamaica. It is gratifying to see public and private investment in Jamaica. It is heartening to see the efforts to make Jamaica a destination as opposed to a pass-through. I've seen the efforts of

the Department of City Planning and Council Member Nantasha Williams to solicit the opinions of local stakeholders as to what they wish to see included in this project, and their earnest efforts to include those points of view in the final product. However, my support and optimism are tempered by several concerns. One, this community must remain affordable for the long-time residents that have been endured through the times in Jamaica. The 4,000 Mandatory Inclusionary Housing units planned for the project are laudable, but more must be done to accommodate current Jamaica residents and maintain affordable housing. Two, a sizeable number of residents in the target zone are forced to live in close proximity to heavy investor uses which create toxic conditions that have been documented to negatively impact the health of those residents. Specifically, the current M1 zones along Liberty Avenue which house waste transfer stations, concrete plants and other noxious uses cannot be upzoned to higher manufacturing zones. This plan must provide protection for those residents whose homes are in proximity to these noxious uses. The success of this plan would largely depend on the enforcement of relevant laws--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you for your testimony. Your time is expired.

WILLIAM SCARBOROUGH: [inaudible] The lack of adequate enforcement by municipal agencies has caused untold suffering to residents in Jamaica. City Planning has outlined what they'll see development in Jamaica, but whether these plans come to fruition will be largely dependent on agencies of which DCP has no control. Success will depend on commitment by the Mayor's Office and others with oversight responsibility to ensure that flood relief, infrastructure, and enforcement requirements are met. The--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Thank you, Mr. Scarborough.

WILLIAM SCARBOROUGH: proposal Council Member Williams to create a downtown Jamaica taskforce to monitor the progress is critical. Those agencies charged with--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Thank you, Mr. Scarborough. You can submit the rest of your testimony to--

WILLIAM SCARBOROUGH: [inaudible]

CHAIRPERSON RILEY:

landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you.

WILLIAM SCARBOROUGH: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Next, we're going to hear from Nyisha Howell.

NYISHA HOWELL: Yes, good afternoon, Chair, Council Member Kevin Riley, Williams and Speaker Adams and members of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. My name is Nyisha Howell. I'm the Chief of Staff City of York College CUNY President Claudia Schrader who unfortunately had a scheduling conflict today and has asked me to speak on her behalf. Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan. York College is located in the vibrant heart of downtown Jamaica, Queens which is the focal point of the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan. Investing in this plan represents not just an investment in our institution, but also in the future of more than 6,000 of students and counting who came to us with aspirations. They graduate and move into crucial fields such as health care, social work, business, technology, law enforcement, the arts, education, government, and more. To support their advancement, it's essential

to enhance our facilities with, for example, more science and technology labs, an additional building, as well as other necessary resources. The plan highlights the significance of creating safe and welcoming streetscapes around York College. This includes vital investments in lighting, landscaping, and signage all aimed at developing a pedestrian-friendly corridor. Such improvements can cultivate stronger connections both physical and social between our campus and downtown Jamaica, making the area more accessible and inviting for students, families and visitors. President Schrader also advocates for the establishment of a Downtown Jamaica Oversight Taskforce. This taskforce would play a crucial role in ensuring that the commitment outlined in the plan are monitored and realized. This accountability is particularly important for anchor institutions like York College which depends on effective, long-term planning to thrive. In conclusion, it's important to recognize that strengthening York College is not just an investment in education, but also a catalyst for local economic growth. York College is a key partner in the future of Jamaica, Queens. It's a place where students can learn and thrive, where residents can

access cultural and workforce initiatives, and where public investments can enhance the overall neighborhood ecosystem.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Ms. Howell.

NYISHA HOWELL: Thank you. The Jamaica Neighborhood Plan is vital to realizing its vision. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we're going to hear from Jermaine Sean Smith. Jermaine, if you can hear me, please unmute. You may begin. Jermaine, if you can hear me, please unmute, and you may begin.

JERMAINE SEAN SMITH: Good afternoon everyone. Thank you for this hearing. Thank you for convening, Chair Riley. Thank you for the excellent work, Dr. Williams. As a SQPA-- as Executive Director of SQPA, a nearly 50-year-old organization right there at Roy Wilkins Park serving as the only Black-run park in New York City and the only park that combines human services and green space, we understand the value of-- and the importance of the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan and what it means to a thriving southeast Queens community. We stand in

support, in full-fledged support of this program to make sure that we're bringing the right vital resources, the right amount of attention and the upkeep for the community that we need to see it move forward to the future. So, as the Chair said earlier, he likes nice and sweet. That is all that I have to say and thank you all very much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Jermaine. I appreciate it. There being no more members-- or actually, I'm going to stand at ease. If there are any members of the public who are online who wish to testify on this proposal or if there's any members in chambers who would like to testify, I'll stand at ease for 15 seconds. If you're online, please use the raise hand function. Okay, there being no other members of the public who wish to testify on Pre-considered LUs relating to the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan for ULURP number N250173CRQ, C250172ZMQ, C250171HAQ, the public hearing is now closed and the items are laid over. That concludes today's business. I would like to thank the members of the public, my colleagues, Subcommittee Counsel, Land Use, other council staff, Sergeant at Arms, and the Department of City Planning and all the city agencies

2 that came out today to testify and participate in
3 today's meeting. This meeting is hereby adjourned.
4 Thank you.

5 [gavel]

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date September 23, 2025