

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

OF THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND
FRANCHISES

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Wednesday, September 17, 2025
Start: 10:15 A.M.
Recess: 5:12 P.M.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Hon. Kevin C. Riley, Chair
Hon. Sean Abreu, Interim Chair

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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

Other Council Members Attending: Joseph, Won, and
Stevens

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

A P P E A R A N C E S

Melanie Rodriguez and Mike Reyna,
El Caldero Restaurant and Sport Bar

Nadia Busuttil and Eric Busuttil,
Green Pavilion Restaurant and Sports Lounge

Shawn Alyse Campbell,
District Manager, Brooklyn Community Board 14
RE: Green Pavilion Restaurant and Sports Lounge

Ruhel Haque,
Lava Rock Kitchen

Amin Uddin,
Landlord of 2119 Starling Avenue
RE: Lava Rock Kitchen

Lin Zeng,
Director at Queens Office of Department of City
Planning (DCP)

Hye-Kyung Yang,
Senior Lead for Special Projects at NYC
Department of City Planning (DCP)

Sarit Platkin,
Executive Director of Neighborhood Planning and
Equity Initiatives at New York City Housing
Preservation and Development (HPD)

Beth DeFalco,
Deputy Commissioner for Public Affairs for New
York City Department of Environmental Protection
(DEP)

Dylan Meagher,
Chief of Staff of Sustainability at New York City
Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES
A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Jason Banrey,
Deputy Borough Commissioner for the Department of
Transportation in Queens (DOT)

Nick Molinari,
Chief of Planning and Development at New York
City Department of Parks and Recreation

Laura Melendez,
Project Planner at New York City Department of
Parks and Recreation

Marit Larson,
Assistant Commissioner of Planning at New York
City Department of Parks and Recreation

Erich Bilal,
Chief of Staff, Bureau of Sustainability at New
York City Economic Development Corporation (EDC)

Lisa Goren,
Long Island City Coalition

Steven Edgar,
Long Island City

Donal Cogdell,
Minister of Justice at Hope Astoria Church

Andrea Mungo,
Western Queens Community Land Trust

Corey Hannigan,
Active Transportation Program Manager at Tri-
State Transportation and Member of Queens
Community Board Two

Senjuen Hsia,
21-07 40th LLC

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES
A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Alberto Cruz,
Associate Executive Director for Adult and
Community Services at Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood
Settlement Houses

Amanda McEnergy,
Associate Executive Director for External
Relations at Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood
Settlement Houses

Eliana Gibbs,
Community Engagement Director at Jacob A. Riis
Neighborhood Settlement Houses

Senator Kristen Gonzalez,
New York State Senate

Frank McCrea,
Director of Older Adult Center at Jacob A. Riis
Neighborhood Settlement Houses

Patricia Cooper,
Resident of Queensbridge

Kariesia Baton,
Founding Executive Director of Queensboro Dance
Festival; Member of Community Board Two

Kirsten Bladh,
Policy Manager at Open New York

Maria Rojas,
Seniors of Queensbridge

Valerie Green,
Resident of Queensbridge

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES
A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Audrey Hilliard,
Resident of Queensbridge Houses

Paula Chambers,
Resident of Queensbridge

Christine Hunter,
Chair of the Land Use and Housing Committee for
Queens Community Board Two

Paula Kirby,
Plaxall, Inc.

Manny Romero,
Vice President for Communications and External
Affairs at LaGuardia Community College:
On behalf of President Kenneth Adams of LaGuardia
Community College

Edjo Wheeler,
Executive Director of Culture Lab LIC

Jubaire Salim,
Representing—self

Elena Ketelsen González,
Associate Curator at MoMA PS1

Connie Butler,
Director of MoMA PS1

Kevin Douglas,
Representing self,
[Affiliated with the Floating Hospital]

Laura Rothrock,
President of the Long Island City Partnership

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES
A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Charles Yu,
Vice President of the Long Island City
Partnership

Alan Suna,
Chairman of Silvercup Studios in Long Island City

William Xu,
Vice President of United Construction and
Development Group

Rachel Cohen,
Representing—self

Matt Quigley,
Plaxall, Inc.

Jordan Hare,
Plaxall, Inc.

Peter Papamichael,
Founder of the VOREA Group

Carlo Casa,
Director of Policy and Research at the New York
Building Congress

Rob Basch,
President of the Hunters Point Parks Conservancy

Barbara Etzel,
Long Island City Resident

Jessica Sechrist,
Executive Director of the Hunters Point Parks

Chris Batres,
Council Representative for the New York District
Council of Carpenters

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES
A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Andrew Ebenstein,
Representing—self

April Adams,
Manager of Government Affairs at JetBlue Airways

Denis Ibric,
Council Representative for the New York City
District Council of Carpenters

Paolina Hsia,
Speaking on Behalf of Small Business and Property
Owners (along 21st Street between 39th and 40th
Avenue within the IBC zone)

Kevin Dantonio,
Representing—self

Austin Celestin,
Representing—self

Laura Wolf-Powers,
Western Queens Community Land Trust; Professor of
Urban Planning at Hunter College

Seth Bazacas,
Pastor at Wellspring Church NYC, Founding
Director of Renew Queens

Christopher Leon Johnson,
Representing—self

Olivia Munn-Shirsath,
Resident of Hunters Point and Pastor at
Wellspring Church

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES
A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Jackson Chabot,
Director of Advocacy and Organizing at Open Plans

Daniel Taylor,
Resident of Queensbridge Houses

Kenny Greenberg,
Member of Queens Community Board Two

Anatole Ashraf,
Chair of Queens Community Board Two

Riley Owens,
Chair of the Transportation Committee of
Community Board Two

Jenny Dubnau,
Coalition of Community Groups in LIC & Western
Queens

Rachel Brown,
Coalition of Community Groups in LIC & Western
Queens

Pamela Herrera,
Land Justice Coordinator at the Western Queens
Community Land Trust

Memo Salazar,
Western Queens Community Land Trust and the
Coalition of Community Groups in LIC & Western
Queens

Lior Brimberg,
Parent of a Baccalaureate School for Global
Education (BSGE) Student

Dan Miller,
Resident of Astoria, Queens

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES
A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Thomas Mituzas,
Blissville Civic Association

Morry Galonoy,
Chair of the Small Business Committee for Queens
Community Board Two, and Member of the Land Use
and the Transportation Committees

Christine Garner,
Urban Design Associate at the Regional Plan
Association

Valentin Cannucci,
Long Island City Resident

Lisa Deller,
Queens Community Board Member and Former
Community Board Land Use and Community Board
Chair

Sarah Helden,
Member of Western Queens Community Land Trust,
Coalition of Long Island City Community Groups

Christina Chaise,
Second Vice President of the Resident Association
Board—On behalf of Residents of Ravenswood and
Queensbridge

Joanna Levinger,
Resident of Long Island City

Rosamond Gianutsos,
First Vice Chair of Queens Community Board Two

Sarah Dole,
Resident of Long Island City

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

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

Christian Tirado,
Parent and Member of a Baccalaureate School for
Global Education (BSGE) Parent Teacher
Association

Ping Yeung,
Resident of Long Island City

Yarianna Céspedes,
Resident of Long Island City

David Gordon,
Resident of Long Island City

Leo Guttman,
Resident of Long Island City

Nick Leung,
Resident of Long Island City

Adam Ganser,
Executive Director of New Yorkers for Parks

Sabreen Rahman,
Resident of Long Island City

Salma Haque,
Event Coordinator at BHALO, Inc.

Deborah Diggs,
Resident of Long Island City

Maddie DeCerbo,
Real Estate Board of New York

Charles Wang,
Resident of Long Island City

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

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

Brian Ferreira,
Resident of Long Island City

Nellie Afshar,
Second Vice Chair, Queens Community Board Two

Michael Zoorob,
Member of Queens Community Board Two

David Chai,
Resident of Long Island City

Émilia Decaudin,
Resident of Long Island City

Mark Follo,
Resident of Astoria, Military Veteran of the US
Navy

Ciaran Gallagher,
Resident of Long Island City

Lindsey McCormack,
Resident of Long Island City

Tyler Baldwin,
Resident of Long Island City

Vishnu Reddy,
Resident of Long Island City

Jasper Wu,
Resident of Long Island City

Salil Khanna,
Resident of Long Island City

Mandana Limbert,
Court Square Civic Association

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

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

Edith Adams,
Resident of Long Island City

Evelyn Chango,
Community Board Two

Emily Smith,
New York City Resident

Ernie Brooks,
Resident of Long Island City

Corinne Haynes,
President of Queensbridge Houses Resident
Association

2 SERGEANT SHERMAN: Good morning, this is a
3 microphone check for the Subcommittee on Zoning and
4 Franchises. Today's date is September 17, 2025. We
5 are located in the Chambers, and this is being
6 recorded by Taisha Sherman.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: (INAUDIBLE) Are we ready?

8 INTERIM CHAIR PERSON ABREU: [GAVEL]

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Council Member, one second.

10 Good morning, and welcome to the New York City
11 Subcommittee Council hearing on Zoning and
12 Franchises.

13 At this time, please silence your cell phones.
14 If you wish to testify, please go to the back of the
15 room to fill out a testimony slip. At this time and
16 going forward, no one is to approach the dais. I
17 repeat, no one is to approach the dais.

18 Chair, we are ready to begin.

19 INTERIM CHAIR PERSON ABREU: [GAVEL] Good
20 morning, and welcome to the meeting of the
21 Subcommittee of Zoning and Franchises. I'm Council
22 Member Shaun Abreu. I'm temporarily chairing this
23 committee today. This morning, I am joined by Council
24 Member David Carr.

1 Today we will have five hearings, three
2 Sidewalk Cafe applications, including:

3 LU 379 for El Caldero Restaurant and Sport
4 Bar; LU 380 for Lava Rock Kitchen; LU 381 for Green
5 Pavilion Restaurant and Sports Bar.

6 We'll also hold the hearing on LU 372 for the
7 Station Plaza Jamaica City Map Change. Note that a
8 comprehensive public hearing was held by the
9 Subcommittee on September 9th for the Jamaica
10 Neighborhood Plan, including discussion and open
11 testimony on this related action.

12 Today, we are holding a separate public
13 hearing for this mapping action pursuant to a
14 separate public notice and consistent with ULURP
15 requirements.

16 Finally, we will hold a public hearing on LUs
17 373 through 378 for the Long Island City Neighborhood
18 Plan, a series of Land Use actions to rezone a
19 portion of Long Island City in Council Member Won's
20 district in Queens, which I will describe in more
21 detail when we open that hearing.

22 First, I will go over the meeting procedures.

23 This meeting is being held in a hybrid format.
24 Members of the public who wish to testify may testify
25

1
2 in person or via Zoom. Members of the public wishing
3 to testify remotely may register by visiting the New
4 York City Council website at www.council.nyc.gov/land
5 [use](#) to sign up, or for those of you here in person,
6 please see one of the Sergeant at Arms to prepare and
7 submit a speaker card.

8 Members of the public may also view a live
9 stream broadcast of this meeting at the Council's
10 website.

11 When you are called to testify before the
12 Subcommittee, if you are joining us remotely, you
13 will remain muted until recognized by me to speak.
14 When you are recognized, your microphone will be
15 unmuted.

16 We will limit public testimony to two minutes
17 per witness. If you have additional testimony that
18 you would like the Subcommittee to consider, or if
19 you have written testimony that you would like to
20 submit instead of appearing in person, please e-mail
21 it to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Written
22 testimony may be submitted up to three days after the
23 hearing is closed. Please indicate the LU number and
24 or project name in the subject line of your e-mail.

2 We request that witnesses joining us remotely
3 remain at the meeting until excused by the Chair, as
4 Council Members may have questions.

5 Lastly, for everyone attending today's
6 meeting, this is a government proceeding, and decorum
7 must be observed at all times. Members of the public
8 are asked not to speak during the meeting unless they
9 are testifying. The witness table is reserved for
10 people who are called to testify, and no recording or
11 photography is allowed from the witness table.

12 Further, members of the public may not present audio
13 or video recordings as testimony, but may submit
14 transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant at
15 Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

16 I will now open the public hearing on LU 379,
17 a Sidewalk Cafe application by El Caldero Restaurant
18 and Sports Bar for approximately five tables and 20
19 chairs located on Jerome Avenue in the Bronx in
20 Council Member Stevens' District.

21 For anyone wishing to testify regarding this
22 proposal remotely, if you have not already done so,
23 you must register online by visiting the Council's
24 website at council.nyc.gov/landuse

For anyone with us in person, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms to submit a speaker card. If you would prefer to submit written testimony, you can always do so by emailing it to

landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov

I don't think Council Member Stevens is here with us, so I would now call on the applicant panel for this proposal, which consists of the following panelists: Melanie Rodriguez and Mike Reyna (phonetic).

Counsel, please administer the affirmation. Melanie Rodriguez and Mike Reyna (phonetic)?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Reyna and Miss Rodriguez, I'm going to ask you to raise your right hand and answer the following question.

Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, before this committee, and to respond honestly to council member questions, Mike Reyna? Melanie Rodriguez, thank you.

INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: 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.

2 And now the applicant team may begin, and I'll
3 just ask you to please restate your name and
4 organization for the record.

5 MELANIE RODRIGUEZ: Melanie Rodriguez

6 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And the
7 organization, sorry.

8 MELANIE RODRIGUEZ: El Caldero Restaurant

9 MIKE REYNA: El Caldero Restaurant

10 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you, and you
11 may now present.

12 MIKE REYNA: We're just looking here to present
13 the application. We already received everything like
14 that.

15 UNKNOWN: (INAUDIBLE)

16 MIKE REYNA: Okay, we already presented the
17 application to the government, and we received some
18 information that we needed to reduce it, which we
19 did. We're not going to use that part, and they want
20 something in writing (INAUDIBLE) like that, so we're
21 going to do a small section on it, which is in the
22 paperwork that we submitted.

23 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Can you please
24 restate what it is that you're changing?

1
2 MIKE REYNA: Well, they are saying-- We have
3 some tables and chairs inside on top of the doors of
4 the basement on the sidewalk. So they wanted us to do
5 something else to the structure there. So we didn't
6 do that. We removed that and we put it on the side.

7 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. I am checking
8 to see if my colleague, Council Member Stevens, has
9 any questions.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Just give us a minute,
11 please, thank you.

12 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So my understanding
13 is that the council member has concerns about
14 pedestrian safety at this establishment. Can you
15 speak to those concerns? Please make sure your mic is
16 on.

17 MIKE REYNA: What concern is this?

18 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Are you aware of
19 any pedestrian safety issues at the site?

20 MIKE REYNA: We don't think so because it's a
21 very large area, and we're just talking a side of it.
22 It's, like, the side of a restaurant, not on the main
23 street. Jerome is like...

24 MELANIE RODRIGUEZ: 169...
25

1 MIKE REYNA: 169 Street, which is a big area
2 there.
3

4 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So you don't find
5 any... (CROSS-TALK)

6 MIKE REYNA: We did the measurement and
7 everything like that.

8 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. And there are
9 no other-- You're not aware of any other pedestrian
10 safety issues at the site?

11 MIKE REYNA: Not at all.

12 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay. Well, we'll
13 wait-- we'll give the council member another minute
14 to get here. If not, we will proceed to the next
15 panel.

16 MIKE REYNA: Okay.

17 (PAUSE)

18 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you for your
19 patience. We're going to stand at ease for a few
20 minutes.

21 (PAUSE)

22 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: All right, this
23 panel is excused. And we will not put this specific
24 hearing into recess.
25

2 MIKE REYNA: We need to come back, or we can
3 leave? That's it?

4 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: You've been
5 excused.

6 MIKE REYNA: Thanks.

7 (PAUSE)

8 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I will now open the
9 public hearing on LU 381, a Sidewalk Cafe application
10 by Green Pavilion Restaurant and Sports Bar for
11 approximately six tables and 15 chairs located on
12 18th Avenue in Council Member Joseph's District in
13 Brooklyn.

14 For anyone wishing to testify regarding this
15 proposal remotely, if you have not already done so,
16 you must register online by visiting the Council's
17 website at council.nyc.gov/landuse.

18 For anyone with us in person, please see one
19 of the Sergeant at Arms to submit a speaker card. If
20 you would prefer to submit a written testimony, you
21 can always do so by emailing it to
22 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

23 Chair-- No, not Chair, sorry, Council Member
24 Joseph, you have a statement?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Yes.

2 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Go ahead.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Council
4 Member Abreu.

5 Thank you for the opportunity to present this
6 testimony regarding Land Use Application Number 381
7 concerning the request by Green Pavilion Restaurant
8 and Sports Lounge, located in my district at 4307
9 18th Avenue in Brooklyn, NY 11218, for a revocable
10 consent to operate a sidewalk cafe under Section 19-
11 160.2 of the New York City Administrative Code.

12 At the outset, I want to acknowledge that
13 thriving local businesses are a vital component of a
14 strong and vibrant community. We recognize the value
15 that restaurants and hospitality establishments bring
16 to the Council District 40 in New York City at large,
17 not only through economic activity and job creation,
18 but also as gathering spaces for families and
19 neighbors. As a council member representing the
20 mighty Council District 40 and its residents, I
21 remain committed to fostering a positive,
22 collaborative relationship with small businesses. I
23 often use small business spaces for social and
24 community events. However, we must also be honest
25 that serious public safety concerns have been brought

1 to my attention regarding this establishment. Those
2 concerns cannot be ignored as we consider this
3 application for expanded use of public space.

4 According to the conversations and emails we have
5 received, the Green Pavilion has been linked to a
6 troubling series of incidents that have raised red
7 flags with law enforcement, local residents, and
8 community leaders.

9
10 The Community Board 14 Team contacted us,
11 reported from NYPD 70th Precinct, and detailed the
12 following incidents that occurred in the vicinity of
13 the establishment, with the majority of which
14 happened during late night or early hours:

- 15 • April 21st, there was a felony assault.
- 16 • April 28th, workers were reportedly beaten.
- 17 • May 8th, a woman was assaulted, and an
18 arrest was made.
- 19 • July 5th, there was a stabbing incident.
- 20 • August 11th, there was a robbery and
21 shooting.

22 These incidents are significant enough to
23 prompt the precinct's then commanding officer to sign
24 a dedicated post at the location for certain hours,
25 suggesting that these are not isolated cases but part
of a pattern of late-night disorder.

1 In addition, we have received corroborated
2 complaints from local residents, including one
3 particular detail: the passionate message from a
4 neighbor who had lived through the chronic
5 disturbance associated with this establishment. This
6 resident described ongoing noise complaints, often
7 until 6:00 a.m., frequent street fighting and
8 altercations, and a shooting occurring just as
9 children were arriving from school.
10

11 General fear and concern about the
12 establishment is a blight and a source of terror for
13 nearby families. Given this pattern of troubling
14 activities, we cannot in good faith recommend
15 approval of a Sidewalk Cafe application to expand the
16 use of public space and potentially the hours of
17 operation without a clear and credible plan of action
18 from the owner.

19 That said, the goal of this call-up is not to
20 punish, but to partner. We believe that safe,
21 respectable, community-oriented businesses should be
22 supported, but support must be earned through
23 accountability and transparency.

24 We respectfully ask the owner of Green
25 Pavilion:

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 25
2 1. To appear before the subcommittee today to
3 address these concerns directly with
4 sincerity.

5 2. Present a concrete Safety Compliance Plan
6 which includes: adjusted hours of operation,
7 enhanced private security measures,
8 collaboration with the 7-0 Precinct and
9 local Community Board, a commitment to
10 regular communications with nearby
11 residents, outlined steps taken to de-
12 escalate late-night disturbances to prevent
13 further violence or public disorder.

14 This application will not be considered in a
15 vacuum. Public sidewalk space is a shared community
16 resource, and any extension of use must reflect the
17 values, safety, and expectations of our residents.

18 My team and I are ready and willing to work
19 collaboratively with business owners and all relevant
20 stakeholders to find a path forward, but we must
21 ensure that path leads to a safe, safer, more
22 respectable, and community-positive outcomes for all
23 parties involved.

24 We encourage the Green Pavilion to engage in
25 this process in good faith, take the concern

1
2 seriously, and come forward with a detailed,
3 transparent plan that demonstrates their commitment
4 to being better neighbors and a responsible business.

5 Thank you for your attention, and I look
6 forward to hearing your testimony and asking a few
7 questions. Thank you, Council Member.

8 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you, Council
9 Member. I will now call the applicant panel for this
10 proposal, which consists of remote panelists, Nadia
11 Vega Busuttill and Eric Sean Busuttill, and my
12 apologies if I am mispronouncing your last name.

13 NADIA BUSUTTIL: Hi, good morning, are you able
14 to hear me well?

15 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Yes. Yes.

16 NADIA BUSUTTIL: Okay, my name is Nadia
17 Busuttill...

18 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Excuse me...

19 NADIA BUSUTTIL: Eric Busuttill is not able to
20 be here today... (CROSS-TALK)

21 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Sorry, one second.
22 The counsel is going to administer the affirmation.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell the
24 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,
25

1 before this subcommittee, and in answer to all
2 council member questions?

3 NADIA BUSUTTIL: I do.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

5 NADIA BUSUTTIL: I can now speak?

6 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: You may begin, and
7 please restate your name and organization.

8 NADIA BUSUTTIL: Hi, my name is Nadia Busutttil,
9 and I am representing Adboni Restaurant Corp, DBA
10 Green Pavilion Restaurant and Sports Bar. That's my
11 name and the business. I just wanted to address, of
12 course, the concerns that Rita Joseph has spoken of.

13 This establishment has been here for 43 years
14 successfully. And my father owns the business. We
15 have become very close to our community and our
16 neighbors over the past four decades. We do have a
17 strong relationship with the 7.0 precinct. And the
18 concerns that were mentioned, some of which we do
19 take accountability for, but some-- most of the
20 things said are not accurate. I'm not sure where the
21 information was, you know, received from, or who gave
22 that information, so I just want to explain that.

23 You know, we're doing all we can every day in
24 terms of safety. We've had this outdoor seating since
25

1
2 COVID. It's helped us, you know, strive as a
3 business. Like I said, thank you, this is actually
4 not an updated picture of the outdoor seating, we
5 actually are in compliance. Our application was, you
6 know, successfully accepted by the Community Board
7 14. The outdoor seating has allowed us to engage more
8 with the community. We're very close with the
9 neighbors around the corner from us on Lawrence
10 Avenue, which is a cerebral palsy institution. A lot
11 of customers come from there, as well as the 70th
12 Precinct.

13 We hold a lot of family events, weddings,
14 birthday parties that, you know, like I said, over
15 the past four decades have been, you know, this place
16 has been a hub for families, and this is a family
17 place. The things that have been occurring within the
18 vicinity of the restaurant, you know, not all of it
19 can be predicted, nor are we at fault with
20 everything.

21 But in terms of the hours of operation, we
22 operate from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. We are a bar, an
23 established bar. We have a license for that. Let me
24 see, I just want to, I just want to point out that we
25 do have a security guard during the evening, uh,

1
2 hours of when the bar is open. During the bar hours,
3 we do search people, and we take IDs. You know, we do
4 all that we can, and we have been doing all that we
5 can for the past 43 years. Unfortunately, the
6 neighborhood has been changing over the years, and
7 some things we do not have control over,
8 realistically.

9 So, you know, we do provide a clean, safe
10 outdoor area that has enhanced the atmosphere of the
11 neighborhood. We are one of the very few long-
12 standing businesses in Kensington, Brooklyn. We're a
13 very unique place that holds, you know, different
14 family events like I said. We are very, you know,
15 community-driven, and it's a shame of what has been
16 going on within this neighborhood.

17 We do work with the 7.0 precinct very closely.
18 We cooperate with them very closely. You know and I
19 know that the past few months have not made the place
20 look, you know, the best, and we are taking, you
21 know, the measures to make sure that, you know, we're
22 doing all that we can. And some things, you know, we
23 can't do, you know, everything in terms of safety.
24 The people outside, we can't control them. We have a
25 24-hour camera surveillance, and we have a security

1 guard. Like I said, our hours of operation are 7:00
2 a.m. to 4:00 a.m. You know, we want to keep this
3 outdoor seating. It helps with our customers who are
4 wheelchair bound. People do hold parties here. It is
5 very inviting. Like I said, this is not an updated
6 picture. Our picture is in compliance-- I mean, our
7 outdoor seating is in compliance. It's actually open
8 air. You know, I just want-- I came to testify today
9 to explain that (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)
10

11 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you. Council
12 Member Joseph, do you have any questions for the
13 applicant?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: The incidents that I
15 reported in this testimony today were submitted to us
16 by 7.0. The 7.0 is also very concerned. They had to
17 post someone outside. And as I said, I'm not here to
18 get you, but I would love to see a plan of action as
19 to what will happen for the safety of our
20 communities, right? They are young children, there
21 are families, and the disturbances have been a lot,
22 and there have been complaints. We received a slew of
23 complaints. So my thing here is not to find excuses,
24 but I would really love to see some transparency,
25 some accountability, and some responsibility.

1 NADIA BUSUTTIL: Yes, I'm absolutely taking
2 accountability. Like I said, we do have a security
3 guard. We do, you know, we do cooperate with the
4 police, and any camera evidence that they need, you
5 know, we've provided. We do everything up to code,
6 you know, we have a valid liquor license. We have a
7 valid food establishment for the past 40 years. I'm
8 not making excuses. I feel like this has been a bad
9 run, a bad year in terms of the neighborhood, and
10 we're doing all we can on our end, the best we can as
11 a restaurant. We are a restaurant. We have many
12 customers that do enjoy us being here and are very
13 loyal to us. Many, many families over the past 43
14 years have, you know, can speak on that. And I wish
15 that we could have those people here today, to you
16 know, not say the negative things that are happening,
17 you know, around our vicinity, not in our vicinity.
18 Not in, I'm sorry, not in the establishment. You
19 know, we are more than just those incidents that have
20 happened this past year. You know, the past 43 years,
21 I feel like we should have some credit in that sense
22 of being successful for that long, and not having
23 these types of terrible issues for that long...

24 (CROSS-TALK)
25

1 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I have a question
2
3 for you.

4 NADIA BUSUTTIL: Uhm, and...

5 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Would you be
6 willing to submit to the Council Member a plan that
7 she can review and take back to her constituents?

8 NADIA BUSUTTIL: Absolutely, we can do that.

9 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Council Member,
10 when would you like that plan?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Yeah, then, that's what
12 I had said in my statement. I want to see a plan, and
13 I gave her five bullets. If she wants our office to
14 email it to her, I would love to do that gladly. Like
15 I said at the beginning of my statement, it's to work
16 with small businesses and support them, but when they
17 become a problem in the community, and we get a lot
18 of emails and complaints—for shootings, for
19 stabbings, for assault, then it becomes a problem.
20 It's a shared space, and this is a community.

21 NADIA BUSUTTIL: Yes, you can email that over
22 to me. That would be great, and I can have that
23 safety plan sent to you today as soon as possible. We
24 are taking accountability, and we hope that, you
25 know, we plan and we hope that things like this won't

1 continue to happen within our vicinity of this block.
2
3 And we are a positive force in this community. And I
4 hope that we can express that or somehow prove to you
5 that, you know, being here has been a positive
6 experience for, you know, the majority of our
7 customers and the majority of our community.

8 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you. If there
9 are no other questions, Council Member?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: I'm good, thank you,
11 Chair.

12 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: All right, you are
13 excused, thank you so much.

14 NADIA BUSUTTIL: Thank you.

15 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Counsel, are there
16 any members of the public who wish to testify
17 remotely or in person regarding this proposal?

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We have Shawn Campbell, who
19 has registered remotely to testify on this item.
20 Shawn Campbell?

21 (PAUSE)

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

23 SHAWN CAMPBELL: Hello. Thank you very much for
24 this opportunity. I appreciate Council Member Rita
25 Joseph's work on this particular application. I'm

1
2 Shawn Campbell, District Manager at Community Board
3 14.

4 I'm concerned about the process itself, in
5 that when community boards only have 30 days, and
6 this hearing was scheduled for and was held on August
7 7th by a committee of the whole of Community Board
8 14. At that time, we did not have information from
9 the NYPD that followed the shooting that took place
10 on August-- the morning of August 11th. And because
11 the application was due on the 18th, our
12 recommendation on the 18th, the Community Board had
13 no time to then revisit the application at the
14 community level with community members who have since
15 come forward expressing concerns about the location.

16 And I understand the applicant's testimony
17 about a long track record of no negative incidents.
18 But I'm concerned about the trajectory that we're on.
19 I would urge the Committee, urge the Council Member
20 to consider some space in between the time that an
21 application is approved, if that's where this is
22 going, in order for the establishment to sort of
23 regain the trust and comfort level of the surrounding
24 community, and then allow the Community Board time
25 and space to bring those comments back into an arena.

2 Because it wasn't just one incident, the
3 information from NYPD suggests that more than one
4 thing has been going on in the establishment, and not
5 just nearby. And it seems as though it's violence of
6 an escalating manner. And so I do wish to express
7 those concerns and recommend that we exercise caution
8 and take this slowly.

9 And then finally, recommend that (TIMER) the
10 City Council review the process by which there's no
11 way...

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired. Thank
13 you.

14 SHAWN CAMPBELL: (INAUDIBLE) a 30-day
15 recommendation. Thank you.

16 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you so much.
17 The witness panel is now excused.

18 Counsel, are there any individuals here
19 waiting to testify?

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Chair, there are no
21 other witnesses registered to testify on this item.
22 Thank you.

23 (PAUSE)

24 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: There being no
25 other members of the public who wish to testify on LU

1
2 381 related to Green Pavilion Restaurant and Sports
3 Lounge Sidewalk Cafe application, the public hearing
4 is now closed, and the item is laid over.

5 (PAUSE)

6 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I will now open the
7 public hearing on LU 327 related to the Station Plaza
8 Jamaica City Map Changes, an application by the New
9 York City Department of Transportation and the New
10 York City Economic Development Corporation to change
11 the City Map to facilitate the construction of two
12 pedestrian plazas as part of the Station Plaza
13 Enhancement Project in Downtown Jamaica, Queens in
14 Council Member Williams' and Council Member Gennaro's
15 districts.

16 As I mentioned at the opening of today's
17 remarks, a comprehensive public hearing was already
18 held on the Jamaica Neighborhood Plan on September
19 9th. That hearing included a discussion and open
20 testimony for this related action. We are holding
21 today's public hearing for this mapping action,
22 consistent with ULURP requirements.

23 Counsel, has any member of the public
24 registered to testify for this application?

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Mr. Chair, there are no
3 registrations for this item, and no one in person
4 signed up to testify.

5 (PAUSE)

6 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: There being no
7 other members of the public who wish to testify on
8 the LU 372, related to the Station Plaza Jamaica City
9 Map Changes, the public hearing is now closed and the
10 item is laid over.

11 (PAUSE)

12 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: I will now open the
13 public hearing on LU 380, a sidewalk café application
14 by Lava Rock Kitchen for approximately 24 tables and
15 46 chairs, located on Starling Avenue in the Bronx in
16 Majority Leader Fariás' district.

17 For anyone wishing to testify regarding this
18 proposal remotely, if you have not already done so,
19 you must register online by visiting the Council's
20 website at council.nyc.gov/landuse.

21 For anyone with us in person, please see one
22 of the Sergeant at Arms to submit a speaker card.

23 If you would prefer to submit written
24 testimony, you can always do so by emailing it to
25 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

1 The Majority Leader is unable to join us in
2 person today to participate directly, but she has
3 provided a statement, which I will now read on her
4 behalf:
5

6 "Thank you to Chair Riley for the time and for
7 reading the statement on my behalf today. I made the
8 call-up request for this application in order to
9 ensure that there was a thorough and accurate review.

10 The Sidewalk Cafe's proposed location is on
11 Starling Avenue, the center of Bangla Bazaar, one of
12 the busiest corridors in the district. Within one
13 block of the proposed location, there is a highly
14 used playground and several schools. PS 106 has an
15 exit and entrance on the very same block on Odell
16 Street. Every afternoon, hundreds of students and
17 families move through this same stretch of sidewalk—
18 add to that, the tutoring center in the same building
19 with an entrance directly next to the proposed
20 sidewalk café. The sidewalk distance and space is
21 really the crux of the issue before us. What remains
22 of paramount importance is whether there is enough
23 safe walking space. On Starling Avenue and Odell
24 Street, with schools, businesses, and apartment
25 buildings all converging, the narrowing of the

1 sidewalk can make a significant impact on pedestrian
2 traffic flow. I appreciate the applicant's
3 cooperation to date, and I encourage this continued
4 collaboration toward a safe and workable solution. We
5 want to ensure this plan leaves enough room for the
6 children, families, and community members who use the
7 sidewalk every single day to do so without
8 constraint."

9
10 I will now call the applicant panel for this
11 proposal, which consists of Ruhel Haque and Amin
12 Uddin, Counsel. Please administer the affirmation.
13 Ruhel and Amin?

14 AMIN UDDIN: Hello, good morning.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: For the application
16 panelists, if you can hear me, do you affirm to tell
17 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
18 truth, before this subcommittee, and in answer to all
19 council member questions?

20 PANEL AFFIRMS

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

22 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you. For the
23 viewing public, if you need an accessible version of
24 this presentation, please send an email to request to
25 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

1
2 And now the applicant team may begin, and I
3 will just ask you to please restate your name and
4 organization for the record.

5 RUHEL HAQUE: My name is Ruhel Haque of Lava
6 Rock Kitchen.

7 AMIN UDDIN: My name is Amin Uddin. I am the
8 landlord of the property, 2119 Starling Avenue.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

10 RUHEL HAQUE: We submitted the application to
11 the government, to City Hall, and I received an email
12 from the City Council regarding some-- the issues
13 with the drawings. And I spoke with Mr. Curtain from
14 Ms. Fariás' office, with questions about the nearby
15 entrance, the light post, uh, the distance from the
16 light post, as well as the Ahsan's Learning Center,
17 which is on the second floor of the restaurant, on
18 the main entrance, on the left side, which is the
19 main entrance to (INAUDIBLE) to the second floor. I
20 was advised to clarify the distance. And we are
21 working on it now.

22 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: All right, since
23 your restaurant is located on the main road of
24 Starling Avenue, which is one block from Concerta
25 Playground, PS 106, and Saint Raymond High School for

1 Boys, in addition to MS 127 two blocks away, concerns
2 about pedestrian flow have been identified.

3
4 Do you believe that there will be major
5 pedestrian concerns for your sidewalk café,
6 especially since there is a tutoring center within
7 your building that has an entrance directly next to
8 your sidewalk café? In addition, right next to
9 Ahsan's entrance is the entrance for the Daka Digital
10 Printing, which will add to the traffic flow.

11 So, do you believe that there will be a major
12 pedestrian concern for your sidewalk café?

13 RUHEL HAQUE: Regarding Ahsan's Learning
14 Center, they're open only, I believe, on the
15 weekends, Saturdays and Sundays. If I may, and the
16 Daka Digital Printing, uh, to my knowledge, I do not
17 see a lot of crowds from the students from Ahsan's
18 center, because they are not open Monday through
19 Friday, they are just open on the weekends, from, I
20 believe, from morning to 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. I'm not
21 sure exactly of their business hours.

22 So, the main entrance, uh, the main, on
23 Starling Avenue, I do not see that it is going to be
24 really crowded, because of the students from the
25 learning center.

1
2 AMIN UDDIN: And if I may, the-- we are looking
3 at the application here, on Starling Avenue, there's,
4 uh, from the curb up until where the tables are
5 proposed to begin for Lava Rock Kitchen, there is 10
6 feet of space. And on Odell Street, on the other side
7 of the sidewalk, the proposed sidewalk café, there is
8 a distance of roughly 8.5 feet, I believe from the
9 curb to where the proposed seating begins, which we
10 believe should be enough to ensure that there is
11 enough space for, you know, typical and even, you
12 know, more traffic flow than usual, especially around
13 school, business (INAUDIBLE) time. We believe it
14 should be okay.

15 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So the tutoring
16 center you said is open just primarily on the
17 weekends, and you're not seeing a lot-- you're not
18 seeing much traffic from the digital printing center?

19 RUHEL HAQUE: Uh, yes.

20 AMIN UDDIN: Yeah, the-- it doesn't coincide
21 with the restaurant opening hours. The restaurant is
22 mainly busy in the late afternoon, and the tutoring
23 center is mainly busy in the morning time.

24 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And the... What are
25 your-- what-- do you know the hours of the tutoring

center on the weekend and your business hours on the weekend? Is there any overlap there?

RUHEL HAQUE: The restaurant's business hours on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday are from 3:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m.

INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay.

RUHEL HAQUE: And Monday, we are closed. And Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, we are open from 4:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

AMIN UDDIN: And the learning center hours, I am checking on Google right now, uh, they are open Saturday, Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: So, there's not much overlap on the weekends, uh, for the, uh, for the learning center?

AMIN UDDIN: Yes... (CROSS-TALK)

INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: for the tutoring center.

And on the weekends, probably not much overlap with schools either. But, during the week, uhm, there is definite overlap. I want to ask the question on behalf of the Majority Leader: if pedestrian traffic becomes an issue, what would you do to try to, you

1 know, reduce the issue, to mitigate the issue? If it
2 becomes an issue?

3
4 AMIN UDDIN: If it becomes an issue, we can
5 reduce the size, I guess, or the width of the—
6 particularly on Odell Street. We can reduce the width
7 of the tables. Instead of putting two tables across,
8 we can just stick one table in order to better
9 facilitate traffic flow.

10 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: And you are willing
11 to speak to the local council member on that-- on
12 your plan, uh, should pedestrian traffic become an
13 issue?

14 RUHEL HAQUE: Yes.

15 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Do you plan on
16 seating patrons outside, all the way to closing, to
17 11:00 p.m.?

18 RUHEL HAQUE: The last seating is, like, let's
19 say for the weekend, it's 10:30, the kitchen closes
20 at 11:00 p.m. That's, yes, that is ideal, at least
21 for summer, yes, maybe not for the winter.

22 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: But you are saying
23 on weekends, uh, most certainly, maybe not every
24 other-- I mean, if you could just provide clarity to
25

1 the Majority Leader on that, I am sure that would be
2 helpful information to have.

3
4 RUHEL HAQUE: Sure.

5 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: My last question on
6 this: Will you have security or a member of staff
7 monitoring the sidewalk café in case the dismissal of
8 students causes issues with the café setup or your
9 property?

10 RUHEL HAQUE: Yes, we can have a member of
11 staff just making sure everything is okay, and there
12 are no issues with the students or anything, uh,
13 coming into contact or getting injured or anything
14 potentially happening, uh, we could keep a member of
15 staff on it.

16 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Okay, give me one
17 second.

18 (PAUSE)

19 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Do any other
20 council members here have any questions for this
21 panel?

22 (PAUSE)

23 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you. This
24 panel is excused.

25 AMIN UDDIN: Thank you.

1 RUHEL HAQUE: Thank you.

2 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Counsel, is there
3 anyone else signed up to testify?
4

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Mr. Chair, there are
6 no, uh, there is no one signed up to testify on this
7 item.

8 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: There being no
9 other members of the public who wish to testify on LU
10 380, relating to the Lava Rock Kitchen Sidewalk Café
11 application, the public hearing is now closed and the
12 item is laid over.

13 (PAUSE)

14 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you. I will
15 now reopen the public hearing on LU 379 for the El
16 Caldero Restaurant and Sport Bar. We opened this
17 hearing earlier today, and it was put into recess. I
18 reopen the hearing so that we can hear a statement
19 from Council Member Stevens.

20 Council Member Stevens?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER STEVENS: Hello, good morning.
22 I'm sorry I'm not there in person. I just wanted to
23 make sure that a couple of items were talked about
24 while we're thinking about the sidewalk café.
25

2 First, I just want to say El Caldero is an
3 amazing partner, and we really appreciate having them
4 in the community. They provide very nutritious food,
5 and they have always-- they've been a place that
6 we've used for catering. However, the sidewalk café
7 is what I have a couple of concerns about.

8 My first concern is when talking with El
9 Caldero, they were told that they can actually
10 already set up their sidewalk café by DOT, before the
11 application was approved. So I'm concerned that even
12 in this process, there's a disconnect in how the
13 process should be played out and what that should
14 look like. So that's my first concern.

15 In addition, although this area is no longer
16 zoned for auto shops and auto mechanics, there are
17 two auto shops directly across the street from where
18 the sidewalk café would be. So, I think that we need
19 to consider the safety hazards of people eating so
20 close to where cars are being fixed. Fumes are being
21 zoomed into the air, and so I'm really concerned
22 about the safety of people eating outside.

23 My last point is that this is on and near
24 Jerome Avenue, where there's an elevated train right
25 across the street from the 4.4 Precinct that has a

1
2 fleet yard there. So we often have cars double-parked
3 and triple-parked outside of there. So it's already a
4 very congested area. So, to add a sidewalk café, I
5 believe we'll just continue to add to the congestion.
6 And like I said, there are two auto mechanics, often
7 there are cars being worked on right outside, under
8 the train station, and right across the street from
9 it, on the street. So, I think that, with all of
10 those things still being present in the area, we need
11 to address those issues before we consider any
12 sidewalk cafés in this area. Because, right now, it's
13 just not equitable for residents in the community to
14 be able to move freely, with both the congestion and
15 the auto mechanics still being there.

16 Please let me know if there are any questions
17 or concerns that folks would like to address.

18 INTERIM CHAIRPERSON ABREU: Thank you, Council
19 Member Stevens.

20 With that, the public hearing on LU 379 for
21 the El Caldero Sidewalk Café is now closed, and the
22 item is laid over.

23 (PAUSE)

24

25

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Good morning. I just wanted to thank Council Member Abreu for starting the hearing today.

I will now open the public hearing on LUs 373 through 378 for the Long Island City Neighborhood Plan. This is a city proposal to rezone a portion of Long Island City located in Council Member Won's district. The proposed actions include Zoning Map amendments, acquisitions, and site selections by the city designation of an urban development action area, approval of an urban development action area project, the disposition of the city-owned Properties, City Map amendments, and Zoning Text amendments, including modifying and expanding the special Long Island City mixed-use district and establishing mandatory inclusionary housing.

On a technical note, I want to note that there is an additional related action for a City Map amendment for this plan, which has been approved by the City Planning Commission, which will be introduced at our next Stated Meeting and will have a public hearing at a future date.

However, because it is related to the overall Long Island City Neighborhood Plan, it will be

1 included as part of today's presentation and
2 discussion.
3

4 Altogether, these actions seek to create
5 approximately 14,700 units of housing, including up
6 to 4,700 affordable units, create a connected,
7 resilient, and accessible waterfront, and meet the
8 infrastructure and community needs of a growing
9 neighborhood.

10 Today, we will have the opportunity to discuss
11 with the Administration how these goals will be met,
12 including the creation of housing that our
13 constituents can actually afford, providing new
14 school seats and public open space, and ensuring that
15 the water and sewer infrastructure capacity will meet
16 the needs of the community into the future.

17 For anyone wishing to testify regarding this
18 proposal remotely, if you have not already done so,
19 you must register online by visiting the Council's
20 website at council.nyc.gov/landuse.

21 For anyone with us in person, please see one
22 of the Sergeant at Arms to submit a speaker's card,
23 and please indicate if you're in support or in
24 opposition of this proposal.
25

2 If you prefer to submit written testimony, you
3 can always do so by emailing it to
4 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

5 I would now like to give the floor to Council
6 Member Won for opening remarks.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you so much, Chair
8 Riley.

9 Good morning, everyone. It's so good to see
10 you. My name is Julie Won. I'm currently the council
11 member who represents the 26th District, which
12 includes Long Island City.

13 Our goal together, collectively, when we first
14 embarked on this journey two years ago, was to
15 promote equitable growth in Long Island City and to
16 ensure that our neighborhood is equipped with the
17 resources it needs to thrive for our current
18 residents and for the generations to come.

19 Today, we're here to discuss the One Island
20 City Neighborhood Plan (OneLIC), which seeks to
21 increase the supply of permanently affordable
22 housing, expand open space opportunities, waterfront
23 access, promote job growth, address critical
24 infrastructure and capacity needs, arts and culture,
25

1
2 and plan for the future resiliency of Long Island
3 City.

4 After seeing how previous rezonings in this
5 particular area in District 26 and Long Island City
6 overall have lacked sufficient infrastructure
7 investments to support the growing community and have
8 disproportionately benefited property owners and
9 developers, I recognize the need for a comprehensive
10 neighborhood planning process in Long Island City,
11 one that considers all aspects of what makes a
12 community thrive.

13 If you feel like you're having a flashback or
14 you're in Deja Vu, where you may have sat in this
15 hall before about this very project, you're right!
16 You're not having a Deja Vu. This project has failed
17 four times before me with my predecessors. You know,
18 sometimes the fifth time is a charm. Maybe, maybe
19 not. We'll see how it goes today with the agencies—
20 but over the past two years, we have collaborated
21 with the Department of City Planning to engage local
22 residents and community organizations to better
23 understand community needs and develop a shared goal
24 for the plan, all of which has guided the ultimate
25 proposals we are discussing here today.

1 I know many of you have spent-- We've had a
2 lot of engagement throughout this process for the
3 last two years. One that is-- that surpasses the
4 collection of the four projects that have gone before
5 us. So this isn't the total of all the surveys, but
6 for the survey. Because there were two separate
7 surveys before our survey that my office sponsored,
8 thanks to the City Council and the support of Speaker
9 Adrienne Adams, we had 2,300 survey respondents, over
10 5,700 written comments from the town halls, and the
11 focus area meetings. We've had canvassers knock on
12 more than 4,900 doors at Queensbridge Houses, and so
13 much more.
14

15 And I know hundreds of people have testified
16 at both community board hearings and town hall. And I
17 thank you for coming yet again in this marathon to
18 have your voice heard again.

19 I want to thank the Department of City
20 Planning for their tireless work on this plan, as
21 well as our constituents and neighbors for their
22 extensive engagement, especially for all of the
23 advocates from Western Queensland Trust, Long Island
24 City Coalition, Hope Justice Astoria, and so much
25

1
2 more that have really come together to make sure that
3 people's voices are heard.

4 I want to also thank Community Boards One and
5 Two for their leadership. They have, for the first
6 time, I believe, passed this project in both the
7 Zoning Committee or their Land Use Committee, as well
8 as the General board. And I want to extend my
9 gratitude to our Land Use Council team, James
10 Cottone, Perris Straughter, William Vidal, and so
11 many others who have worked on this with us so far.

12 And I want to also give flowers to my
13 incredible staff, Ellie, Laura, Nick, Issac, Lilly,
14 Greg, and Farah, who have also worked very hard to
15 ensure that our community's priorities are heard by
16 the City.

17 I also want to thank my colleagues, Borough
18 President Donovan Richards, our Congresswoman, Nydia
19 Velázquez, our State Senator Kristen Gonzalez, our
20 State Assemblymember, Claire Valdez, and Zohran
21 Mamdani, who also overlap where this project
22 currently lies. And I would be remiss if I did not
23 thank all of our NYCHA residents. I know that
24 (INAUDIBLE) Settlement Houses is here today, thank
25 you so much, as well as all of our union partners, I

1 see the orange back there—carpenters proud. And I
2 know DC9 has also been present, cement and brick
3 layers, and Liuna has also been very active. So, I
4 thank you all for all of your efforts, because I know
5 you are volunteering your time.
6

7 In June, we reached a historic milestone with
8 both Community Boards One and Two passing the OneLIC.
9 Both community boards included a thorough set of
10 recommendations on stipulations in their resolutions
11 to improve the current plan to more effectively meet
12 community needs now that the New York City Planning
13 Commission has passed the plan, but this work is far
14 from complete.

15 As it stands, the One in the City Neighborhood
16 Plan lacks a tangible commitment to address community
17 needs and fund capital investments for critical
18 infrastructure in Long Island City. To gain my final
19 support of One Long Island City Plan, the City must
20 translate community needs into real, concrete
21 commitments. My red lines, or our priorities for this
22 neighborhood plan, have been clear and public.
23 Nothing has changed. So, at the bare minimum, we need
24 to make sure that there is a maximization of deeply
25 affordable and family-sized units of housing on both

1 private and public sites. And we need to create a
2 publicly accessible waterfront open space connecting
3 Gantry Park to Queensbridge Park, Con Ed, and NYPA. I
4 know you're out there somewhere. Please do the right
5 thing. We need to relocate city agencies, the
6 Department of Parks, as well as the Department of
7 Transportation, their agency operations from under
8 the Queensboro Bridge and the ramps, and restore
9 these sites back to Parks, which is included in the
10 Queensbridge Baby Park, to a publicly accessible open
11 space connecting the new waterfront with Parks' land.

12
13 To secure investments, we have to secure
14 investments in critical sewer and stormwater
15 management infrastructure to address existing
16 flooding and resiliency issues.

17 To improve neighborhood and resilience, we
18 have to build new schools to address the existing
19 school seat shortage, which currently existent
20 because the City failed to open the schools that they
21 promised when they increased density in Long Island
22 City, and students continue to be on waitlists.
23 People continue to move away from Long Island City
24 because there aren't adequate school seats for every
25 single grade level in Long Island City.

2 We must bring vacant units online at
3 Queensbridge Houses, Ravenswood Houses, and Woodside
4 Houses, and we have to make sure that there are
5 critical capital investments to improve these
6 physical conditions in our public housing units in
7 Long Island City.

8 So, without these commitments to address every
9 one of these priorities, the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan
10 will not have my support. I will vote no later this
11 fall, but we can try again next year, maybe with the
12 new Administration. Maybe.

13 We have an opportunity here to write the
14 historic wrongs in Long Island City and set a model
15 example for equitable growth that centers on
16 community needs. I will continue to fight for the
17 needs of the long-- I will continue to fight for the
18 needs of District 26 and hold the City accountable to
19 deliver a final plan that ensures Long Island City is
20 a neighborhood where current and future residents can
21 thrive.

22 I look forward to finalizing commitments of
23 these issues over the coming weeks as we begin the
24 Council's negotiations for this vote. And I just want
25 to reiterate what Commissioner Osorio, on the

1 Department of City Planning Commission, had said when
2 he voted "no" on this project earlier this month,
3 but, again, in quotes, he said, "I respectfully vote
4 no because I cannot support a proposal of this scale
5 in good conscience, leaving critical significant
6 adverse impacts unaddressed." (BABY TALKING) Yes, the
7 baby agrees. We need (LAUGHTER) more school seats.

9 And according to the final Environmental
10 Impact Statement, the list includes public schools,
11 libraries, open space, and air quality. I want to
12 underscore that this is a disadvantaged community
13 designation, underscoring the need for special
14 attention under the New York State Climate Change
15 Laws, namely the Climate Leadership and Community
16 Protections Act. Equally important, I understand the
17 future of the Vernon site is still to be determined,
18 but at that current stage of the process, I cannot
19 support a proposal until there is a guarantee that if
20 housing were to be developed here on public land, it
21 would be 100% affordable. As other commissioners have
22 mentioned, I hope these things can be addressed, but
23 I really want to continue to say that he is not alone
24 in these thoughts. These thoughts have been what have
25 prevented this rezoning from passing for decades. And

1 if the city of New York cannot right the wrongs that
2 we have made for the decades before us, then we will
3 continue not to have progress in this area, and it
4 will continue to remain how it is today,
5 underutilized, unwalkable, and sad. I see DCP
6 frowning in agreement.
7

8 But I do hope that today's conversations can
9 be fruitful, and I will turn back to the chair to
10 continue on to our hearing.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member
12 Won.

13 I will now call the applicant panel for this
14 proposal, which consists of Lin Zeng and Hye-Kyung
15 Yang from DCP; Nick Molinari, Laura Melendez, and
16 Marit Larson from the Department of Parks and
17 Recreation, Sarit Platkin from HPD, Jason Banrey from
18 DOT, Erich Bilal from EDC, and Dylan Meagher from
19 DEP.

20 Good morning, everyone. Counsel, can you
21 please administer the affirmation?

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, please raise
23 your right hands, and I will ask you in turn to
24 affirm the following: Do you affirm to tell the
25 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in

1
2 your testimony before this subcommittee, and in
3 answer to all council member questions?

4 Lin Zeng?

5 DIRECTOR ZENG: I do.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hye-Kyung Yang?

7 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: I do.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sarit Platkin?

9 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLATKIN: I do.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Beth DeFalco?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: I do.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Dylan Meagher?

13 COF MEAGHER: I do.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Jason Banrey?

15 COMMISSIONER BANREY: I do.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Nick Molinari?

17 CHIEF MOLINARI: I do.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Laura Melendez?

19 MS. LAURA MELENDEZ: (NO RESPONSE)

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Laura Melendez?

21 MS. LAURA MELENDEZ: (NO RESPONSE)

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Marit Larson?

23 ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER LARSON: I do.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Erich Bilal?

25 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: 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 to request to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

And now the applicant team may begin; I just ask that you please restate your name and organization for the record. We also have some chairs over here, so you guys can move here as well.

You may begin.

MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Good morning, my name is Hye-Kyung Yang from the New York City Department of City Planning. Good to see everyone. I'm here to present to you, on the Long Island City Neighborhood Plan, a vision for the next 10 years of growth, opportunity, and transformation of the neighborhood.

The Long Island City Neighborhood Plan is a series of land use actions developed from the OneLIC planning process, an extensive community engagement process conducted in partnership with Council Member Won, which delivered three key goals as part of a long term vision for the neighborhood to address the

1 need for affordable housing, to facilitate business
2 growth, and to address the need for open space.

3
4 First, on housing, LIC has been one of the
5 fastest growing neighborhoods in the city, with over
6 21,000 homes constructed in the past two decades.
7 However, while some income-restricted affordable
8 housing has been created through voluntary tax
9 incentive programs, current zoning does not mandate
10 the creation of affordable housing in new buildings.

11 Second, on business growth, LIC is Western
12 Queens key industrial and commercial hub. It is
13 centrally located and has excellent vehicular and
14 transit infrastructure, making it an ideal location
15 for businesses to grow and thrive.

16 And third, an open space, as Long Island City
17 continues to grow, new open space is needed to
18 increase resiliency and support community well-being.
19 With this neighborhood plan, we have the opportunity
20 to create a resilient and continuous public
21 waterfront.

22 As proposed, the Long Island City Neighborhood
23 Plan is projected to create close to 14,700 new
24 homes, of which approximately 4,300 would be
25 permanently income-restricted, affordable to New

1
2 Yorkers earning between 40 and 80% of the area's
3 median income. The plan will also create nearly 3.5
4 million square feet of new floor area for commercial
5 and community facility uses, space that would support
6 approximately 14,400 new jobs in an area with many
7 transit options.

8 The following Land Use actions are proposed to
9 encourage housing growth while requiring permanently
10 affordable housing, enlivened corridors with active
11 ground floor uses and streetscape improvements, and
12 incentivize job growth in the neighborhood. We'll
13 share more on these actions a little later in the
14 presentation.

15 We have the Zoning Map and Zoning Text
16 Amendments, which are proposed to support the area's
17 growth by applying MIH to the project area, expanding
18 opportunities for open space, improving resiliency
19 along the waterfront, and modifying the existing
20 special Long Island City mixed-use district as co-
21 applicants to this application, HPD is seeking UDAA
22 designation, UDAAP project approval, and disposition
23 to redevelop and improve city-owned land with 100%
24 affordable housing development. With co-applicants
25 DCAS and EDC, we're seeking approval for acquisition,

1 site selection, and disposition of non-residential
2 city-owned properties to improve access along the
3 waterfront.
4

5 And lastly, we're proposing City Map
6 Amendments to improve circulation near the
7 waterfront.

8 The project area covers a 54-block area in
9 Western Queens. Most of the project area is located
10 within Community District Two, with a small portion
11 located in Community District One.

12 The proposed rezoning area focuses primarily
13 on industrial areas South of NYCHA's Queensbridge
14 House campus and West of the Court Square
15 neighborhood.

16 Though parts of Long Island City have seen
17 tremendous growth in recent decades, the LIC
18 Neighborhood Plan area in particular is still
19 predominantly low-rise with more room to grow than
20 other parts of the neighborhood.

21 Today, only low-density manufacturing uses are
22 allowed across most of the plan area. Additionally,
23 there is no requirement for income-restricted
24 affordable housing to be developed if housing is ever
25 built. And although there is waterfront access plan

1 in place along the waterfront, this restrictive
2 zoning means that nothing has been developed that
3 would create public open space—next slide.

4 A short background before we get to the
5 specifics of the proposal—to create this
6 Neighborhood Plan Proposal in partnership with
7 Council Member Won, we've held 21 public meetings,
8 hearing concerns and desires from over 1,800
9 attendees.

10 These conversations have led to the following
11 five goals:

- 12 1. Create more housing for people at a range
13 of income levels.
- 14 2. Create a connected, resilient, and
15 accessible waterfront from Gantry Plaza
16 State Park to Queensbridge Park.
- 17 3. Meet the infrastructure and community needs
18 of a growing neighborhood while mitigating
19 climate impacts.
- 20 4. Support the diversity and vitality of Long
21 Island City's unique and thriving economy.
- 22 5. Make it easier for residents to access
23 Neighborhood resources and amenities.
24
25

1 So, we've broken up the project area into four
2 distinct subareas: The Waterfront, Corridors, LIC
3 Core and Queens, and Industrial Subarea.
4

5 We will use the subareas to walk through the
6 zoning proposal, beginning with the Industrial
7 Subarea.

8 Today, zoning creates a hostile environment
9 for pedestrians and constrains businesses' ability to
10 grow. The proposal calls for applying a variety of M-
11 1A Districts where maximum building heights range
12 from 155 to 245 feet. These districts encourage loft-
13 like building forms with flexible envelopes to
14 address a variety of business needs.

15 Next, we'll move to the Corridor Subarea.
16 Today, this area's zoning prohibits residential or
17 mixed-use buildings. We're proposing to introduce
18 residential uses here while still allowing commercial
19 and manufacturing uses for mixed-use development. The
20 highest densities will be allowed along 44th Drive in
21 an M1-4A or 8-A District. And to the South, shaded in
22 yellow and orange, lower densities would complement
23 the existing density just outside of the project
24 area. And along the waterfront, a high-density M1-5A
25 or 8 district would complement existing density.

1 Next, we'll move over to the LIC Core and
2 Queens Plaza Subarea. Today, the LIC Core and Queens
3 Plaza areas host a broad variety of land uses,
4 including many vacant sites ready for development.
5 The proposal would map M1-6 paired with the R-9 and
6 R-10 Districts, adjacent to transit stations and
7 existing high-density districts. The M1-6A/R10
8 District proposed to the north of Queens Plaza would
9 have a height limit of 750 feet to limit shadow
10 impacts on the adjacent Queensbridge House campus.

12 Lastly, we'll walk through the zoning proposal
13 for the waterfront subarea. Today, the waterfront is
14 mostly comprised of low to mid-rise buildings that
15 host a variety of manufacturing, auto utility, and
16 storage uses. The proposal would map an M1-6 AR9
17 district around Anable Basin and along the East
18 River, and an M1-5A/R8 District on parcels fronting
19 44th Drive.

20 Parcels without color, which include the Con
21 Edison site, are not proposed to be rezoned but are
22 subject to updated Waterfront Access Plan
23 requirements and special district regulations to
24 ensure consistency across the waterfront.

1 The LIC Waterfront Access Plan is the first
2
3 ever created in New York, but it has not delivered
4 significant public open space since then. Waterfront
5 Access Plans, which are now used across the city, are
6 meant to ensure public access and benefit when
7 waterfront property is developed in those areas, and
8 it presents an opportunity for us to gain new, high-
9 quality open space as part of this plan.

10 The proposed changes would increase public
11 access to both Anable Basin and the East River and
12 require at least 40 feet of open space along the
13 shoreline from Gantry Plaza State Park to
14 Queensbridge Park, with opportunities for expanding
15 open space through the floor area bonus. The bonus
16 would incentivize the development of community-
17 designed amenities such as performance spaces,
18 athletic fields, or playgrounds. The updates would
19 also establish a new street network that improves
20 both access and visibility.

21 The proposed actions also call to map MIH in
22 portions of the project area shown here in orange.
23 Mapping MIH with this increase in residential density
24 would produce approximately 4,000 permanently income-
25 restricted units in LIC, where there are none today.

We're not proposing to map MIH in the purple areas that make up the IBZ, because no new housing would be allowed by the plan.

The proposal also includes site-specific actions. Within the project area, there are three city-owned sites centered along 44th Drive and two sites under the ramps to the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge. I will go over these in the next few slides. While not a city-owned property, the Con Ed property located off of Vernon Boulevard is also subject to acquisition action.

During our engagement, the community envisions the three city-owned sites along 44th Drive to be used for community amenities that include housing, open space, and space for community facilities and local businesses. To meet the plan's goals of creating more housing for people at a range of income levels, co-applicant HPD is seeking a number of approvals for city-owned property at 4-59 45th Avenue to facilitate the development of approximately 320 100% income-restricted housing units and community facility space.

1 With co-applicants, DCAS, we're seeking
2 disposition of the city-owned property at 44-36
3 Vernon Boulevard and 4-99 44th Drive.
4

5 EDC currently has a request for interest on
6 the 44-36 Vernon Boulevard building, where concepts
7 to convert all or portions of the Vernon Boulevard.
8 are being sought from the public.

9 The lots under the ramps to the Queensboro
10 Bridge are also subject to disposition approval at
11 Blocks 428 and Block 429. This disposition action is
12 necessary for the City to enter into any future
13 agreements with private entities on the adjoining
14 privately owned sites. There are no known projects at
15 this time.

16 To meet the plan's goals of creating a
17 connected, resilient, accessible waterfront, DCP,
18 with applicants DCAS and EDC, is seeking acquisition
19 and site selection of Block 488, part of Lot 114,
20 which aligns with the already 900-foot-long
21 waterfront portion of the Con Edison property. This
22 is a major waterfront property occupied by Con Ed's
23 Learning Center facility, and approval of this action
24 would facilitate a continuous public connection along
25

1 the waterfront. Con Ed would maintain use of the rest
2 of the property.

3
4 The existing street network along the
5 waterfront does not provide sufficient circulation to
6 align with the proposed actions. For example, 45th
7 Avenue is only 30 feet wide, which is well below
8 citywide standards, while 44th Drive is excessively
9 wide for a street near the waterfront. In order to
10 enhance circulation and right-side streets to create
11 a distinct waterfront, we're proposing a series of
12 changes to the City Map to realign, narrow, d-map,
13 and widen portions of the street network in order to
14 map a new Loop Road connecting 45th Avenue with 44th
15 Avenue.

16 The City Planning Commission approved this
17 plan with a number of minor modifications. These
18 include technical cleanups and clarification on
19 signage regulations, height restrictions, waterfront
20 access, and street widths.

21 In addition to Land Use actions as part of
22 this one LIC planning effort, we have and continue to
23 work with electives, city agencies, and stakeholders
24 to identify support for the needs identified through
25 this neighborhood planning process, including city

1 investments in schools, affordable housing, open
2 space, and sewer infrastructure.

3
4 And to close, LIC has been through decades of
5 planning and attempts at piecemeal rezoning. While
6 Land Use updates since the 1990s have allowed much of
7 the neighborhood to grow, the One LIC Project Plan
8 area remains locked in place by decades of
9 regulations despite the City's housing shortage.

10 The One LIC plan aims to meet the City's
11 evolving needs and the needs of the neighborhood. And
12 while much of this presentation focuses on the Land
13 Use rationale and proposal that are part of the
14 overall project, as I've noted in the previous slide,
15 the plan also considers the need for capital
16 investments and City commitments that are being
17 deliberated throughout the planning review process.

18 We've been working across city agencies to
19 respond to the asks of the multiple stakeholders that
20 have interests in the health and viability of the
21 growing LIC neighborhood. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. I have a few
23 questions before I turn it over to Council Member
24 Won.

1 The Special Long Island City mixed-use
2
3 District was established in 2001 with the goal of
4 creating a new central business district in LIC. Over
5 the last 24 years, we have seen the neighborhood
6 transform into a largely high-rise residential
7 neighborhood. So three questions come with that:

8 What lessons were learned from the last two
9 decades of development in LIC that informed this plan
10 before us today?

11 Are you introducing any new urban design
12 controls that weren't part of the LIC Special
13 District for the inland portion of the rezoning and
14 separately for the waterfront portion?

15 And the third question under that is, you are
16 proposing transition heights along the waterfront
17 that will create wider towers. Has this been done
18 elsewhere on the waterfront, and how do you propose
19 transition heights compared to those other areas?

20 If you need me to repeat, I will.

21 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Thank you for your
22 question, Chair Riley.

23 We believe that the rezoning and density
24 changes are appropriate for the centrally located
25

1 transit mixed-use neighborhood, which has excellent
2 access to jobs (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

3
4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Can you talk into the
5 microphone?

6 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Oh, I'm sorry.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

8 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Can you hear me now?

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes.

10 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Okay, great... which has
11 excellent access to jobs, services, and amenities
12 with opportunities for diverse job growth and
13 workforce development.

14 As you mentioned, LIC has seen transformative
15 changes in recent decades, starting with the 1995
16 Long Island City Framework, which identified Central
17 Long Island City as an area with significant
18 potential for office, retail, and residential
19 development.

20 Over the past three decades, the global
21 economic and environmental events have changed the
22 landscape of the neighborhood. Planning efforts that
23 sought to leverage LIC's proximity to Manhattan
24 business districts and envision the neighborhood to
25 develop into a mixed-use composition for LIC with a

1 thriving commercial business district, as the main
2 catalyst for this change did not come into full
3 fruition because of the tragic historical events of
4 9/11 and soon after the Great Recession, Hurricane
5 Sandy, and most recently the global COVID-19
6 pandemic. By the late 2010s, the area had shifted to
7 a mainly residential market.
8

9 The proposal before you is consistent with
10 current citywide policies and goals to facilitate the
11 production of both market-rate and income-restricted
12 housing, particularly in high opportunity
13 neighborhoods well served by transit, and to support
14 the diverse, inclusive economy.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: How did DCP decide on the
16 proposed zoning districts and densities we see in
17 this plan? Specifically, how do densities compare to
18 the Gowanus Rezoning and the Greenpoint-Williamsburg
19 Waterfront?

20 DIRECTOR ZENG: Nice to see you again, Chair
21 Riley. Lin Zeng, Director of Queens City Planning.

22 This is an ambitious plan. The density that
23 we're proposing will create the housing that we need
24 in the city right now, and mostly because of the
25 transit connection here, which you know is what we

2 are striving to do, which is finding appropriate
3 spots to place housing units. And I think one thing,
4 you know, to note that's different from the previous
5 plans, we're also mapping MIH and having
6 affordability, which is also similar in the
7 (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: The previous LIC plans or
9 the previous...

10 DIRECTOR ZENG: No, the previous LIC plans did
11 not have mandatory inclusionary, but as part of this
12 OneLIC, there will be required affordability on
13 private sites, whereas before and right now buildings
14 are going up or are not required or mandated to have
15 affordable units there.

16 So the densities here, we believe, it is
17 appropriate. So that we can accomplish the housing
18 goals that we've been, you know, we need to solve
19 this housing crisis that we're in.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: To the densities you just
21 discussed, take into account any lands underwater
22 that also generate floor area?

23 DIRECTOR ZENG: Yes, yes. Right now, the
24 districts along the waterfront are mostly M
25 districts, manufacturing districts, so part of this

1 rezoning, we are allowing residential development.
2
3 And a big part of this plan is to require those
4 residential developments, those private site private,
5 uhm, residential developments to include public open
6 space as well. So, whereas right now the area along
7 the waterfront is completely closed off to the
8 public, uhm, implementation of this plan would open
9 this up to everybody and not just the residents who
10 would be moving in.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Staying on the waterfront,
12 since this plan includes so much of Long Island
13 City's waterfront, can you describe what the existing
14 flood risks are in this area?

15 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Thank you for your
16 question, Chair Riley.

17 We understand that (INAUDIBLE) is going to
18 keep New Yorkers safe, especially by the waterfront.
19 There's no one way to protect against the coastal
20 storms and sea level rise. Resiliency happens on
21 multiple scales and strategies across the city's
22 multi-layered system, especially along the LIC
23 waterfront, as you noted. For coastal storm flooding,
24 we look at making our buildings more resilient,
25 having structural infrastructure improvements, and

1 community preparedness. For LIC in particular, new
2 buildings in the floodplain have been designed and
3 built to higher resiliency standards to both
4 maximize-- oh, to minimize risk to life and safety as
5 well as property damage. Appendix G of the NYC
6 Building Code requires that all structures within the
7 1% annual chance floodplain must meet Flood Resilient
8 Construction standards, and these exceed FEMA
9 standards and are intended to help sites with sand
10 storm surge. A building will be required to be built
11 to withstand the flooding at least two feet above the
12 base flood elevation.
13

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Can you address how this
15 plan will be-- excuse me, will add to the resiliency
16 of the neighborhood to coastal storms and sea level
17 rise?

18 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Yes, thank you for your
19 question.

20 So, in particular, to the waterfront sites,
21 we're unlocking the development potential of the low-
22 lying, underutilized sites along the waterfront to
23 address the neighborhood's vulnerability to coastal
24 flooding. So by establishing a minimum elevation
25 within waterfront public access areas that reflects

1 the sea level rise projected in the 2100s, the
2 revitalization of the waterfront over time will help
3 protect Long Island City more broadly from tidal
4 flooding and coastal storm events. So the creation of
5 new open space along the shoreline will also
6 accommodate the additional coastal protection systems
7 in the future.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, of the approximately
10 projected 14,700 units of housing that the plan is
11 intended to produce, how does it ensure that family-
12 sized units will be built? Because if you know
13 anything about this hearing, I don't really like
14 studios, so, yeah.

15 DIRECTOR ZENG: Thank you for that question,
16 Chair Riley.

17 Yes, affordable housing is top of mind in, you
18 know, in all our projects and all our proposals right
19 now. And certainly we want to produce housing units
20 that serve, you know, recent college grads, serve
21 seniors, serve families as well. So one thing I could
22 say about this plan is that there is a public site
23 that we are proposing for disposition for 100%
24 affordable housing. And this is the site on 44th
25 Drive. So as part of that site, the City would have

1 an engagement process, a workshop that would fully
2 gather information from the public on the type of
3 housing units, and if the feedback is for more family
4 housing, we would dedicate, uh, looking for a
5 proposal that would fit that.

6
7 In terms of the private site developments, MIH
8 does allow for the development of two and three-
9 bedrooms. I believe the requirement right now, and
10 I'm joined here by Sarit Platkin from HBD, is that
11 the MIH units have to be proportional to the market
12 rate units. So if the market rate units are all two
13 bedrooms, then the MIH units will also be two
14 bedrooms as well.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: That's good to know.

16 This plan includes mapping new M zones, which
17 were created as part of the City of Yes Text
18 Amendment. How do you anticipate these new M zones
19 might impact the future growth of the LIC IBZs?

20 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Thank you for your
21 question.

22 Thank you for your question. So the existing
23 industrial business area is located just north of
24 44th Drive and South of Queens Plaza South. Today,
25 it's an M1 zone where the floor area ratio is

1 generally limited to a maximum of two to five FAE.

2 The uses allowed are commercial, industrial, and
3 community facilities. We've studied the trend of this
4 area in the last decade and understand that this area
5 is one of the economic drivers of the city, being
6 located adjacent to our growing neighborhood and
7 strong transit connectivity. Uh, industries such as
8 construction, film, and food production continue to
9 strengthen the vitality of the city. New industries
10 such as creative spaces for artisan galleries,
11 breweries, banquet halls, bakeries, and recreational
12 facilities, activities that complement the
13 residential uses surrounding this area, are growing
14 and align with supporting the new neighborhood.

15 We're working closely with Long Island's lead
16 partnership while crafting our proposal. And to help
17 continue the economic growth, we're proposing M1-A
18 districts that allow for higher development
19 allowances for commercial, industrial, and community
20 facilities to give the growing existing and new
21 creative maker space businesses flexibility to grow
22 as needed, as well as seeking complementary
23 investments in public realm and infrastructure that
24

1
2 can help this area fulfill its potential as a
3 creative and innovation-centered job district.

4 We've heard the interests of residential uses
5 within the IBC during the OneLIC engagement. And as
6 part of the legislative requirements set by City
7 Council, City Planning, in partnership with SBS and
8 EDC, just released the first draft of the Industrial
9 Plan for public feedback that looks to explore the
10 economic conditions of the industrial economy of the
11 city and the conditions of the industrial areas. We
12 look forward to further engagement on the Industrial
13 Plan this fall.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Okay. As I shared with
15 you before, I'm currently doing a neighborhood plan
16 in my district right now. So I'm going to go into
17 some questions that I currently want to know.

18 So this is for Erich. Erich, can you just
19 speak about some of the economic opportunities the
20 City foresees happening in this corridor with this
21 neighborhood plan for this community?

22 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: Thank you for the
23 question—Erich Bilal, Vice President, Neighborhood
24 Strategies, Economic Development Corporation.

1 So, I think the idea, based on the zoning
2 proposal, is that Long Island City can produce a
3 diverse economy. The idea is that a live/work
4 community can support multiple industries,
5 particularly industries that demonstrate opportunity
6 for growth. I think that there is potential here to
7 deliver commercial and residential opportunities. And
8 I suspect that with the supportive investments and
9 initiatives associated with this rezoning, a very
10 diverse economy in Long Island City would be propped
11 up.
12

13 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Is there an estimated
14 job count that you're foreseeing with this zoning
15 project?

16 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: I'll defer to my City
17 Planning colleagues for that question.

18 DIRECTOR ZENG: I believe it's about 14,000.

19 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Yes, 14,000.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Fourteen thousand jobs?

21 DIRECTOR ZENG: Yes, correct.

22 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Correct.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: (UNINTELLIGIBLE)

24 Corridor, okay.
25

2 I will defer to Council Member Won. I will
3 probably have some questions after, but Council
4 Member Won, you go ahead.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you so much. I just
6 had a follow-up question for an earlier question that
7 the Chair had asked. I remember a few months ago,
8 maybe a year ago now, we...

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: (INAUDIBLE)

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: I want to go back to a
11 question that Lin-- Commissioner had-- Borough
12 Commissioner had answered.

13 How much of this plan includes so much of the
14 Long Island City waterfront that is under the water
15 already? So, for any of the land under the water that
16 is counted as floor area to calculate density in the
17 waterfront, can you help me understand the process
18 for that, because there have been multiple
19 constituents who have pointed that out to us as well?

20 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Thank you, Council Member.

21 FAR underwater has calculated along the
22 waterfront, and so whatever the FAR has designated,
23 as you see, it takes into account the densities
24 underwater. So as I have noted, the, uhm, I'm sorry--

2 DIRECTOR ZENG: I think maybe to follow up on
3 that is, yes, some properties do have their land
4 underwater, and that would be counted towards their
5 zoning lots. But the requirement under the
6 (INAUDIBLE) access plan that we are modifying as part
7 of this plan is to require that 20% of their, you
8 know, at least 40 feet wide, that's the minimum of
9 waterfront access. So, regardless of, you know, what
10 their zoning lots' floor area is, there are still
11 standards that they need to meet so that we can
12 create a continuous waterfront.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So when we calculate the
14 40 feet, it won't be from the land that's underwater,
15 but it'll be for the area above water? (CROSS-TALK)

16 DIRECTOR ZENG: Correct from the shore. From
17 the...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: But, then, does it count
19 depending on the tide of the water? How do we
20 calculate that? That's what people are asking.

21 DIRECTOR ZENG: I think there will be a hard
22 edge. So it would be counted-- it would be 40 feet
23 from there. But we can certainly get back to you with
24 a more precise answer to that because, yeah, I don't
25

1
2 have the full list of sites and the specifics on
3 that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So, for the Waterfront
5 Access Plan, the calculation for 40 feet will be done
6 for the land that's above water. But am I
7 understanding correctly that for density, when you're
8 calculating for the density that that land is capable
9 of or entitled to include the land that's underwater?
10 I think that's what's confusing people because we're
11 not creating an underwater city over here, so... And
12 people have a lot of concerns about the density in
13 the waterfront.

14 DIRECTOR ZENG: I understand that. Thank you
15 for your question. Yes, I understand that concern.
16 The allowable floor area would consider the land
17 that's underwater as well because it is part of that
18 property.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: And how do we ensure that
20 it's taking into account the flood and mitigation
21 risks that people are so concerned about, about
22 building that height along the waterfront so close to
23 the shore?

24 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: So part of the--I think
25 the crux of the question is how do we mitigate some

1 of the impacts, like the height and density, along
2 the waterfront. So some of the tools that we have
3 with our urban design along WAP are along the basin,
4 the lowering of the base heights from the underlying
5 R9, and introducing (INAUDIBLE) a set of regulations
6 that limit the tower size and locations near the 44th
7 Drive. And then extension on 5th Street, which really
8 begins to push the buildings towards-- away from the
9 shoreline.
10

11 We're also introducing the Open Space Bonus,
12 which will expand the waterfront open space and push
13 buildings further from the shoreline in some areas to
14 protect the people and the buildings from the coastal
15 rise that you're talking about.

16 The 40 feet that you mentioned is required
17 with the shore public walkway, and some areas will
18 need to provide a supplemental public access area,
19 which will expand the width between shoreline and
20 buildings in selected locations.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, thank you, that's
22 helpful.

23 And you mentioned that Con Ed property along
24 the waterfront may be acquired by the City. Do you
25 expect to have an MOU signed with Con Ed before the

1
2 vote that will pave the way to make this become a
3 reality?

4 DIRECTOR ZENG: Thank you for your question.
5 And before I turn this over to my colleague Erich the
6 EDC, I would just like to say, you know, this was
7 definitely an idea that we share with you that you've
8 brought to the table of having this continuous
9 waterfront connecting Queensbridge Park to the North
10 and Gantry Plaza State Park to the South. And so we
11 added this acquisition action as part of OneLIC so
12 that we can see that through. Conversations are
13 ongoing. And so I think Erich would probably be more,
14 you know, can speak to the latest on that and see
15 whether we can get to it before the plan is approved.

16 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: Thank you. Thank you for
17 the question.

18 That's right. The approval of these actions
19 would allow for EDC on behalf of the City to acquire
20 an easement to facilitate the creation of that
21 publicly accessible open space and make progress
22 towards the goal of a continuous greenway continuing
23 from Gantry State Park to Queensbridge Park.

24 And EDC, on behalf of the City, is working
25 closely with City Planning and is in the process of

1 negotiating the terms of an agreement with Con
2 Edison, including any associated costs for the
3 acquisition, maintenance, and construction. Those
4 conversations have been productive, and we thank you
5 for your partnership there, Council Member. They are
6 ongoing, and the goal is to provide that continuous
7 waterfront access as robustly and quickly as
8 possible. Don't have details on timeline for
9 completion of the agreement, but we're working as
10 hard as we can.
11

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Do you believe we'll have
13 an MOU with Con Ed and NYPA to make this a reality
14 before the vote?

15 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: That's what we're
16 working towards, yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So it's a yes, we will
18 have an MOU before the vote?

19 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: I'm sorry, Council
20 Member, I can't guarantee, but that's what we're
21 working towards.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, thank you.

23 At the City Planning Vote Commission, uh,
24 Planning Commission vote on September 3rd,
25 Commissioner Dan Garodnick publicly said that this

1
2 plan doubles down on the public realm of Long Island
3 City, delivering a continuous, resilient waterfront
4 along the East River that will connect Gantry Plaza
5 State Park to Queensbridge Park.

6 Does the City commit to providing necessary
7 resiliency measures along the waterfront to protect
8 Long Island City from sea level rise, increasing
9 severe storms, considering that now, with this
10 acquisition, it would become public land—for Con Ed
11 and NYPA?

12 DIRECTOR ZENG: Those properties and those
13 developments would fall under our WAP requirements.
14 So similar to the open space that we're requiring
15 from the private site owners, these will also follow
16 the same restrictions, guidelines, and codes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So the city will invest in
18 resiliency for that waterfront?

19 DIRECTOR ZENG: Specifically, you know,
20 landscaping and, where needed, raised shoreways. That
21 is part of the larger plan, yes.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: The City has been in
23 conversation with Con Ed and NYPA, as the Vice
24 President of EDC has just testified, who owns the
25 property in the waterfront, to acquire land to create

1 this public waterfront that is connected. The Con Ed
2 and NYPA properties contribute to the segregation of
3 both Queensbridge Houses and Ravenswood Houses, which
4 are predominantly Black and brown, from the rest of
5 the neighborhood, that does predominantly happen to
6 be demographic-wise white and Asian.
7

8 What have Con Ed and NYPA done to be good
9 neighbors in the district to make this connected
10 waterfront to Queensbridge and the rest of the
11 neighborhood a reality? Can you give us more details
12 on what the conversations have been and what the
13 current process will be?

14 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Thank you for your
15 question, Council member. On your topic on your
16 question about engagement with NYCHA residents, you
17 have been at the forefront and front of engagement
18 with our (INAUDIBLE) residents since the beginning,
19 and we have multiple focus area meetings, town hall
20 events, tabling, walking tours, and everyday
21 interaction with the Queens (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-
22 TALK)

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Wait, thank you, I just
24 want to clarify that the question is...

25 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Yes, okay...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: What is the current
3 process that Con Ed and NYPA individually are
4 requesting from the city of New York to make this a
5 reality? Because that has not been public
6 information, and the public deserves to know.

7 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Thank you for your
8 question. It's my understanding that there is an
9 ongoing conversation with Con Ed and NYPA. I will
10 pass it over to our colleague at EDC.

11 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: Sure. Thank you.

12 At this early stage, the conversations have
13 been focused on planning and feasibility. We've been
14 conducting information sharing with both of those
15 groups to understand operations at their sites, to
16 understand what implementation of a waterfront
17 esplanade would look like. The impact that it would
18 have on operations. We've also been talking about
19 opportunities to provide upland connections, which
20 are a requirement as part of these projects. And I'll
21 just note that the waterfront access design
22 requirements are very strong and thoughtful. And so
23 those components of the conversation have also been
24 under discussion. Meaning, what does the final
25 topside condition look like? What does the water's

1 edge condition look like? Various feasibility
2 conversations and topics like that.

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So, what is Con Ed
5 requesting of the city of New York to make this
6 happen?

7 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: I guess I'm not sure I
8 understand the question. Sorry, Council Member.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: What is Con Ed and NYPA--
10 What do they need to allow you to acquire their land?

11 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: Well, the negotiations
12 are ongoing, and I, I should say that there's some
13 proprietary and confidential information being
14 exchanged, but, in essence, the idea is that some
15 kind of exchange of value would take place in order
16 to facilitate a transaction whereby the City could
17 construct a publicly accessible esplanade on their
18 private land.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: And do you believe that
20 both parties, Con Edison and NYPA, are engaging in
21 these negotiations in good faith?

22 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: I would say yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, thank you. We'll be
24 following up on the progress of those conversations.
25 And the expectation from the public is that we would

2 have an MOU signed prior to the Land Use vote in
3 order for us to have support for this project for
4 OneLIC.

5 Where are the City's-- we already asked that--
6 We understand that the EDC has completed their
7 preliminary cost estimates for easements for both Con
8 Ed and NYPA. Has the City received appraisals for the
9 easement cost from Con Ed and NYPA?

10 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: We have not yet.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Is there an estimated
12 deadline that they're supposed to send this to us by,
13 since we're running out of time before the vote?

14 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: No stated deadline, but
15 those conversations are ongoing.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: And do you feel confident
17 that we will have a concrete agreement? And we would
18 have the needed appraisals and partnership agreements
19 with these parties before the vote?

20 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: Yes, Council Member, I'm
21 hopeful, yes.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay.

23 Has the City identified funding to pay for the
24 acquisition of this land from Con Ed and NYPA to
25 build out the public waterfront?

1
2 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: There has been no
3 dedicated funding for this exchange as of yet.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Do you have an estimate on
5 how much this would cost?

6 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: I will have to get back
7 to you with a precise answer. I'm sorry.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay. Will the City-- I am
9 just going to state on the record that, from what you
10 have testified, I do believe that the City has
11 committed to securing concrete agreements from both
12 Con Ed and NYPA. And the question is, does the City
13 commit to finding adequate funding and providing an
14 implementation timeline by the City Council vote to
15 make this happen?

16 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: Yes, that's our-- that's
17 our hope.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, yes, thank you.

19 And along the lines of connected waterfront,
20 our next line of questioning is on infrastructure and
21 resiliency. Residents of Long Island City often
22 experience flooding in basements and ground floors,
23 often from sewer backups during heavy rain. How will
24 the City work to reduce existing flooding issues

1 while mitigating the impact of new residential
2 density?
3

4 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Thank you for your
5 question, Council Member.

6 I will start by saying that, before I hand
7 over part of the question to our colleagues at DEP, I
8 want to note that the neighborhood planning process,
9 we've analyzed the potential outcome through our
10 Environmental Impact Statement, and rezonings and/or
11 new development, present an important opportunity to
12 enhance onsite stormwater management and reduce
13 demand for City sewer systems. So, as disclosed in
14 the EIS, stormwater flows to the sewer system are
15 expected to decrease as a result of the proposed
16 rezoning as sites redevelop. Now, this is due to the
17 Unified Stormwater Rule, which passed in 2022. This
18 rule requires that the lot that meets a certain
19 criteria to meet enhanced onsite stormwater
20 management requirements, include higher stormwater
21 volumes, more restrictive release rates, and, for
22 sites requiring, uh, requirements to infiltration
23 practices to entirely prevent some stormwater runoff
24 from entering the sewer system. This is an
25 improvement over today's conditions, where sites

1 either may not have onsite storm management systems,
2 or are meeting less stringent requirements. These
3 requirements help the City maintain sewer operation
4 volume and improve water quality conditions by
5 reducing combined sewer overflow in combined sewer
6 areas and reducing the stormwater pollution entering
7 the water bodies.
8

9 Now, within the rezoning area, there are 43 of
10 the projected potential development sites identified
11 for environmental purposes review, which would likely
12 require to comply with stringent components of the
13 uniform-- of unified stormwater rules and need to use
14 the permanent green infrastructure practices such as
15 green roofs, to retain stormwater onsite for
16 stormwater control, and also implement the stormwater
17 management best practices during construction.

18 So, in other words, development would actually
19 assist in stormwater capture, because each property
20 would be required to create and provide a system to
21 reduce and completely capture all of the stormwater
22 on their site.

23 Now, DCP has been working with our agency
24 partners to investigate the infrastructure needs of
25 the area, both as they currently exist and what will

2 be needed to support future growth—including that
3 our DEP partners conduct an analysis to better
4 understand the cost and timeline associated with the
5 infrastructure that is required to meet these needs
6 through the amended (INAUDIBLE) fund.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, from what I
8 understand from your testimony, is that new
9 residential development in this area would actually
10 help with stormwater management rather than hurt?

11 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: That is correct.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Can you give me an example
13 of another neighborhood where this has been
14 successful?

15 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: I think our colleagues are
16 (INAUDIBLE) to speak to this.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Hi, Council
18 Member. Gowanus is one of those areas where we have
19 been very successful with the Unified Storm Water
20 Rule. In that area, again, any-- and this was
21 different from the last time Long Island City was
22 rezoned. This rule didn't exist. Right? This came
23 into existence in 2022. And, so, the difference now
24 is that anytime any property touches 20,000 square
25 feet, or disturbs 20,000 square feet, they are

1 required to manage, on their property, an inch and a
2 half of rainwater. That's critically important
3 because most of the sewers can handle about an inch
4 and a half of rainwater a hour before they start to
5 go over capacity. In Gowanus, we have actually seen,
6 because there were so many new properties being
7 developed and having to manage stormwater, that the
8 amount of stormwater that was being managed onsite,
9 on those properties, actually reduced the amount of
10 stormwater that we were seeing going into the sewer
11 system. And that's really important, because it adds
12 capacity to the existing system.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you so much. I just
15 have a concern that new development can take anywhere
16 from 20 to 30 years to complete, while the current
17 flooding issues have been there for decades, and
18 every major hurricane and every major rainstorm, Long
19 Island City continues to suffer. So, I just want to
20 understand: What are the steps that DEP will be
21 taking on public sites or on public streets where we
22 continue to have severe flooding, like 11th Street in
23 Long Island City or other areas like the IBZ? What
24 will happen there?

1
2 As well as, Can you help me understand the
3 accountability measures that are existent right now
4 by DEP for the Unified Stormwater Rule in an area
5 like Gowanus?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Certainly. So, a
7 couple of things to understand when there is a
8 rezoning, regardless of any amount of units that are
9 approved in that rezoning, once the rezoning is
10 approved, we begin what we call a drainage plan
11 amendment. Kind of think of that drainage plan as the
12 blueprint for the area of the-- a blueprint of the
13 way that the area actually drains and how all of the
14 sewers are being used in that area. That's something
15 that we've already started to do ahead of time, just
16 knowing how important this was. And certainly because
17 of your advocacy. So that's already begun.

18 In addition, no property can hook up to the
19 existing sewer system without getting a permit from
20 DEP. So we'll never hook up a property to the
21 existing sewer when we can't handle the capacity. And
22 there are a lot of engineering analyses and very
23 specific analyses that go into that process. So we're
24 not going to overtax the existing sewer system.

2 At the same time, we've worked very closely
3 with your office and gone out to a lot of site
4 visits, a lot of different problematic areas to start
5 examining, not start, but to continue examining,
6 really, some of the flooding issues that Long Island
7 City is already experiencing. Some of those issues
8 we're working to address, adding catch basins,
9 looking at capacity, and how our outfalls help drain,
10 you know, out into the harbor.

11 We're working on that right now in addition to
12 other upgrades inside and outside the IBZ, and that's
13 important because the entire system is connected. So,
14 you know, in order to increase flow on a block or
15 sewer capacity on a block, you can't just fix the
16 sewer on that block. You've got to really look at how
17 the system is connected and where that major big
18 trunk line, which is how we think of it like a tree,
19 right, where we need to increase capacity there, so
20 that it will help the drainage throughout the entire
21 area.

22 COF MEAGHER: Thanks, Deputy Commissioner. This
23 is Dylan Meagher from DEP. And to add to that, the
24 regulations that the Deputy Commissioner was speaking
25 about, we also encourage water reuse onsite in

1 private developments. This is a citywide policy that
2 we are encouraging large developments, especially
3 developments of over 200 or 300 units, to reuse water
4 onsite. And there are different levels of reuse that
5 can happen in the site, and at kind of different
6 levels of reuse, to develop the property owners will
7 get a discount on their rate, so that there is an
8 incentive for them to make the upfront costs to reuse
9 the water. And this water reuse is for non-potable
10 reuse uses. So, for example, maybe air conditioning
11 or gardening or anything that's non-- that people are
12 not using directly.

14 So this is an incentive that reduces the
15 actual water being used and flowing to the building,
16 and also reduces the amount of water that's flowing
17 out of the building. So it's really kind of a win-win
18 for reducing water inflows in the sewers and also and
19 also for the community. Along with that, we've been
20 using, uh, increasing our FloodNet technology system.

21 So FloodNet is our sensors that we place on
22 the streets that have live, real-time monitoring of
23 any, uh, of flood levels in that location.

24 So thanks to outreach from your staff and
25 yourself, we've identified two new locations within

1 the specific LIC area to add FloodNet sensors, and
2 there was already one previously. And people from the
3 community can go right now and search online for
4 FloodNet, and they can see the live conditions of
5 flooding at those locations.
6

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you so much. So
8 essentially, what I've heard both DEP and ECB testify
9 is a Unified Storm Water Rule, and more development
10 would actually help with our flooding situation in
11 Long Island City, not hurt, and that Unified
12 Stormwater Rule came into effect in 2022, which means
13 that most of the areas where we see severe flooding
14 were not under the Unified Stormwater Rule, which is
15 why we continue to have this flooding.

16 We look forward to having the accountability
17 that permits will not be given to any new development
18 to come online and have water access if they do not
19 comply with the Unified Stormwater Rule, which is a
20 built-in accountability system. And we welcome the
21 two new locations for FloodNet, so that way we have
22 real-time monitoring of flooding in our districts,
23 which we have been looking to have regular civilians
24 currently report to 311, which has been tedious and
25 has been draining, because people have been reporting

1
2 for decades. So we appreciate that, and we look
3 forward to continuing to work with you to have more
4 positive impact in Long Island City for flooding and
5 resiliency.

6 What I also want to understand is that much of
7 the rezoning area is in the 100-year coastal
8 floodplain, particularly the blocks surrounding
9 Anable Basin. Can you explain how the new residential
10 development in the waterfront sub-area will be
11 resilient to future coastal storms?

12 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Thank you for your
13 question, Council Member.

14 As I noted earlier in response to the question
15 from Chair Riley about some of the strategies that
16 we're using, including Appendix G of the New York
17 City Building Code, uh, as a city, we do face a huge
18 challenge balancing the need for housing and jobs
19 while needing to reduce the vulnerability of over
20 400,000 New Yorkers who live in the floodplain.
21 Therefore, the City's Land Use policies across the
22 floodplain carefully consider the city's needs while
23 reflecting the varied degrees of flood risks that
24 exist in different parts of the city, including Long
25 Island City. Many of the buildings in the floodplain

1 predate contemporary flood resiliency standards, and
2 the use of substantially improved buildings is
3 required to meet some of the highest resiliency
4 standards in the city, as I referred to in Appendix
5 G.
6

7 We believe that addressing the City's housing
8 needs and increasing resiliency are complementary
9 goals. Addressing the need for housing is a top
10 priority of the City, and enabling housing
11 development through updates to zoning is one
12 important way the City is going to address this.

13 Now, the City believes that resiliency must be
14 advanced through multiple strategies that address a
15 range of vulnerabilities, including the heating and
16 flooding. These strategies include shoreline
17 adaptation and improvements, increasing planting
18 wherever we can, and building scale resiliency
19 measures such as elevation. Thank you.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: I think the public still
21 has a lot of concerns about the waterfront, coastal
22 resiliency, and the floodplain. I wish we had
23 something like the Unified Stormwater rule
24 equivalent. So maybe that's something that our
25 Legislative Team, I think she's downstairs, but she's

1 listening, can start to brainstorm about how we
2 legislate that to have that go into effect as soon as
3 possible.
4

5 Does the City commit to at least \$90 million
6 in public funding to address sewage and stormwater
7 management and infrastructure in Long Island City?
8 This would be in addition to investments made by
9 private developers to be in compliance with the
10 Unified Stormwater Rule, especially because we
11 continue to have concerns voiced by the public about
12 how long it would take-- we love the explanation of
13 how Unified Stormwater Rule works, and this is great,
14 but the rezoning will take decades to build out and
15 people are continuing to voice their concerns about
16 current issues. So we want to have commitments
17 addressing those separately, sooner than the timeline
18 that would be achieved by the Unified Stormwater
19 Rule.

20 COF MEAGHER: Thank you for the question,
21 Council Member.

22 We're currently performing a drainage plan as
23 our Deputy Commissioner mentioned. And as that
24 process, as that analysis has proceeded, and thanks
25 to the advocacy of your staff, and the site visits,

1
2 which came out with us once to visit a number of the
3 locations, we've been able to identify some priority
4 areas within the LIC rezoning area that we understand
5 has seen complaints and also may have capacity issues
6 due to our preliminary analysis. The drainage plan
7 that we're doing is expected to be completed early
8 next year. So we will need to have that drainage plan
9 completed to have greater certainty. But we are happy
10 that we're already able to identify a couple of
11 areas.

12 In terms of cost, it's a little bit too early
13 at this moment to identify a specific dollar number.
14 But, you know, again, we're already identifying some
15 areas that are seeing complaints.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay. We look forward to
17 working with you and understand the technicalities of
18 making sure that we don't have taxpayer dollars
19 misused or misallocated. So we want to be accurate to
20 your technical expertise, and we do look forward to
21 the drainage plan being completed next year. But I do
22 hope that by the time of the Council vote, we would
23 have a range or an estimate that DEP could commit to
24 in order to make sure that once the drainage plan is
25 complete, it would be invested in Long Island City.

2 Businesses in the industrial business zone
3 consistently face flooding and drainage backup, and
4 will not benefit from the Unified Stormwater Rule
5 requirements. Will the City commit to funding and
6 addressing these flooding issues before the Council
7 vote? Are there other options for the IBZ that don't
8 have the benefit of the Unified Stormwater Rule to
9 help with this flooding? Because we do call this area
10 the "toilet bowl" of Long Island City.

11 COF MEAGHER: Interesting, I haven't heard that
12 term. But, uhm, I've visited the area and I enjoy
13 kind of walking around. But that area is part of our
14 drainage plan, and it's a critical component of our
15 analysis. So we can't speak on the specific
16 investments that we would identify that are there at
17 this moment, but it is part of the drainage plan, and
18 we are looking at it carefully.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, we will follow up,
20 and I know that the IBZ has been requesting a
21 walkthrough with the DEP team, so would you commit to
22 that before the Council vote? To do a walk-through
23 and an inspection of the IBZ current status?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Yeah, we're happy
25 to go out and walk through with you and look at all

1 of the specific areas. I think you know, Council
2 Member, we've already been out to several that you've
3 pointed out, but we're happy to do that again before
4 the vote.
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, great, there's a lot
7 of good food there, so we'll make sure you're well-
8 fed.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: We'll take you up
10 on that, too. We'll hold you...

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: We'll hold you to
13 account on that.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: I understand.

15 Lastly, for DEP, I understand, uh, for DEP, I
16 understand DEP is conducting a drainage study that
17 includes the Long Island City Neighborhood Study
18 area, which you have testified, does DEP commit to
19 completing the study by next year, early 2026? And if
20 you say early, is that quarter one or quarter two?
21 Can you clarify? And will commit to presenting the
22 study findings in a public forum to both Community
23 Boards One and Two?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Yes, Council
25 Member. Right now, it is scheduled to be completed by

1 the first quarter of 2026. And we absolutely will
2 make that public. Part of what goes into those
3 drainage plans—those are very highly technical
4 engineering analyses. So, they also look at, you
5 know, projected zoning as well, as that will become
6 so important to the way in which we look at what
7 needs to be done to add capacity in some areas. But,
8 yeah, that will be a very public, available
9 presentation.
10

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, thank you so much,
12 and we look forward to that presentation. Are we
13 talking quarter one or quarter two that the drainage
14 study would be complete in 2026?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Quarter one.

16 COF MEAGHER: Quarter one.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DEFALCO: Quarter one.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, that's great, thank
19 you so much.

20 Okay, moving on to the neighborhood's favorite
21 topic, parks and open spaces. Thank you for being
22 here, uh, to DOT, to Mr. Banrey, our favorite. I
23 believe he's also a local resident.

24 Community Board One and Community Board Two
25 are already among the lowest in terms of open space

1 per capita in the city. And the environmental impact
2 statement identifies a significant impact on open
3 space in the industrial-- in the residential study
4 area. What new parks and open spaces does the City
5 plan to introduce as part of this rezoning?
6

7 DIRECTOR ZENG: I want to kick it off before
8 turning over to my colleagues at DOT and Parks,
9 because they are doing, you know, good work now,
10 ongoing work, and improving park spaces and looking
11 for ways to expand, you know, the public realm.

12 As part of this plan, as we already discussed,
13 you know, open space is a key goal here in addition
14 to allowing for more residential developments. One is
15 creating that continuous waterfront open space, which
16 could create up to six acres of new public open space
17 in this area.

18 Second, as part of our Text Amendment, we are
19 also including Open Space Bonuses for sites that are
20 not on the waterfront to include on the inland, in
21 terms of trying to incentivize private developers to
22 develop quality open space for the public there,
23 where they currently don't exist. And we are also
24 adding an active Open Space Bonus on the waterfront
25 as well, and parcels that are larger, so in addition

1 to passive recreational space, there will be
2 opportunities for active recreational uses on the
3 waterfront as well.

4
5 So those are sort of the main, you know,
6 actions that we are proposing that would expand open
7 space. Additionally, as we have been working with
8 your office, you know, in the past two years, we're
9 still looking to expand on public sites where we can.
10 And so I think this is where I'll hand it off to our
11 colleagues so that they can speak a little bit more
12 in detail... (CROSS-TALK)

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Before we move on to the
14 City agencies, I have a question about the private
15 sites. Can you quantify how many square feet and
16 which sites are going to be adding either passive
17 open space, active recreation space, or green space
18 in this project?

19 DIRECTOR ZENG: So on the waterfront sites,
20 anyone who is building is required to provide a
21 waterfront open space. And so that is the WAP that we
22 had discussed, where, at a minimum, it needs to be 40
23 feet wide. On the Open Space Bonus, that is
24 something, uh, it's up to the developer whether they
25 want the additional floor area on their site. So we

1
2 can't guarantee who is going to take up on this
3 development-- on these bonuses, but the idea is to
4 have that opportunity so that we can create more
5 public open space where we can.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: And for the Open Space
7 Bonus, how many square feet of open space would that
8 create?

9 DIRECTOR ZENG: It is, uh, any sites that are
10 larger than 25,000 square feet can utilize this Open
11 Space Bonus.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay. And do you believe
13 that by the time we have our City Council vote, we
14 would have a clear understanding of how much
15 additional square footage of open space we would have
16 from the private-- from the private sites?

17 DIRECTOR ZENG: We can look into that, but with
18 the private sites, it is up to the private owner
19 whether they want to take up that bonus. But on the
20 waterfront side, we can certainly give you a little
21 bit more of an understanding of what that total open
22 space will look like. Yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, we look forward to
24 that.

1
2 And back to the Parks and Department of
3 Transportation.

4 CHIEF MOLINARI: Thank you, Council Member, for
5 the question. I am Nick Molinari, Chief of Planning
6 and Neighborhood Development at New York City Parks.

7 The Parks Department is committed to exploring
8 new open space creation in Long Island City.

9 Currently, the agency is completing an addition to
10 the western entrance of Queensbridge Baby Park, which
11 will create nearly half an acre of new public open
12 space and features a central gathering space, lawns,
13 game tables, and seating. Anticipated construction
14 completion is April 2026 for that project.

15 Additionally, looking into the future of open
16 space expansion in Long Island City, Parks, along
17 with our colleagues at DOT, is also exploring
18 creative solutions such as expanding the footprint of
19 existing parkland triangles. One successful example
20 specifically in the Court Square area was the
21 expansion of Rafferty Triangle through the closure of
22 an adjacent slip lane. Opportunities for further
23 expansion exist near Rafferty Triangle, Hunters
24 Triangle, and adjacent to Court Square Park.

1 Additionally, across the city, Parks has been
2
3 successful in partnering with New York City DOE
4 through the Schoolyards to Playgrounds Program, which
5 is opening up existing and future schoolyards to the
6 public during after-school hours. Along with our
7 colleagues at SCA (New York City School Construction
8 Authority) and DOE, we're looking for opportunities
9 for further collaboration through the OneLIC plan.

10 Additionally, through our Walk to a Park
11 Initiative, the Parks team, along with our colleagues
12 at City Planning, is identifying potential sites that
13 will be suitable for open space acquisition. We've
14 kicked off the Land Use processes so far for two
15 community boards elsewhere in the city and anticipate
16 starting the public review process for Queens
17 Community Board Two in mid to late fall of 2025.

18 I'm going to pass it along to Jason if he has
19 more to add on the DOT aspect.

20 COMMISSIONER BANREY: Thank you, Nick Jason
21 Banrey, Deputy Borough Commissioner for the
22 Department of Transportation in Queens, former
23 District 26-er. It's been a pleasure to be a part of
24 this, and thank you for the opportunity, Council
25 Member and Chair Riley.

1 DOT has been committed to transforming public
2 land, especially in your district. DOT has been
3 working with you since you joined the office, as well
4 as our sister agencies, and this community through
5 the OneLIC process to identify new public space
6 opportunities, important new cycling connections, and
7 more, while also preserving space needed to support
8 critical safety and work on city bridges.

9 DOT already has several projects either
10 completed or underway that will continue to expand
11 public space offerings in your district and
12 complement the current rezoning packages that are
13 currently being discussed. These projects include—
14 and also are a result of your leadership—or the
15 breaking ground of a baseline in Dutch Kills Street,
16 this exciting new \$9 million project, which is
17 currently under construction, will provide one more
18 acreage of new parkland that never existed, and new
19 protected bike lane infrastructure on Crescent
20 Boulevard, the completion of hardening on Queens
21 Boulevard and Northern Boulevard, 11th Street,
22 Jackson Avenue, and 44th Drive. Additionally, the
23 development of a new Plaza at 46th Street and Jackson
24 Avenue, as a result of state funding that we recently
25

1 received, and also as a result of your leadership,
2 the 29th Street open space, which also never existed
3 in this district.
4

5 Other projects and public spaces also include,
6 and are currently under consideration by the agency,
7 are the 11th Street, the North and South connector.
8 This connection and this new multi-use pedestrian
9 path and bicycling path will reduce a barrier for
10 NYCHA residents caused by the Queensboro Bridge and
11 connect to existing open space assets such as Murray
12 Playground, 12 Street Plaza, which is also currently
13 under construction and will be completed for its
14 final phase, and the sports courts adjacent to
15 Queensboro Bridge. Additionally, that's also included
16 in this package are the 23rd Street public realm
17 improvements and public space recapture. This project
18 aims to connect Queens Boulevard to Queens Plaza,
19 Queens Plaza North Bike Path, with the core of Long
20 Island City by potentially upgrading existing
21 facilities, reconstructing curb lines, sidewalks, and
22 roadways for all pedestrians, and potentially will
23 also include pedestrian refuges and curb extensions.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, I think it's safe to
25 say from your testimony that District 26 is by far

1 DOT's favorite council district in Queens. (LAUGHS)

2 But we want to focus on this current study area. So

3 DCP has stated a goal of 2.5 acres of park space per

4 every 1,000 residents in the area. What is Long

5 Island City's current ratio, and how will this plan

6 make progress towards this goal? Because we have

7 heard over and over again from the public that we are

8 second to last in the City of New York for green

9 space for the populace.

10
11 DIRECTOR ZENG: Sure. Thank you for that

12 question. Yes, open space is a challenge here, and

13 that is why it is a major goal for this plan to try

14 to-- where we could find it possible to expand more

15 open spaces to the residents and to the surrounding

16 community. Currently, the open space ratio in Long

17 Island City is about 0.9 per 1,000, you know, 1,000

18 residents.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So, 0.9, like less than

20 1%?

21 DIRECTOR ZENG: Correct, currently.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: That's pretty abysmal.

23 DIRECTOR ZENG: It is-- it is (INAUDIBLE)...

24 (CROSS-TALK)

25

1 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Even for people who are
2 bad at math, that's pretty bad.

3 DIRECTOR ZENG: It is very bad...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: That's like a negative F.
5 Beyond F.

6 (LAUGHTER)

7 DIRECTOR ZENG: Maybe, probably.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: The City is failing.

9 DIRECTOR ZENG: We would need to redo first
10 grade, right? It's failing, but I think it also
11 speaks to sort of the manufacturing nature of this
12 district, right? Because it's long been industrial.
13 So, as part of this plan, we want to open up some
14 more of these spaces where people can enjoy either
15 sitting or playing, you know, playing catch or
16 pickleball, where it's appropriate. But without any
17 action, without the plan, because Long Island City
18 has been such a popular neighborhood, the population
19 will continue to increase. So from 0.9 Councilwoman,
20 it will drop to 0.67 without... (CROSS-TALK)

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: (INAUDIBLE)

22 DIRECTOR ZENG: without the proposal, without
23 the proposal.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Oh...

1 DIRECTOR ZENG: That's...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So now we're...

3 DIRECTOR ZENG: So the amount of...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: (INAUDIBLE) redoing first
5 grade...

6 DIRECTOR ZENG: The amount of...

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: We're going to go back to
8 kindergarten

9 DIRECTOR ZENG: Right? The amount of space
10 would continue to decrease. So, I think with this
11 plan, we will be adding more. So as I said earlier,
12 we're increasing up to about 6 acres along the
13 waterfront. And I think, as Nick has also stated,
14 some of the efforts that we're looking at adding to
15 this plan...

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: And by adding 6 acres and
17 14,000 units of housing, roughly, what percentage
18 does that leave us with a ratio?

19 DIRECTOR ZENG: I don't have that number here.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Hey, (INAUDIBLE) team,
21 please do the math now. (INAUDIBLE)

22 DIRECTOR ZENG: (INAUDIBLE) we... (CROSS-TALK)

23

24

25

1 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: (INAUDIBLE), you have
2 time. Because if we're continue to fail, beyond 1%, I
3 don't think six acres is going to cut it.
4

5 DIRECTOR ZENG: And I think we want to continue
6 to work with your office. It is a challenge. Space is
7 definitely limited. And we want to hear how best we
8 can do this to meet that (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So our community has made
10 a proposal, which is clearing out under the
11 Queensboro Bridge, by the Department of
12 Transportation, as well as Parks, to make it clear
13 that we need to have more open and green space. If we
14 were to clear underneath the bridge and the ramps
15 used by DOT and Parks for operations, for parking and
16 storage currently, it would add an additional 370,000
17 square feet for the 14,000 units of housing that
18 we're proposing to build.

19 So under the bridge along the Queensboro
20 Bridge and the ramps, there's 370,050 square feet of
21 publicly owned land across 15 city-owned sites that
22 are presently occupied by New York City DOT and
23 Parks. This space is equivalent to 8.5 acres or 6.5
24 professional football fields. So it seems that in
25 order for us not to be at less than 1%, it would only

1 be the minimum we would have to do for this project
2 for it to pass in the City Council.

3
4 DIRECTOR ZENG: Thank you for that. Yes, we are
5 exploring, definitely exploring all of our options
6 here. And I don't know if Nick or Jason wants to add
7 to that, but currently, there are uses under the
8 bridge, as you noted.

9 CHIEF MOLINARI: Thank you, Council Member, for
10 the question.

11 You're right, the open space ratio is low in
12 this area. It's been on Parks's radar independent of
13 the Long Island City OneLIC plan, which is, as I
14 mentioned, some of those products I mentioned before
15 will add additional acreage of open space. So those
16 four projects, but particularly as I mentioned, the
17 Walk to a Park ULURP, that's something that we are
18 focusing on, community districts across the city with
19 low open space ratios, and trying to advance
20 acquisition opportunities related to your question of
21 under the Queensboro Bridge. The City team
22 understands the desire for additional open space
23 underneath the bridge. As you know, there are
24 critical and location-sensitive City operations
25 located there, and those serve the public and the

1 neighborhood. However, the City team has been working
2 together to explore opportunities for consolidation
3 and or relocation, including some strategic and
4 important north-south connectors, as Jason mentioned.
5 And we're looking forward to continuing conversations
6 and discussions with your office about the properties
7 there.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, thank you for your
10 commitment to relocation and consolidation for this
11 very important issue, because without this, there is
12 no way the City is going to-- the City Council is
13 going to pass this project, because we are already
14 failing. What this hearing is going to continue to
15 show you, what the constituents who are here to
16 testify will tell you, is that Long Island City has
17 been a detriment to city development. It has been
18 great that we have been at the forefront of building
19 more housing, but it was to the detriment of social
20 infrastructure as well as basic infrastructure for
21 our community. We don't have enough park space, we
22 don't have street safety, we don't have enough
23 schools, we don't have enough libraries, we don't
24 have enough of much of anything. So I look forward to
25 continuing to work with you.

1 One thing about the Queensbridge residents, in
2 particular the seniors who have lived through the
3 different iterations of their park space at
4 Queensbridge, as well as Queensbridge Baby Park,
5 whether it be a swimming pool that was taken away
6 from them, or Queensbridge Baby Park that was taken
7 away from them. It has been brought to our attention
8 that there seems not to have been a clear protocol
9 followed for park alienation when that park space was
10 taken away from the public.
11

12 Can you help us clarify what process was taken
13 legally to take the Queensbridge Baby Park and
14 transform it into parking and storage space?

15 CHIEF MOLINARI: Thank you for the question,
16 Council Member. Related to the site here, as I
17 mentioned, we're looking to continue conversations
18 about this property. It is a critical infrastructure,
19 and it is location-specific. So it is a hard
20 conversation to have about relocating facilities, but
21 we will continue the conversations there.

22 In terms of the property, it is being used for
23 park-appropriate use now. Parks operations is a park-
24 appropriate use. So there is an alienation required
25 because it's being used for Park purposes, which is

1 the back-of-house operations. But I hear you about
2 the desire for additional access here. It is
3 something that Parks has been incredibly focused on,
4 which is the first project that I mentioned; we did
5 relocate our maintenance operations facility to allow
6 for that acre, uh, half acre of open space on the
7 western side of the park, close to Vernon Boulevard.
8 We have focused on cleaning up this area, cleaning
9 out abandoned vehicles, improving safety along the
10 greenway there, and have had many walkthroughs with
11 your office. And we understand the importance. And we
12 will continue the conversation, because we do believe
13 the community deserves beautiful open spaces here.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Can you help me understand
15 what-- so, I understand your argument that legally
16 you're not required to go through park alienation
17 through the state legislature to take away the Park's
18 public use of that land. But can you help me
19 understand what community outreach was done, what
20 engagement was done? Because community boards do not
21 have any record of public messaging or public warning
22 from the Parks Department letting Queensbridge
23 residents know that their beloved baby park, which
24 was used for toddlers and children, that their
25

1 playgrounds would then be taken away and fences would
2 be built with barbed wire. And there seems to be no
3 record of any sort of outreach with the Tenants
4 Association, and no one has any recollection of this,
5 and they do find this extremely racist and harmful.

6
7 CHIEF MOLINARI: Thank you, Council Member, for
8 the question.

9 These facilities, some of them have existed
10 for decades. So I don't know exactly what outreach
11 was done when this happened way back when. However, I
12 can say since my time at Parks, we have had outreach
13 to the community, the Queensbridge residents, as well
14 as local residents for the projects we've done. We've
15 described some of the work we're doing at the site,
16 including the operational swap that we did on Vernon
17 Boulevard, which was moving operations under the
18 bridge to free up the space that's not covered by the
19 bridge for public access.

20 But we can check and see if there was outreach
21 back then, but it's decades ago, and you know, these
22 sites, you know, I don't know if we have clear
23 records.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: I want to have a follow-up
25 conversation in writing if you can provide both

1
2 Community Board One, as well as my office, with what
3 archival records you have of communication with the
4 Tenants Association or the Queensbridge residents
5 that notified them that this happened? And I want to
6 make sure that I say it on the record that Community
7 Board Two has slammed the relocation of GreenThumb
8 services yard, that moved operations there in 2003.
9 So even as of-- within 2003, neighbors have said that
10 there wasn't adequate communication from the Parks
11 Department.

12 So we want to have a positive relationship
13 with the Parks Department. We love our parks. I have
14 given more capital funding to Park's Agency since
15 I've taken office than any other Queens member. And I
16 want to continue to support your work. But we have
17 expectations on how we operate, especially in
18 underserved neighborhoods in my district, and we have
19 not been meeting their standards of communication or
20 with the community boards. So, we please, we expect
21 better from you.

22 CHIEF MOLINARI: Thanks, Council Member. So, we
23 will check the records, and we can provide something
24 in writing.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay.

2 Back to DOT. Through our public engagement, we
3 have become aware that the City has encroachments on
4 public land under the Queensboro Bridge, which was
5 once an open public site, including. Queensbridge
6 Baby Park. Does the City commit to relocating DOT's
7 operations off these sites and restoring this land to
8 public open space?

9 COMMISSIONER BANREY: Thank you for the
10 question, Council Member, and thank you for your
11 leadership on this issue.

12 In regard to the comments made about the
13 Queensboro Bridge, DOT is having earnest
14 conversations with City Hall and Parks about
15 potentially relocating additional facilities beneath
16 the Queensboro Bridge, and we've been making
17 progress. As you're aware, much of the land under the
18 Queensboro Bridge supports critical City operations
19 that are geographically sensitive and manage
20 emergency response, as well as the daily maintenance
21 work of our East River bridges, and also serving your
22 district.

23 Through the rezoning process, though DOT has
24 committed to providing a north-south linkage under
25 the Queensboro Bridge that has never existed before.

1 This is approximately a 40-foot walkway, but not
2 fully to the bridge's pier, is adjacent to the river.
3 This will allow for the development of your
4 waterfront vision, connecting a new path between the
5 Con Ed facility through the agency's current bridge
6 preventative maintenance facility, deicing yard, and
7 Queensboro Bridge, and the Queensbridge Baby Park.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Can you help me understand
10 clearly, because I want the record to reflect that
11 the Parks Department has stated very clearly that
12 they are looking to work together with the City of
13 New York for relocation, consolidation, and moving
14 towards a future that really works for all of us to
15 have more open space and park space. So does the DOT
16 commit to the same?

17 COMMISSIONER BANREY: There are additional
18 sites that we're currently taking into consideration,
19 and we're going to continue progressing those
20 conversations as we meet with you over the next month
21 and a half.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: For consolidation and
23 relocation, as long as there is support to do that?
24
25

2 COMMISSIONER BANREY: Correct. We have been
3 making great progress on that, and we are going to
4 continue to keep you updated.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you both. And will
6 the City—I guess City Hall isn't exactly here, but
7 DCP can respond on their behalf. Does the City commit
8 to providing a timeline for relocation and
9 redevelopment of these sites before the Council vote,
10 as well as estimated costs, to make sure that the
11 community, which currently has less than 1% of
12 adequate public space, can rest assured that they
13 will not continue to go into the negatives of public
14 space per populace?

15 DIRECTOR ZENG: Thank you, Council Member, for
16 being such a proponent for open space.

17 We are-- there are a lot of uses and there are
18 a lot of moving pieces. So we are trying-- we will
19 try our best to get to some resolution by the time of
20 your vote. I think because of all the different
21 parties involved and the needs of the different uses,
22 we cannot commit at this moment, but we can commit to
23 getting to a spot with your office and with your
24 partnership to get to a spot that you're happy with.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay. Well, I will commit
3 to the public on the record that I will not be voting
4 yes on this project without a clear commitment for a
5 timeline for relocation, uh, funding to support the
6 relocation, as well as the redevelopment of these
7 sites, before the Council vote.

8 So we are looking to go from 0.9% to a much
9 higher number, which we will follow up with DCP. For
10 the current estimated three-acre, uh, six-acre
11 addition to-- we are looking forward to 370 square
12 feet of additional open space through the bridges and
13 the ramps.

14 And I want to pivot now-- Oh, okay, what
15 provisions of the special district and or the
16 waterfront access plan will mitigate the impact of so
17 much height and density of the water's edge—which
18 you already testified, so we can skip that—is the
19 40-foot maximum or 40-foot minimum that the City
20 requires for the public walkway given-- Oh, okay, so
21 I guess I'm just stating on the record that 40-foot
22 is the minimum, correct? Not the maximum...

23 DIRECTOR ZENG: That's correct, that's the
24 minimum... (CROSS-TALK)

1 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: that the city can require
2 for the public walkway given the proposed zoning.
3

4 And in addition to the 40-foot walkway, there
5 are incentives required for private developers to
6 build public open space along the waterfront, as you
7 have testified, through the Open Space Bonus.

8 So that wraps up our open space questions. I
9 just want to pivot to street safety while we have
10 DOT.

11 Can DOT tell us which major streets
12 throughout the OneLIC Plan study area are getting
13 major pedestrianization and protected bike lane
14 projects? Because we know that we get a ton of
15 complaints on 311 about the hazards of the bike lanes
16 that go through the IBZ, with a lot of truck
17 activity, as well as very low pedestrian usage in the
18 study area currently.

19 COMMISSIONER BANREY: Thank you, Council
20 Member, for that question.

21 So, currently there are several street
22 improvement projects that are currently underway, and
23 then those will progress into what we are looking
24 into packaging into this one OneLIC proposal.
25

1
2 So, currently right now, we're pursuing a
3 second phase of Borden Avenue. A lot of these are
4 east-west connections. Borden Avenue is in its second
5 phase review, which is a connection review of its
6 industrial area as it connects to the Kosciuszko
7 Bridge. Thompson Avenue outside of LaGuardia
8 Community College is a plan that we're going to start
9 working with your office to develop. It's an
10 additional East-West connection, which connects to
11 the recently completed Queensboro Boulevard. And then
12 there are additional areas within the zoning area and
13 around the zoning proposed area that are scheduled
14 for upgrades as well as part of this package. And
15 those are Vernon Boulevard, uh, Court Square, and the
16 area around Court Square, which is an investment that
17 we're looking into as well. And each of these
18 projects, just to note, is going to consider all of
19 our tools within the agency's toolkit where feasible.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: There has been a lot of
21 incoming, as you know, and I know, and even the Parks
22 Department knows, because all three of us are getting
23 the heat for it for many years now, to connect the
24 site-- to connect the bike lane, the protected bike
25

1 lane on Vernon, I believe, outside of Queensbridge
2 Park.
3

4 So, can you help us understand when and if
5 that can happen?

6 COMMISSIONER BANREY: Yeah, Vernon Boulevard,
7 uh, improvements are projected-- are part of this
8 plan...

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER BANREY: OneLIC, uh, up until
11 Queensboro Bridge. As the plans are developed, and as
12 this project is developed, we look forward to
13 continuing conversations about what that project will
14 look like outside of Queensbridge. So north of the
15 bridge, alongside the western perimeter of
16 Queensbridge Houses. But right now we don't have any
17 scheduled improvements for that section.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay. So we will follow up
19 to make sure that there is a scheduled improvement
20 for that section, because we have had both cyclists
21 and pedestrians complain. A lot of our NYCHA seniors
22 use Queensbridge Park for their walking laps, and
23 they don't want to have any head-on collision with a
24 cyclist, and cyclists do prefer to just have the
25 right of way as well as an option to go into the

1 waterfront if they want to. So we want to open that
2 up for the public.
3

4 And can you help me understand a little bit
5 more clearly, uh, as a follow-up for the truck
6 traffic required by the industrial business in the
7 neighborhood, and I know that you have been doing the
8 truck study. Can you help us understand what the City
9 will do to improve the street safety for cyclists and
10 pedestrians, as well as drivers in the IBZ who also
11 don't want to become murderers?

12 COMMISSIONER BANREY: Thank you for the
13 question, Council Member.

14 So there are some things that we've actually
15 done in advance and that are integrated into this
16 OneLIC proposal. Uhm, 44th Drive was recently
17 identified as a truck route within the agency's
18 current truck route network redesign. But in addition
19 to that, DOT is working to assess where changes are
20 warranted within the network and within the proposed
21 area. And we'll work to introduce safety improvements
22 to any new route or any additional routes as a result
23 of this proposal.

24 DOT plans to provide more regular updates to
25 the truck route and network in the future. DOT also

1
2 promulgates the rules regarding truck routes,
3 enforcement and uses of truck routes. That's done by
4 the NYPD, and we'll continue working with them as
5 well on those improvements.

6 As we work to develop the street improvement
7 projects—implement them, we'll consider working with
8 the 108 precinct and the 114th, depending on where
9 the area is.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you. We look forward
11 to working with you.

12 I know that it's almost one o'clock. It's
13 12:43 on the dot right now. We are going to work
14 through our questions. It is extremely important that
15 if you're part of the public, that we go through
16 these questions to have them on the record for the
17 public to know, from the city agencies, as we make
18 these decisions on how we negotiate for this project,
19 as well as how we vote on behalf of you all as a
20 Council on this project.

21 But know that I am a mother of two, and I
22 don't like anybody going hungry. At one o'clock, we
23 are going to have pizza that will arrive for everyone
24 to eat for free. So hold on tight, don't leave yet.

1 We want you to stay here. So my team will help you
2 get your pizza.
3

4 Last question for the DOT—and of course, the
5 agencies are also welcome to pizza.

6 (LAUGHTER)

7 If you could describe-- so one of the biggest
8 heartaches that we've had was a lot of women,
9 especially women of color who are working in the IBZ,
10 in the manufacturing sites, who are going home at
11 night. They have had a lot of unsafe incidents,
12 whether it be mugging or harassment, etc. And we are
13 seeing heightened issues there.

14 Can you help us describe, by DOT, the proposed
15 rezoning? How will this improve the pedestrian
16 experience in this area, because currently it is very
17 dimly lit, if at all? There hasn't been a lot of
18 street cleaning, etc. So we have a lot of concerns
19 about the lighting of this area as well.

20 COMMISSIONER BANREY: Thank you for the
21 question, and I want to give Nick and Farah from your
22 office a shout-out on just leading the way on this as
23 we work together every day.

24 You know, if there's any areas that exist
25 right now with any current issues, we're working

1
2 aggressively with our maintenance contractor to
3 address them. But as you know, we are also working to
4 package a new street lighting contract, and we're
5 working to prioritize specific locations as we
6 identify that contract.

7 So as we move forward through the rezoning for
8 Nick and the Council Member team, you know, let's
9 talk about specific locations where we're seeing
10 those issues. If we need to see new lighting, we'll
11 work to have that integrated into the proposal, if
12 not before.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, great.

14 And my last question to you is, can you help
15 me understand if there is an associated street plan
16 for DOT for this project? If not, why not? And if so,
17 when can we expect to see one? And if you don't have
18 one now, do you want to do one very quickly? (LAUGHS)

19 COMMISSIONER BANREY: And you're referring to
20 the master plan, the streets plan that the City
21 Council thankfully passed several years back? (CROSS-
22 TALK)

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER BANREY: Yeah, I think the best
25 way to answer that question is that, while there were

1 a lot of studies done by the agency, and this kind of
2 compares to what we're dealing with in downtown
3 Jamaica—Downtown Jamaica had several extensive
4 studies that were undertaken, specifically the
5 Jamaica Now streetscape plan, which helped identify a
6 lot of projects within that package proposal for
7 Jamaica.
8

9 Here, it's quite different, as you said a
10 little bit earlier, and I think it's fairly true. The
11 26th District is a favorite of this administration
12 and the Department of Transportation, and we've been
13 working with the Community Board and your office to
14 see through many improvements. And so as we continue
15 to move forward, a lot of our plans are going to be—
16 and have been dictated by this process, but also
17 previous studies that we conducted with your
18 predecessors, as well as your team when you got into
19 office.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, thank you so much.

21 I want to move next to one of the most
22 contentious topics in my district. It's schools. I
23 don't see anybody from School Construction Authority.
24 Is there a representative from New York City Public
25 Schools or SEA?

2 DIRECTOR ZENG: No, there is not a
3 representative here from SCA, but we are here to
4 answer your questions. As... (CROSS-TALK)

5 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, got it.

6 DIRECTOR ZENG: to our ability.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So, for the families that
8 are watching or individuals, parents, students who
9 are watching, we have been tracking very closely. The
10 Environmental Impact Statement, which identifies a
11 significant need for elementary school seats—1,300
12 seats, because of the anticipated development.

13 We have heard very clearly from the students
14 of BSGE High School, and we have seen firsthand, as
15 well as a clear affirmation from the School
16 Construction Authority, as well as New York City
17 Public Schools or Department of Education, that they
18 do not have adequate space in their current space or
19 the current school. And they are up for their lease
20 in three years, and they do need a new spot—as well
21 as many parents who have been organizing for years
22 for a new middle school to be opened in the area.

23 So we know from all of the protests and
24 rallies, petitions, we need to increase the number of
25 schools in this area. And we also, I want to

1
2 acknowledge that there has been a lot of foul play
3 here. From our predecessors, I know no one sitting
4 here has worked in School Construction Authority. I
5 know that even the current School Construction
6 Authority leadership is not responsible. But we have
7 had a lot of confusion in the past *failed* rezonings
8 and the announcements of a Court Square school of a
9 Vernon Boulevard Middle School, which never got built
10 and never moved forward for over a decade, and it has
11 pissed off a lot of people.

12 So today I want to confirm, and this is public
13 knowledge, Parcel C and Hunters Point South as well
14 as Court Square Elementary School has moved forward,
15 is in construction, or is going through-- is going in
16 the process of demolition for both of those schools,
17 and those school seats do not count towards these
18 1,300.

19 We are working towards citing separate school
20 seats for these 1,300 seats, so those would be
21 additional schools. And I am proud to say that as of
22 tomorrow, it will be public knowledge that the Vernon
23 Boulevard Middle School, thanks to the partnership
24 with Plaxall, will be moving forward into accelerated
25 construction for our community.

2 We got to give that a round of applause.

3 (APPLAUSE)

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So now with those
5 confirmations, I want to move forward to the
6 questions.

7 Is the School Construction Authority and DCP,
8 on behalf of the School Construction Authority,
9 committed to citing the number of schools needed to
10 supply the additional 1,300 school seats by the City
11 Council vote, not including the Court Square school,
12 Parcel C School, or the Vernon Boulevard Middle
13 School?

14 DIRECTOR ZENG: Thank you so much for this
15 question. Schools, in addition to open space, have
16 been a huge priority for you, and you've been such a
17 strong proponent for us to find the seats that would
18 meet the needs of this plan.

19 I'd like to just mention, as part of this
20 plan, we are, as you mentioned, the middle school on
21 44th Drive—that is part of this plan as well. That
22 space is-- a portion of that lot would be reserved
23 for a future school in the future. So that is city-
24 owned land, and we can build a school there. And that
25 is, you know, and we need to design for that as well.

1 As part of this plan we are also including a
2 school floor area exemption. So any private site
3 development that wants to include a school either on
4 their base, in the base of their building, or on
5 their zoning lot can be exempted up to 150,000 square
6 feet.
7

8 And so we added this so that we can have more
9 options for appropriate school sites because, as you
10 know, schools have very particular standards, design
11 standards, and safety standards for this very
12 vulnerable population of young schoolchildren.

13 And I believe that exemption is already coming
14 into play, as we've been talking to private site
15 developers about exploring the options of including
16 schools.

17 So, and then lastly, as you've mentioned, uh,
18 the commitment with Plaxall is definitely very
19 promising for adding more seats to this area. And as
20 we continue with this proposal, and with ULURP, I
21 believe we can still continue those conversations
22 with other owners that you have brought to the table,
23 that you have helped really, you know, worked really
24 hard in forming those partnerships with the City, so
25

1 that we can get to the right number of seats by the
2 time you vote.

3
4 So we hope to continue to work on getting the
5 right sites for our school students.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, so what I am hearing
7 you say is that School Construction Authority is
8 committed to siting the 1,300 school seats by the
9 Council vote?

10 DIRECTOR ZENG: I can't speak for the School
11 Construction Authority, but we are actively working
12 on it, and we have been talking to all the interested
13 parties, the private site parties, that could include
14 a school on their sites, as well as your office. But
15 again, it involves multiple parties. So we are
16 working hard to get to a point where everybody is
17 comfortable with moving forward.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, well, since the
19 School Construction Authority is not here, I'm going
20 to put it on the record that I will not be voting yes
21 on this project without clear commitments for 1,300
22 school seats, siting the schools and the locations of
23 them. And in addition to identifying the school
24 sites, School Construction Authority will have to
25 have committed funding to provide, as well as a

1 provide a developmental timeline for the schools by
2 the City Council vote.

3
4 And in addition to the 1,300 school seats for
5 elementary school, the Vernon Boulevard Middle
6 School, as we have just talked about, we will also
7 need a site for the BSGE (Baccalaureate School for
8 Global Education) High School for us to move forward
9 with this project.

10 The Hunters Point community has long been
11 promised a new middle school, and we're really
12 excited for that. And over the last six years, the
13 Baccalaureate School of Global Education has needed a
14 larger site for the growing students, and we will be
15 looking forward to having a clear commitment from SCA
16 and a private developer to ensure a new site for them
17 that will be large enough to have a completely
18 transformed student experience. Thank you so much. We
19 will follow up directly with School Construction
20 Authority.

21 The next line of questions is about housing
22 and NYCHA. I don't believe I see anybody from NYCHA.

23 DIRECTOR ZENG: Council Member, I will be
24 speaking as part of the NYCHA team.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay.

1 So we'll move on to talking about housing and
2 NYCHA. There are currently three public sites
3 included in the rezoning area. This is a unique
4 opportunity to introduce much-needed, deeply
5 affordable housing. What is your plan to maximize the
6 use of this public land for affordable housing on
7 these sites? I know the Commissioner has already
8 mentioned that there is one site that you are looking
9 to make 100% affordable.
10

11 DIRECTOR ZENG: I'm sorry, I was having a sip
12 of water. Can you just repeat the first part of your
13 question again? Sorry, Council Member... (CROSS-TALK)

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: There are currently three
15 public sites included in this rezoning area, and this
16 presents a unique opportunity to introduce much-
17 needed deeply affordable housing. What is your plan
18 to maximize the use of public land for affordable
19 housing on these public sites?

20 DIRECTOR ZENG: Yes, thank you for that
21 question. So, on the first-- the UDAAP (phonetic)
22 action that we are proposing as part of this plan is
23 for 100% affordable housing on a public site. This is
24 the current DOT property on 44th Drive. And we
25 estimate about 320 units as part of that development.

1
2 And now you know, we have a limited amount of
3 public sites. There are two more that are also-- it's
4 across the street from 44th Drive, which currently
5 has an active use as a DOE building on Vernon
6 Boulevard, as well as a parking facility that the
7 staff of that building use. So, currently, you know,
8 with a limited amount of public space, we are
9 exploring.

10 And through our public review process and
11 community engagement, we've heard other needs from
12 the community. So we are exploring those different
13 needs here.

14 And I think I could turn it over to maybe
15 Erich to talk about the Vernon Boulevard sites that
16 we are currently looking at, what potential uses are
17 there, and then maybe later on, Sarit can talk about
18 our affordability goals on these public sites.

19 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: Sure. Thank you, Lin,
20 and thank you for your question.

21 So, of course, we recognize the extraordinary
22 need for housing across the five boroughs and that
23 the City is working on identifying as many new
24 housing opportunities across the city as possible.
25

2 Because of the size of these public sites at
3 Vernon Boulevard, we do believe that they can support
4 a comprehensive economic development approach that
5 includes new affordable housing and local access to
6 family-supporting jobs. We understand that there is a
7 strong community interest and a diverse mix of uses
8 across the city on sites.

9 The City is taking steps to understand what
10 mix of uses would maximize that economic opportunity
11 in LIC. The first step is ongoing, and that is the
12 Vernon Building Request for Information, or RFI. And
13 of course, we're in active conversations with you and
14 your team to plan for the future of those sites and
15 to understand the best approach.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: I understand—to build off
17 of your testimony, I understand that the RFI for the
18 Vernon building has closed recently. Can you provide
19 an update on the number of respondents who submitted
20 their RFI responses, as well as next steps in the
21 process? What is the timeline for determining a path
22 forward for this site?

23 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: Of course, so, just to
24 zoom out a little bit, the RFI or Request for
25 Information, uh, gives the City an opportunity to see

1
2 how interested stakeholders view the opportunities
3 and challenges of adaptive reuse of the Vernon
4 building, specifically concepts to convert all or a
5 portion of that building for commercial, light
6 industrial, retail and or community serving uses.

7 I note that there is no reward-- no award--
8 associated with this RFI, and the City will not be
9 selecting a developer. Rather, the City aims to
10 better understand the level of interest and adaptive
11 reuse of the building and the viability of potential
12 redevelopment projects there.

13 So we ask that responses incorporate community
14 feedback that's been gathered through these
15 responses. And we've received nine proposals. We are
16 currently reviewing them and looking at things like
17 the building's ability to accommodate the programming
18 that's in line with community priorities and also
19 financial feasibility, including reliance on public
20 subsidy.

21 That said, as Lin mentioned, my colleague,
22 there are over 1,000 DOE employees who work in the
23 Vernon building right now. They're working on site in
24 offices, repair shops, storage, and warehousing, and
25

1 they're performing very critical citywide
2 administrative services.

3
4 There's also the adjacent parking lot, which
5 supports the Vernon building employees. So any
6 potential redevelopment of these sites would take a
7 substantial amount of time and resources.

8 As for next steps in the coming weeks, we'll
9 share summaries of those responses with you and your
10 team. We'll be gathering input from you, Council
11 Member, and also our partner agencies, and that'll
12 give us a clearer view of the viable options in terms
13 of pathways forward.

14 And, you know, lastly, I just want to note
15 that any redevelopment of these sites, any potential
16 redevelopment of these sites, would be done through a
17 subsequent public procurement, and any funding to
18 support a project at these sites would need to be
19 identified at that time.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Can you just state on the
21 record when you believe that the RFP would be
22 released? Would it be next year or later on? Not this
23 year.

24 VICE PRESIDENT BILAL: Well, I think we'd like
25 to have conversations with you in your office first,

1 Council Member. But, I think that, at the earliest,
2 it would be sometime next year, is my assumption.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Yes, I agree. Next year,
4 thank you.

5 In response to the community's-- Oh, and I
6 just want to publicly thank all the respondents of
7 the RFP, especially our very homegrown Western
8 Queensland Trust, who have been engaged and have been
9 a great community partner throughout this process.

10 In response to the community's need for
11 affordable housing at the deepest levels, my team and
12 I are exploring mapping only MIH Option One, which is
13 an average of 60% AMI, and MIH Option Three, an
14 average 40% AMI, along the waterfront, and only MIH
15 Option Three average 40% AMI, in the inland areas.

16 How many affordable units is this projected to
17 produce on private sites within the rezoning
18 boundaries?

19 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PLATKIN: Council Member,
20 thank you for that question. I'm Sarit Platkin,
21 Executive Director of Neighborhood Planning and
22 Equity Initiatives of the Department of Housing
23 Preservation and Development (HPD).

1 So, I just want to start by saying that, you
2 know, goal number one of the LIC Neighborhood Plan
3 was to create more housing for people at a range of
4 income levels. And HPD and the City team generally
5 have really, you know, adhered to that as we've
6 developed our commitments for the plan. MIH is the
7 Administration's best tool to create affordable
8 housing on private sites, and we're projecting 4,000
9 permanently income-restricted rent-stabilized homes
10 through MIH and the LIC rezoning.

11 We thank you for this proposal, and we are
12 currently analyzing it. Don't have the exact
13 projected amount of affordable units that it would
14 create right now, but we will get back to you shortly
15 with that early next week.

16 But in the meantime, I do just want to share a
17 little bit about, you know, the value of potentially
18 mapping multiple MIH options in these areas:

19 So, you know, mapping multiple MIH options
20 really is the best way to ensure that a range of
21 incomes are served and that affordability is
22 maximized. Multiple MIH options would give property
23 owners the flexibility to adapt over time. MIH
24 interacts with state tax programs such as 485-x,
25

1 which change more regularly than zoning, and as a
2 result, having multiple MIH options can really ensure
3 that at least there's one feasible option for
4 development. Multiple options also allow MIH to
5 accommodate developments of different scales, which
6 we expect, you know, really a range of building sizes
7 in each sub area.
8

9 So you know, in sum, multiple options would
10 really guarantee the flexibility needed to ensure
11 development, and limiting MIH options could risk
12 development feasibility and lead to a reduction in
13 projected affordable housing overall.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, I just want to state
15 on the record that there will be no development here
16 for housing if we don't do MIH Option One and Option
17 Three, as we have asked, because I will not vote for
18 this project without this, which is what the
19 community boards have requested.

20 And I also want to say that pizza has arrived.
21 If you're hungry and you're part of the public,
22 please feel free to just go right out the door, down
23 the stairs, and there will be 10 pies of pizza for
24 you all to enjoy.
25

1 And we're going to continue with questioning,
2
3 but we're wrapping up. So know that-- please don't
4 leave, we want to hear from you as part of the public
5 testimony.

6 As-- and I just want to close out on the MIH
7 Option One and Option Three comment, this would be in
8 addition to any affordable units developed on the
9 public sites.

10 As of July 2025, we had 162 vacant units at
11 Queensbridge Houses, 66 vacant units at Ravenswood
12 Houses, and 33 vacant units at Woodside Houses. Will
13 NYCHA commit to a timeline to bring these vacant
14 units back online at the NYCHA developments—the ones
15 in my district, before the City Council vote?

16 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Thank you for your
17 question, Council Member.

18 NYCHA is a critical affordable housing
19 resource, and our goal is to get New Yorkers into
20 affordable, available apartments as quickly as
21 possible without compromising the safety or quality
22 of their lives.

23 NYCHA has been working hard to improve the
24 turnover process and scale up operations to reduce
25 turnover time. And over the past few years, they've

1
2 been performing extensive and required environmental
3 work in every apartment once they become occupied, so
4 anyone moving into a NYCHA apartment will be safe
5 from lead and asbestos.

6 This extensive cleaning process, along with
7 the general repairs performed, contributes to a
8 longer turnover time and lengthier waits for many
9 families. The NYCHA team shares Council Member Won's
10 commitment to ensuring that the turning over of
11 vacant units is as expeditious as possible.

12 Currently, as stated, there are 227 vacant
13 units at NYCHA-- Queensbridge North and South, and of
14 those, 183 units are vacant--available, meaning
15 turnover is in progress. Eight units have been
16 matched to a tenant, and 27 are permanently off the
17 rent roll, which means not available for rent, and
18 (UNINTELLIGIBLE) temporarily off the rent roll.

19 And since last June, NYCHA has been turning
20 over approximately 535 apartments per month. NYCHA
21 will be happy to further discuss these efforts with
22 the Council Member and continue to work with you on
23 this front.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you so much.
25

1 I couldn't hear you for a second. So eight
2 units, uh, you said we're matched to-- matched, and
3 then what was the number right before that, a 190?

4 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: One hundred eighty-three.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: One hundred eighty-three
6 units... (CROSS-TALK)

7 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Are vacant-available,
8 meaning turnover is in progress.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay.

10 We currently have 38 shelters in my council
11 district, which means that 10,000 people at any given
12 time are homeless or unhoused. We want to make sure
13 that the 183 units are filled, and that Section 8
14 housing is *housing* for those who need it the most. So
15 we want to get a clear timeline before the Council
16 vote, with a commitment of when these vacant units
17 will be online in all three NYCHAs.

18 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Thank you.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: At Queensbridge Houses, as
20 well as Ravenswood Houses, and Jacob Riis services
21 both. They have served at the Queensbridge housing
22 location since 1950, and have significant capital
23 needs to improve the physical space.
24
25

1 We have a large group of seniors here who are
2 here to testify on the amazing services that they
3 receive there and have dire needs for it.

4 Does the City commit to funding the necessary
5 renovations to make the community center safe and
6 welcoming for staff and residents?
7

8 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Thank you for your
9 question.

10 There are several recently completed and
11 ongoing capital projects at Queensbridge North and
12 South, including elevator and ground improvement
13 projects.

14 On elevators, uh, capital elevator
15 rehabilitation work is in progress at Queensbridge.
16 Queensbridge North has \$35 million allocated and is
17 expected to be completed in the spring of 2026. As
18 part of this project, 47 elevators are being
19 modernized, 35 are complete, and 12 remain.

20 Queensbridge South has \$29.3 allocated, and is
21 delayed, but expected to be completed by fall 2026.

22 This project involves the modernization of 49
23 cars. As of June 30th, 35 are complete and 14 are
24 remaining. Construction is ongoing, and NYCHA will
25 provide regular updates on progress.

1 And on the grounds improvement, Queensbridge
2
3 North and South have significant soil erosion, which
4 has impacted the site. There is \$2.8 million
5 allocated for Queensbridge South for grounds
6 improvement. The NYCHA and the City team are grateful
7 to Council Member Won for additional funding towards
8 this project. And with new funding, this project
9 needs to be rescoped with resident leadership and the
10 Council Member.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, so, is that a yes,
12 NYCHA is committed to funding capital for their site,
13 which is used by the Jacob Riis Community Center?

14 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: I will get back to you on-
15 - after I speak with our NYCHA team, but they are
16 committed to working with you and seeing progress
17 here at NYCHA.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay. And we also have the
19 Queensbridge Residents Association. Our beloved TA
20 President, Miss Corinne Haynes, has brought it to our
21 attention that the community space needs renovation
22 in order to accommodate adult and youth programming.

23 Does the City commit to funding the necessary
24 renovations to transform this empty space into
25 flexible programming space?

2 DIRECTOR ZENG: Thank you for bringing that to
3 our attention. We'll look into that and continue to
4 work with your office and the TA to better understand
5 what their needs are.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay.

7 In addition to all the capital improvements by
8 maintenance that Ms. Hye-Kyung Yang has testified to,
9 we have to address the most dire concern, which has
10 been sewage and plumbing-flooding issues there. We
11 have videos of children water sliding down the
12 staircase because the flooding is so incredibly bad
13 in the buildings themselves. From the 5th floor, you
14 can take a garbage pail and slide down like you are
15 at, I don't know, some sort of water park.

16 It is a huge issue. We have shared the
17 sentiment with City Hall on behalf of NYCHA. NYCHA
18 has sent us estimates, and we do look forward to
19 having those maintenance issues resolved.

20 And now moving on to the DIS (phonetic). Was
21 the DIS completed, factoring in the changes made as
22 part of the City of Yes, or was it completed prior to
23 the City of Yes implementation? Are the scenarios
24 reflective of the impact of City of Yes on all EIS
25 (phonetic) categories?

1
2 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Yes, thank you. Thank you
3 for that question.

4 And also, we'd just like to highlight that we
5 want to thank the City Council for your support in
6 getting our City of Yes Text Amendment through late
7 last year.

8 So the short answer to your question is yes,
9 it does apply-- the changes from City of Yes do apply
10 there. So the most conservative estimates using the
11 Option 3 MIH, uh, option is included in our studies
12 across the different chapters, as well as the new
13 manufacturing zones and districts that were created
14 under the City of Yes economic opportunity, which was
15 also used in our environmental impact study.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: If someone could just let
17 the seniors know that they could take the elevator
18 down instead of walking down the staircase to get
19 pizza. And if you're eating pizza, please eat it
20 outside of the Chambers and return. But please let
21 the seniors know not to walk down the stairs,
22 especially with their canes, and just to use the
23 elevator, which is to their left hand side.

24 Okay, I'm almost done—wrapping up. So we have
25 our beloved local arts and culture folks who are here

1 to testify on behalf of arts and culture. Long Island
2 City has been a haven for artists and artisanal
3 producers of all kinds. How will this plan support
4 arts and culture in Long Island City?
5

6 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Thank you for your
7 question, Council Member.

8 You're right, throughout the engagement and
9 ULURP process, we've heard from the arts and culture
10 community expressing the need to support existing
11 arts and cultural resources.

12 The OneLIC Plan supports this important aspect
13 of the neighborhood and, through the proposal,
14 encourages cultural and community-oriented
15 recreational space, such as open air amphitheater
16 performance stages and gathering lawns, as possible
17 amenities for developers to provide on-site when
18 opting for bonuses for active recreational space as
19 part of the updated WAP.

20 The WAP also encourages inclusion of public
21 art within these public spaces. And through the
22 recent Council-approved ZEO (phonetic) consolidation
23 of arts and manufacturing uses into a single use
24 group, which would enable arts and culture users to
25 locate throughout the project area, as of right.

1 Partnering agencies, the Department of Cultural
2 Affairs, has newly launched the Create in Place
3 Initiative, which offers tailored support to arts and
4 cultural institutions citywide, including an
5 interagency task force, a resource hub, a creative
6 space network connecting organizations with
7 underutilized space, and case support to navigate
8 city requirements, or assist with space transition,
9 is available to existing and future artists and art
10 organizations. Thank you.

11
12 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: The arts advocates have
13 been requesting for a very long time throughout the
14 city for DCP to create a zoning incentive program
15 that provides floor area ratios bonuses to developers
16 who provide free or discounted street-level cultural
17 space to local artists and cultural organizations as
18 part of their plan.

19 Could you explain why this is not possible and
20 the views of DCP?

21 (PAUSE)

22 MS. HYE-KYUNG YANG: Sorry, apologies. Thank
23 you for the question.

24 So as part of the plan, we've included zoning
25 incentives to encourage development of public schools

1 and open space for the community. Schools and open
2 space were among the top needs stated by the
3 community and are critical to the development of the
4 neighborhood.

5
6 And, as part of the City of Yes economic
7 opportunity, as I mentioned before, the same use
8 groups, arts and manufacturing uses, are brought
9 together under the same use groups and permitted
10 throughout the product area.

11 We have-- to encourage the public arts within
12 the neighborhood, there are provisions for the
13 proposed Inland Open Space Bonuses to include the
14 public arts. And these proposed WAPS also encourage
15 the inclusion of cultural spaces, such as performance
16 spaces along the waterfront. Thank you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, I just want to state
18 on the record, to return to the MIH conversation, we
19 are mapping multiple One and Three MIH Options along
20 the waterfront, and MIH Option Three inland.

21 HPD data shows that developers do not choose
22 Option three when they have other choices, which is
23 why we're eliminating those other choices for this
24 project in order for me to vote yes on this rezoning.
25 And it is our goal to serve the AMIs that are

1 typically neglected in my neighborhood, especially
2 because the majority of Hunters Point was built out
3 without MIH. And it is within my power to make this
4 modification, so that's what we will be doing.

5
6 Last set of questions for oversight and
7 accountability. We're aware that the Gowanus
8 Neighborhood Plan secured at least \$500 million in
9 City investment, which produced only 8,500 new
10 housing units in comparison to mine, almost half less
11 than mine, making it significantly smaller than the
12 Long Island City Neighborhood Plan, which is
13 projected to create over 14,000 housing units.

14 Can the City of New York commit to meeting the
15 affordable housing, infrastructure, schools, and open
16 space needs for rezoning and making those commitments
17 ahead of the City Council vote? I expect a unison yes
18 from every panelist on this panel.

19 DIRECTOR ZENG: Thank you for your question. I
20 think we can all agree that we appreciate your
21 thoughtful questions throughout this morning, and to
22 make clear what your priorities are in this plan and
23 for your community. So we really appreciate that.

24 For us, we want to be accountable for
25 everything that we commit to. We hope to continue to

1 work with your office on what those things are, uh,
2 the specifics of those commitments and priorities, in
3 that, we continue to talk even after the vote, and
4 that it doesn't end a few weeks from now—that we
5 will continue to hear from you.

6
7 But the concerns are from the community, even
8 after the commitments are made, so that we can really
9 be responsive to all the issues and concerns that
10 would be raised by your office and the community.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, I will take that as
12 a yes, but I look forward to a clear, written
13 commitment closer to the Council vote.

14 And, my last question of the day—Huzzah—how
15 will the City be held accountable for following
16 through with the commitments that the Council
17 negotiates as part of adopting the plan, should it be
18 approved?

19 And from the City's perspective, what are best
20 practices from neighborhood plans to ensure
21 accountability and community oversight over public
22 and private commitments? And do you commit to
23 following those best practices with the potential of
24 an overturn of a new administration?
25

2 DIRECTOR ZENG: Yes, absolutely, we commit to
3 following through on our commitments when they are
4 made. And as I said just now, we want to work with
5 your office in defining what that type of oversight
6 looks like. And we will learn from best practices and
7 what to do, what not to do, from previous plans, such
8 as in Gowanus.

9 But every community is different, and every
10 issue is different. So we want to make sure that what
11 we are following up on and what we are accountable
12 for meets the needs of your community.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, thank you so much.
14 You are now dismissed or adjourned. The question
15 portion of this hearing has now ended, and we are
16 going to move into public testimony.

17 (PAUSE)

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: And, please, don't forget
19 to grab a slice of pizza on your way out. There seems
20 to be cheese, pepperoni, and veggie. So, enjoy!
21 Thanks for coming.

22 (PAUSE)

23 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Our first panel will be
24 Lisa Goren, Steven Edgar, Donal Cogdell, and Andrea
25 Mungo.

1
2 Next, after that panel will be Corey Hannigan,
3 Alberto Cruz, and Eliana Gibbs.

4 (PAUSE)

5 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So Lisa Goren is already
6 up. Donal Cogdel is up. I don't see Steven Edgar or
7 Andrew Mungo. Oh, is it Andrea? Okay, they must have
8 misspelled it. Okay, thank you. You may begin.

9 LISA GOREN: Hello, I am Lisa Goren. Hello,
10 Council Member Won.

11 I'm a 35-year resident and owner in Long
12 Island City speaking on behalf of the LIC Coalition,
13 along with other local organizations that oppose the
14 OneLIC Plan as it stands.

15 OneLIC is marketed by the DCP and the
16 developer's own PR campaign as answering critical
17 needs. It does the opposite, and despite numerous
18 public hearings, the plan has not been changed based
19 on public input. Many of us who are-- many of those
20 in support believe it brings resiliency, open space,
21 school seats, and services. In fact, it sacrifices
22 these for housing that, even where below market rate,
23 is not guaranteed to be affordable to those that it
24 should serve.

1
2 Excessive height and density will stress a
3 community already suffering from overdevelopment,
4 counter to the City of Yes's goal of distributing new
5 housing equitably. Open space will plummet from the
6 second or third lowest per capita in the city to *the*
7 lowest. Elementary school seat utilization is
8 expected to exceed 143%, and there are no guarantees
9 as of yet for those 1,300 school seats to keep kids
10 off much longer wait lists.

11 And I'm sorry, but drainage of existing CSOs
12 and sewer backups will not be fixed by on-site
13 stormwater management. Most egregiously, resiliency
14 and existential threat here is left to an ineffective
15 patchwork of protections dependent on private
16 developers. The plan hands developers city-owned
17 waterfront properties at the intersection of 44th
18 Drive and Vernon Boulevard that lie in the vulnerable
19 Hunters Point floodplain and were under more than six
20 feet of water during Superstorm Sandy.

21 Moreover, it places low-income towers here
22 where they will be unsafe at the low point of the
23 floodplain and (TIMER) an evacuation zone, despite
24 growing risks from storm surge and sea level rise.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you (INAUDIBLE)...

2 LISA GOREN: Our most effective tool would be a
3 public waterfront park, not just a waterfront
4 walkway, to withstand flooding events. And by the
5 way, that would be consistent with what the City is
6 doing on the Manhattan side at East River Park and
7 Battery Park City. We have an unparalleled
8 opportunity here to develop Hunters Point North for
9 the City and Long Island City's long-term needs
10 without damaging the neighborhood to fix it.

11 Please vote no unless we can reduce its
12 density, guarantee needed infrastructure, and keep
13 these public sites for a park that would keep LIC
14 livable and safe. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: You can go next, thank you.
16 Just read and state your name, uh, for the record.

17 DONAL COGDELL: Testing. Uh, yes, I am Donal
18 Cogdell, and I am a Minister of Justice at Hope
19 Astoria Church. I thank you for this time.

20 I come here not alone. I have over 40 letters
21 from concerned members of my church about this plan.
22 As currently constructed, it is not a community-
23 driven plan for the working class, for seniors, for
24 the vulnerable, for Black and brown communities. I've
25 sat and been to most of the community gatherings that

1
2 have asked for input from the community, and I have
3 not seen much of those contributions of the community
4 in this plan.

5 Julie Won has went on record of saying 4,000
6 housing units is not enough for affordability, and
7 that has not been adjusted yet. The school shortage
8 problem has not been adjusted yet. The environmental
9 hazards have not been adjusted yet.

10 So I'm just trying to figure out where has the
11 community's contributions been involved in this plan?
12 It's just been another typical luxury development
13 plan, and that is sad. My faith informs me that we
14 are to love our neighbor, think of our neighbor,
15 consider our neighbor, and there's only one class of
16 people that this plan seems to be serving, and it's
17 not all of New Yorkers.

18 In my church, we have housing insecurity,
19 people that are looking for homes and want to stay in
20 the community. And this plan does not help them stay
21 in that community.

22 And so I'm just-- I oppose the plan as
23 currently constructed. And we are asking for deeper
24 affordability. The same energy that was put forth in
25 Innovation Queens, the fighting for 40%-50% above the

1
2 MIH, is what we-- it's what we want. It is what we
3 desire—that this truly be something for New Yorkers.
4 Thank you.

5 ANDREA MUNGO: Proverbs 31 urges us to speak up
6 for those who cannot speak for themselves and to
7 defend the rights of the poor and needy. I am a
8 concerned resident of Astoria, and I believe this--
9 the overall impact of this rezoning on the community
10 will be negative.

11 A big rezoning can seem good for a community,
12 with shiny new buildings and better landscaping.
13 However, the people it excludes, the people it does
14 not provide for, the poor, the struggling artists,
15 small business owners, small manufacturers, who can't
16 afford to find affordable space to rent, are unseen
17 and forgotten. The powerful and the wealthy, again,
18 benefit from the inequities of yet another super-
19 upzoning in New York City.

20 I choose to speak up for New Yorkers that want
21 to earn a living wage and pay rent that is truly and
22 deeply affordable. The OneLIC Rezoning Plan mainly
23 will benefit wealthy developers, land owners, and
24 wealthy people who can afford exorbitant rent and
25 high-priced condos.

1 I received the emails from New York Housing
2 Connect, and rarely do I see any two and three-
3 bedrooms for families at 20 or 30% AMI.
4

5 We have a housing affordability crisis that
6 vast numbers of rent-burdened New Yorkers can testify
7 to. The build, build, build message from our mayor
8 and other uninformed politicians and city leaders has
9 not been shown to be the solution. Numerous studies
10 of data in recent years are showing that upzone
11 neighborhoods become whiter, more educated, and more
12 affluent in the long run. Upzoning is also associated
13 with increases in housing production, *but* housing
14 prices also increase.

15 I'm calling for responsible and just
16 development that truly meets the needs of low and
17 middle-income singles and families who do not have
18 generational wealth, double incomes (TIMER), or high
19 paying jobs. I suggest using Value Capture for this
20 rezoning, which will produce wealth to subsidize
21 truly affordable housing. This has been successfully
22 done in Vancouver. Why not set a precedent here in
23 New York City and show our country we truly care
24 about our residents?
25

2 I respectfully ask that this rezoning in its
3 current form (TIMER) be voted down. Thank you very
4 much.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Can you please
6 reinstate your name for the Record?

7 ANDREA MUNGO: Yes, Andrea Mungo.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. I wasn't here
9 when we started public testimony. I am going to ask
10 that everybody, when you hear the bell, please start
11 wrapping it up. We have a lot of people signed up to
12 testify. So we just want to show respect to everybody
13 here.

14 STEVEN EDGAR: Good day, everyone. My name is
15 Steven Edgar.

16 After the Air Force landed in Long Island City
17 in 1987, my wife and I raised two sons there. It's
18 been a good fit. One of the many attractions to the
19 neighborhood is the mixture of residential,
20 commercial, and light industry—can't forget about
21 the presence of artists, of course. We quite like to
22 make sure (INAUDIBLE) Long Island City single-family
23 homes, two-family, and multi-family.

24 Proposed high rises are too tall. They will
25 block the sun and throw shadows over the whole

1 neighborhood. Although there are some good ideas in
2 the plan, I'm afraid the proposed zoning changes will
3 tilt density for the worse. Thousands and thousands
4 of people and their cars, noise pollution, and air
5 pollution are real concerns—bicycles competing for
6 the same space. Pedestrian safety will be threatened
7 as well.

8
9 Public transportation already struggles.
10 Subways are crowded and would only get more crowded
11 with 40 to 60,000 new arrivals. Today, two crowded
12 trains passed before I could board a Manhattan-bound
13 7.

14 Sewers, green space, flood mitigation, and
15 schools have been considered, while height of new
16 buildings has not wavered.

17 I'm not anti-change or anti-development, but I
18 urge you to vote no on the plan. It is too much, too
19 fast—70-story towers? Come on. Does anybody really
20 believe the construction of dozens of luxury towers
21 will lead to more affordable housing? Back to the
22 drawing board.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you for your
24 testimony. There being no questions, this panel is
25 excused.

1
2 The next panel I am going to call up consists
3 of Corey Hannigan, Senjuen Hsia, Alberto Cruz, Chris
4 Hanway, and Eliana Gibbs.

5 Just a brief logistical announcement for the
6 benefit of those signed up to testify remotely and
7 who may be following along, I want to note that, as
8 approximately-- we anticipate roughly 1.5 hours of
9 public, in-person testimony first, and then we will
10 transition to online testimony.

11 We begin first with Corey Hannigan.

12 COREY HANNIGAN: Good morning. My name is Corey
13 Hannigan with the Tri-State Transportation Campaign,
14 a 30-year-old nonprofit dedicated to improving
15 mobility in our region. We support this rezoning.

16 I'm also a member of Queens CB2, which
17 conditionally approved this plan alongside a robust
18 and thoughtful list of recommendations that I
19 strongly urge you to look through and consider
20 including in this rezoning.

21 First, thank you to Council Member Won for her
22 focus on affordable housing and safe mobility, two
23 issues that go hand in hand—more housing and
24 walkable, bikeable areas ensure our streets are safer
25

1 and that people can live within reach of family,
2 employment, education, and recreation.
3

4 It's a simple fact that the need for housing
5 in our city vastly outstrips an artificially
6 constrained supply, driving up rents and
7 displacement. But the citywide vacancy rate of 1.4%,
8 legalizing apartments for tens of thousands of new
9 neighbors, many of whom, like me, are queer and may
10 be fleeing discrimination in other places, including
11 other states, and thousands of new, permanently and
12 deeply affordable units, is exactly what we need more
13 of.

14 That said, the DEIS and corresponding plan are
15 missing key components that I hope you will fight to
16 include. There are significant unmitigated impacts to
17 per capita pedestrian space. There was no
18 consideration of bicycle demand in the City Council
19 district with the highest rate of bicycle commuters
20 in Queens, nor any proposal for new bus lanes,
21 despite some of the new housing being half a mile
22 from the train.

23 We still have not seen a comprehensive streets
24 and open space plan from DOT for this project. Such a
25 plan should include more and wider bike lanes, bus

1 prioritization, as there are currently no bus lanes
2 in CB2, new pedestrian plazas, especially under the
3 Queensboro Bridge, and a high-quality continuous two-
4 way cycle track on the proposed Waterfront Esplanade
5 in line with the City's Greater Greenways plan.

6
7 The CB has also asked for a transit
8 coordination plan with the MTA to improve subway,
9 bus, and ferry service to accommodate the influx of
10 new residents and employees on already crowded lines.
11 The last thing we need is 14,000 new cars in LIC
12 (TIMER), and we avoid that by offering practical and
13 attractive alternatives.

14 Finally, I urge you to fight for a large
15 public outdoor pool as part of the rezoning, possibly
16 the Con Ed site.

17 Thank you very much for your time and
18 consideration. I have no doubt you will see the
19 opportunity this plan offers (TIMER) to bring
20 dramatic infrastructure improvements to the
21 neighborhood while creating space for new neighbors
22 in the world's borough.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
24 hear from Senjuen.

2 SENJUEN HSIA: Greetings, my name is Senjuen
3 Hsia, and I represent several property lots in the
4 IBZ-designated area of Dutch Kills in Long Island
5 City.

6 I have been a resident here for 42 years and
7 have worked in its warehouses for 30. While we are
8 supportive of the DCP's efforts, we feel that it does
9 not go far enough in adding mixed-use and residential
10 units to its rezoning plans.

11 Driving along 21st Street from Astoria to
12 Hunters Point, we can see that left turns were banned
13 on every intersection throughout the IBZ; 21st Street
14 has officially been designated as a Vision Zero
15 Corridor and has been completely redesigned to
16 emphasize pedestrian safety and bus reliability.

17 These traffic changes no longer make the lots
18 in IBZ North feasible for significant industrial
19 transport. It is no longer possible for large trucks
20 and containers to effectively maneuver around this
21 zone. This discourages any major manufacturing or
22 wholesale company from wanting to move into the area.

23 Secondly, the IBZ is isolated on all sides by
24 residential buildings. We are surrounded by
25 Queensbridge projects, hotels, eateries, and places

1 specifically catered to the growing number of
2 residents and tourists.

3
4 This area is already geared towards
5 residential commuting and commercial activity. As
6 such, LIC has already lost key elements of its
7 industrial character decades ago. This IBZ
8 designation has effectively been made outdated by the
9 City's own policies to encourage livability. There is
10 no need to force industrial-only spaces when there
11 are numerous empty and dilapidated warehouses
12 littering the area already.

13 The IBZ designation in LIC North and Dutch
14 Kills should be modified to allow for more
15 residential and mixed-use purposes. Let's turn those
16 vacant and run-down warehouses into the homes,
17 plazas, theaters, schools, and community facilities
18 that LIC still desperately needs. Thank you. (TIMER)

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear
20 from Alberto Cruz.

21 ALBERTO CRUZ: Good afternoon, Council Members.
22 My name is Alberto Cruz. I'm here on behalf of Jacob
23 Riis and the Queensbridge community at large.

24 Queensbridge Houses is the largest public
25 housing development in North America, home to some of

1 Long Island City's lowest-income residents. Yet for
2 decades, Queensbridge and all NYCHA developments have
3 endured disinvestment, leaving residents with
4 crumbling infrastructure and poor housing conditions.

5 Residents live with constant plumbing issues,
6 leaks, and repairs that never seem to come. Problems
7 that affect health, safety, and overall quality of
8 life. At the same time, past rezonings in Long Island
9 City have overwhelmingly benefited developers and
10 property owners while leaving Queensbridge behind.

11 The OneLIC plan represents a once-in-a-
12 lifetime opportunity to change that, to finally
13 secure meaningful, concrete investment for the people
14 of Queensbridge. But it cannot move forward without
15 binding commitments from the City to repair and
16 improve their homes.

17 Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement, in
18 Queensbridge, is a pillar of this community. Every
19 day, children, teens, families, and older adults come
20 through our doors for critical programs from after-
21 school to ESL classes, immigrant services, and senior
22 services. But beyond the programming, Riis is one of
23 the few community spaces where residents of all ages
24 gather, connect, and support one another.
25

1
2 Unfortunately, our community center and office
3 spaces are in desperate need of repairs and
4 renovations. The plumbing, flooring, and basic
5 infrastructure are deteriorating, and without
6 investment, we risk losing the essential safe space
7 for our community.

8 So today, I urge you to approve the OneLIC
9 Plan *with* concrete capital commitments from the City,
10 not just for NYCHA apartments, but also for the
11 Queensbridge Riis Community Center that sustains all
12 of the community. This is a rare chance to reverse
13 decades of neglect (TIMER), and we cannot afford to
14 let it pass us by. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
16 hear from Chris Hanway.

17 AMANDA MCENERY: Good afternoon. My name is
18 Amanda McEnery; I'm here representing Chris Hanway
19 and Riis Settlement.

20 As my colleague Alberto just said, our center
21 is just such a hub for the community...

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Amanda, are you testifying,
23 too?

24 AMANDA MCENERY: Yes.
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: So, you can't testify for
3 you and Chris. Chris could submit his testimony--
4 written.

5 AMANDA MCENERY: Okay.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I don't want you to lose
7 your testimony, so if you want to testify for
8 yourself right now, you could go ahead. All right?
9 And you can submit Chris' testimony to us.

10 AMANDA MCENERY: Okay. Uhm...

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: So, just please restate
12 your name for the record, sorry.

13 AMANDA MCENERY: Amanda McEnery, Jacob A. Riis
14 Neighborhood Settlement.

15 So, as Alberto has shared, it is a vital
16 community hub that is not just home to resettlement,
17 but a place where neighbors gather to celebrate
18 birthdays, to hold repasses for loved ones, or where
19 local community organizations come to meet.

20 As Alberto has said, time has not been kind to
21 the space. Pipes are old and deteriorating. Floor and
22 ceiling tiling, especially in our senior center
23 kitchen and cafeteria, need to be replaced, and
24 outside, crumbling concrete and uneven stairs make
25 the entrance unsafe.

1
2 These conditions not only undermine the
3 dignity of residents but also hinder our ability to
4 serve them effectively. This is why this plan is a
5 once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to invest directly in
6 Queensbridge residents by revitalizing the community
7 center that has anchored them for generations.

8 So, on behalf of Riis and the families we
9 serve, and to echo what Alberto just said, we urge
10 the City Council to approve this plan, but only with
11 concrete capital commitments for renovations and
12 improvements at our center.

13 I think oftentimes these projects bring the
14 promise of amenities that realistically many
15 community members cannot access. So instead of
16 promises of amenities that may or may not be
17 accessible for all, we think direct investment in the
18 space that serves Queensbridge residents already is
19 most important. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. And next, we
21 will hear from Eliana Gibbs.

22 ELIANA GIBBS: Good afternoon, Council Member.
23 My name is Eliana Gibbs, and I have the privilege of
24 serving as the Community Engagement Director for
25 Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement.

1
2 For generations, our settlement house has
3 stood as a beacon in Queensbridge Houses. Not just a
4 building, but a sanctuary of hope, creativity, and
5 empowerment. Inside these walls, children find their
6 voice on stage, elders share wisdom through art, and
7 neighbors come together across generations to heal
8 and create.

9 We are the home of civic engagement--
10 correction, our settlement house is the home of civic
11 engagement, hosting participatory budgeting and
12 workshops, where residents learn the power of their
13 voices in shaping the future of their community.

14 And I have witnessed with my own eyes just how
15 transformative this work is. Through the MAP Program
16 that I oversee, I have worked alongside a young man
17 who was once-- could not even walk in the community
18 or step in the same room with his peers without
19 conflict. But through our Art Safe Workshops
20 Blueprint and intergenerational pilot, Thrive Across
21 Generations, he and others who only once saw enemies
22 are now collaborators, brothers, and leaders in our
23 community. That is the power of community. That is
24 the power of my Settlement House.

2 But here's the truth: This beacon is at risk.
3 Without capital funding, the very foundation that
4 holds these dreams, the roof, the walls, the safe
5 haven itself, risks crumbling. And when the buildings
6 fall, so too does the light that so many Queensbridge
7 depend on-- Queensbridge residents depend on.

8 We are not asking for charity. We're asking
9 for an investment—an investment in our settlement
10 house and our community. This investment represents
11 resiliency, peace, democracy, and the future of
12 Queensbridge residents, an investment that ensures
13 our community continues to thrive. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much for your
15 testimony. This panel is excused.

16 Next, I am going to call up Senator Kristen
17 Gonzalez.

18 (PAUSE)

19 SENATOR KRISTEN GONZALEZ: Good afternoon, I am
20 Senator Kristen Gonzalez. It's good to see you all...

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Oh, Senator, real-- real
22 quick...

23 SENATOR KRISTEN GONZALEZ: Oh, okay...
24
25

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [Speaking to the Sergeant
3 at Arms] Can you change-- uh, elected officials get
4 five minutes, thank you.

5 Go ahead, Senator.

6 SENATOR KRISTEN GONZALEZ: Great, it's good to
7 see you both. Thank you so much for having me. I
8 appreciate Council Member Won's leadership on this
9 hearing today.

10 I'm Senator Kristen Gonzalez. I live in and
11 represent Long Island City. I've spent the last two
12 years participating in the community engagement
13 process for the LIC Neighborhood plan. Since day one,
14 I have emphasized the need for a comprehensive vision
15 for community development.

16 While building housing is necessary amid our
17 housing crisis, new development should be affordable
18 and intentionally benefit our communities to support
19 working New Yorkers.

20 I want to be very clear: Without binding
21 commitments from developers and city and state
22 agencies, this plan could exacerbate the
23 infrastructure gaps that many of us already live
24 with.

1
2 Between 2010 and 2020, Long Island City built
3 over 20,000 new housing units, increasing Long Island
4 City's population by 78%. However, our schools didn't
5 keep pace, our sewers continue to struggle during
6 storms, green space has stretched thin, and subway
7 capacity has not significantly expanded.

8 This plan proposes to increase the number of
9 residential units in Long Island City by 14,700. This
10 could be an estimated 30,000 new neighbors in the
11 next 10 years. We must ensure that with growth comes
12 infrastructure we all rely on— more schools,
13 upgraded sewage and storm water systems, safer
14 streets, a transit system that increases subway and
15 bus capacity and reduces travel time. We also need
16 open and accessible green space, not just luxury
17 apartments, but everyday essentials.

18 We must also ensure that the 4,300 affordable
19 units are deeply and permanently affordable across
20 all income levels. That's why I support CB Two's
21 recommendation that MIH options One and Three be
22 required throughout the rezoning area to protect
23 housing for folks making 40 to 60% of the area median
24 income.

1 Family units must also be prioritized. In
2 addition to these affordable options, the more than
3 10,000 public housing residents who have resided in
4 the community for decades deserve deep investment. We
5 have heard from residents who are deeply concerned
6 about density across from Queensbridge Houses.

7 Finally, we deserve art spaces so LIC can
8 continue to be the cultural hub it already is.

9 We deserve investments in our community-based
10 organizations that serve our neighbors in need, and
11 we deserve spaces that help small businesses grow and
12 thrive.

13 I'm encouraged that this process has shown
14 that when our neighbors speak up, we can change what
15 feels like the inevitable. I think everyone who has
16 participated will agree that this has been a
17 community-driven process, and I look forward to
18 seeing those voices heard.

19 I'm also grateful for Council Member Won's
20 work to lead the community engagement process around
21 the LIC Neighborhood Plan, and that she's made it
22 clear that her support is tied to securing community
23 benefits.

1
2 We have an incredible opportunity in this
3 project. If we get real commitments, this plan can be
4 something transformative that addresses the needs and
5 dignity of every LIC resident.

6 I appreciate you hearing my comments today and
7 look forward to working with you through this. Thank
8 you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you so much to our
10 state senator, Kristen Gonzalez. She represents three
11 boroughs: Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn. But she
12 always listens, always takes the time to represent
13 her community. And we're so grateful for your
14 partnership in this. And everything she says, I
15 completely, 100% agree with.

16 So she's been in lockstep; she has testified
17 at every single hearing for the community boards, as
18 well as come to town halls. Her staff has been
19 present at every single meeting for this. So I can, I
20 do think that she has been the most involved state
21 senator in the state of New York. So thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Senator.

23 (APPLAUSE)

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Shhhh... Thank you,
25 everyone.

1 The next panel I am going to call up consists
2
3 of Frank McCrea, Patrica Cooper, Kariesia Baton, and
4 Kirsten Bladh.

5 The following panel will consist of: Darlene
6 Dickson, Valarie Green, Audrey Hilliard, and Maria
7 Rojas. So, after this panel, that will be the
8 following panel. No, the following panel. Not now.
9 Okay, well, one of you is not on this panel.

10 So, this panel, who-- at this table, it is
11 supposed to be Frank McCrea, Patrica Cooper, Kariesia
12 Baton, and Kirsten Bladh. If I didn't call your name,
13 you're not on the panel now.

14 UNIDENTIFIED: (INAUDIBLE)

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: You're on the next panel,
16 you two. You know what? Just sit down. (LAUGHTER)
17 It's not that big of a deal.

18 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you (LAUGHS)

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: All right? (LAUGHS) All
20 right, Frank, you may begin.

21 FRANK MCCREA: Sure. Good afternoon, and thank
22 you for hearing us, esteemed Members of the Council.
23 My name is Frank McCrea, and I am the Director of the
24 Older Adult Center at Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood
25 Settlement.

1 Riis has been a pillar of the Queensbridge
2 Houses and the broader Western Queens community for
3 generations. I have been fortunate to come to Jacob
4 Riis after facilitating grandparent support groups at
5 Queensbridge in my previous role in city government.
6 And I am proud to now work for this organization that
7 uplifts and empowers older adults who are truly the
8 heart and wisdom of our community.
9

10 At Riis, we provide a wide range of critical
11 services and programs designed to support older
12 adults in every aspect of their lives. These include
13 educational workshops that build digital literacy,
14 lifelong learning, nutritional programs like daily
15 congregate meals and food pantry access, and health
16 and wellness offerings ranging from exercise classes
17 and chronic disease management to mental health
18 support groups.

19 We also provide opportunities for recreation,
20 intergenerational engagement, and cultural enrichment
21 that help to combat social isolation and keep our
22 members connected and thriving.

23 But Riis is more than just programming. Our
24 Community Center in Queensbridge is an essential
25 gathering place, a safe, welcoming space for older

1 adults to come together to connect, learn, and
2 flourish.
3

4 As our older adults live longer, more vibrant
5 lives, the demand for our services continues to grow.
6 To meet these growing needs, it is critical that we
7 expand our older adult center so we can continue
8 delivering the high-quality support our neighbors
9 deserve. The physical space itself is in urgent need
10 of investment. Our community center and offices
11 require major repairs and renovations, which (TIMER)
12 NYCHA cannot provide, and this will ensure that this
13 space remains strong, safe, and sustainable for
14 generations to come.

15 This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to
16 invest in this essential (TIMER) community space for
17 Queensbridge and to ensure that Riis continues to be
18 a place where older adults are supported, celebrated,
19 and able to thrive. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thanks. Thank you, Frank.

21 FRANK MCCREA: Sure.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Patrica Cooper?

23 PATRICA COOPER: Good afternoon.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Good afternoon.
25

2 PATRICA COOPER: My name is Patricia Cooper,
3 and I've lived in Queensbridge for 27 years. In that
4 time, I've watched rezonings come and go. Each one
5 came with promises of progress, but while developers
6 profited, we did not. Our lives stayed the same.
7 We're still living with broken plumbing, crumbling
8 infrastructure, and buildings that have been
9 neglected for decades.

10 A few years ago, I had a severe leak in my
11 apartment, which started on the 6th floor. I live on
12 the 1st floor. I called NYCHA immediately, and I was
13 told someone would come within 24 to 48 hours. Three
14 days later, they came. By then, my entire apartment
15 was underwater. The leak reached the electrical light
16 fixtures, and it took Housing an entire week just to
17 find out where the leak started. That's unacceptable.
18 No one should live in these conditions.

19 OneLIC cannot be just another broken promise.
20 If you want our support, we need real, written, and
21 enforceable capital commitments to repair our homes
22 and to renovate resettlement. Without that
23 accountability, this plan must not move forward.

24 We have been patient for decades. Now we are
25 demanding action. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Ms. Cooper.

Next, we will hear from Kariesia.

KARIESIA BATON: Hello, my name is Kariesia Baton, speaking as the founding Executive Director of Queensboro Dance Festival. I also serve on CB2 on the Land Use Committee, and I chair the Arts and Culture Committee.

Our sector mapped 111 arts and culture organizations in the OneLIC zoning area that provide enriching services to LIC residents year-round. Yet the EIS and OneLIC Plan do not include protections for arts and culture in this massive development proposal. That is unacceptable.

Arts are an undeniable historical identity and key amenity of the neighborhood. We cannot put the arts at risk of disappearing, impacting the livelihood of thousands of artists, and killing the vibrancy and economy of our neighborhood.

Arts and culture are a leading economic driver of LIC tourism—\$1.00 spent generates \$7.00 in economic activity. When there is a cultural event, the neighborhood comes to life with people visiting and spending money in our art spaces, our bars, our

1
2 restaurants, and our parks. But it starts with the
3 arts.

4 I urge the City to make sure there are long-
5 term investments in arts and culture through
6 incentives, city agency support, and developer
7 collaboration, as stated in CB2's recommendations.

8 I want to highlight two main CB2
9 recommendations for arts and culture:

10 One is incentives for developers to create
11 below-market arts and culture spaces. And two,
12 investment by developers into an LIC Arts fund
13 operated by local arts service organization,
14 IndieSpace, to streamline funding equitably,
15 especially among the small budget arts and culture
16 organizations within the zoning area.

17 We see models for this in other parts of the
18 city. If one LIC is meant to be a comprehensive plan,
19 it must include arts and culture. It starts with the
20 arts. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
22 hear from Kirsten.

23 KIRSTEN BLADH: Thank you, Chair Riley, Council
24 Member Won, and Members of the Subcommittee on Zoning
25

1 and Franchises, for the opportunity to testify in
2 favor of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan.
3

4 My name is Kirsten Blaud, and I'm the Policy
5 Manager at Open New York, an independent, grassroots
6 pro-housing nonprofit working towards the goal of
7 making New York a city where everyone who wants to
8 live here can readily afford to do so, and where
9 people who already live here can comfortably stay.

10 New York is in the midst of a deepening
11 housing crisis. The city has a vacancy rate of just
12 1.4%, the lowest rate since 1968. More than half of
13 renter households are now rent burdened, paying over
14 30% of their income on housing. And for the most
15 vulnerable New Yorkers, this shortage is not just a
16 financial strain; it means displacement, tenant
17 harassment, and homelessness.

18 Despite the growing urgency of New York's
19 housing crisis, outdated zoning continues to stand in
20 the way of building the homes we so desperately need,
21 squandering opportunity in places like the OneLIC
22 area, where entire blocks of buildings sit
23 underutilized and out of step with the city's needs,
24 in one of the most resource accessible neighborhoods
25 of the city.

1 The OneLIC Plan will help to correct this
2
3 profound mismatch by allowing for the construction of
4 over 14,000 homes and new employment centers that
5 better reflect the needs and future of the city. And
6 it will do so in a way that centers equity to ensure
7 that the benefits are broadly shared.

8 For the first time, the OneLIC Plan brings
9 mandatory inclusionary housing to Long Island City,
10 reserving thousands of units for low and moderate-
11 income households. It launches the Partners in
12 Preservation program to protect and empower existing
13 tenants and prevent displacement. And it transforms
14 the neighborhood's waterfront from private parking
15 lots to publicly accessible open space.

16 The OneLIC Plan is an opportunity to address
17 New York's housing crisis with the urgency and scale
18 that it demands, and within all of the above approach
19 that protects existing tenants while welcoming
20 thousands of new ones.

21 Open New York urges the City Council to
22 approve the OneLIC Plan.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
24 hear from Ms. Maria. Ms. Maria, can you-- one second,
25 Ms. Maria.

1
2 MARIA ROJAS: Hello, Council Members, my name
3 is Maria Rojas, and I want to speak on behalf of the
4 seniors of Queensbridge. Many of us rely on Jacob
5 Riis Neighborhood Settlement for meals and activity,
6 and mostly companionship.

7 Riis's Center is more than just a building. It
8 is where we gather and support one another and feel
9 part of the community. But the space is falling
10 apart. The garden is crumbling and has no safe bench
11 or proper seats for other older adults to gather. The
12 roof is leaking. The kitchen sink is leaking. The
13 bathroom is outdated. And the gym needs a new floor
14 and fixtures. Many rooms are not acceptable for
15 anything.

16 Every Thursday, I attend art and crafts class
17 and (INAUDIBLE). And we make beautiful jewelry, but
18 what matters even more is that we laugh and talk and
19 connect. Without this program, I would have no
20 companionship. This is why One (INAUDIBLE)

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: LIC.

22 MARIA ROJAS: LIC, thank you-- must include a
23 remodel of Jacob Riis Settlement. Our older adults
24 deserve dignity, and rebuilding is central to our
25

1 well-being. Please do not pass this plan without
2 investing in the seniors of Queen Bridge. Thank you.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much, Ms.
5 Maria.

6 MARIA ROJAS: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Are you Ms. Green?

8 VALARIE GREEN: Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I was right.

10 (LAUGHTER)

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Ms. Valerie Green, you're
12 next.

13 VALERIE GREEN: Hello, my name is Valerie
14 Green, and I have lived in Queensbridge for 40 years.
15 In that time, I've seen promises of repairs and new
16 fixtures come and go, each one claiming progress, yet
17 leaving us with the same broken plumbing, crumbling
18 walls, and neglected buildings. Developers have
19 profits, but our quality of life has not improved.

20 In 2017, I requested a simple paint job for my
21 apartment. To this day, it still has not been done.
22 The paint is chipping off my walls, and now I'm also
23 battling a leak in my bathroom. This is not the
24 quality of life I expected after a lifetime of work
25 and service.

2 OneLIC cannot be just another broken promise.
3 If you want our support, we need real, written, and
4 enforceable capital commitments to repair our homes
5 and to renovate the Jacob A Riis Neighborhood
6 Settlement. Without accountability, this plan must
7 not move forward. We have been patient for decades.
8 Now we demand action. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

10 I guess I have a question for everybody here.
11 You all don't have to answer, though. It seems like
12 you guys are for the project, but you'll be 100% for
13 the project with these investments to the arts, to
14 the center within the community, and to housing
15 infrastructure. So you're for the project, but you
16 are calling on the City to do more and invest in the
17 area. Am I safe to say that?

18 PANEL: Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes.

20 FRANK MCCREA: Yes, absolutely.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: All right, thank you so
22 much. This panel is excused. Thank you.

23 The next panel will hear from will be: Darlene
24 Dickson, Audrey Hilliard, Paula Chambers, Christine
25 Hunter, Paula Kirby, and Manuel Romero.

2 Okay, the following panel that we will listen
3 to is Edjo Wheeler, Kevin Douglas, Jubaire Salim, and
4 Connie Butler. That will be the following panel.

5 We will be hearing first from Ms. Darlene
6 Dickson. Ms. Dickson left? Okay.

7 All right, so we will then hear from Audrey
8 Hilliard.

9 AUDREY HILLIARD: Hello, good afternoon,
10 Council Members. My name is Audrey Hilliard, and I
11 have lived in Queensbridge Houses for over 30 years.
12 In that time, I have seen promises of repairs and new
13 capital fixtures come and go. Each one claiming
14 progress, yet leaves us with the same broken
15 elevators, broken plumbing, crumbling walls, and
16 neglected buildings. Developers had profited, but our
17 quality of life has not improved.

18 In 2023, my apartment tested positive for
19 lead. The lead was treated; however, to this day, my
20 apartment has not been painted. The work has not been
21 completed. When they removed the lead, they left the
22 wall unpainted and unfinished. Looking at these
23 damaged walls every day has taken a toll on my mental
24 and emotional well-being. This is not the quality of
25 life any of us deserves.

OneLIC cannot be just another broken promise. If you want our support, we need real, written, and enforceable capital commitments to repair our homes and to renovate the Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement. Without that accountability, this plan must not move forward. We have been patient for decades. Now we demand action. Thank you

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much, Ms. Hilliard. Next, we will hear from Paula Chambers.

PAULA CHAMBERS: Hi. Hello, Congressman (sic) and Members. My name is Paulette Chambers, and I am proud to be a senior living in Queensbridge.

After retiring from the New York City Board of Education, I suddenly found myself with quiet days and too much time on my hands. I then found Jacob Avery Settlement housing, and everything changed. The Riss Center gave me a reason to get up in the morning, to get up and get dressed, and reconnect with the world. It gave me promise, it gave me a community. But this place that gave us life is falling apart. The roof leaks, the bathroom is outdated, and the rooms are not accessible for everyone. The building that brings us joy is crumbling around us.

2 Every Wednesday and Saturday, we attend arts
3 and crafts and jewelry classes at the Riis. The
4 program calms my mind and helped me socialize and
5 pull out of isolation. Without them, I would be
6 alone. This is why OneLIC must include real concern,
7 commitments, and the resettlement. Our older adults
8 deserve dignity. The Riis Building is certain to our
9 well-being (sic). Please do not pass this plan unless
10 it includes real investments in the seniors of
11 Queensbridge. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Miss Chambers.
13 Next, we'll hear from Christine Hunter.

14 CHRISTINE HUNTER: Thank you.

15 Good afternoon. I'm Christine Hunter, Chair of
16 Queens CB2's Land Use and Housing Committee. As an
17 architect who's worked primarily on deeply affordable
18 and special needs housing in the five boroughs, I
19 believe that good housing doesn't end at a building's
20 front door. All of us, at all income levels, live in
21 our neighborhoods as well as our apartments. Local
22 communities that meet our needs across our lifetimes
23 are vital to the city's future and stability. While
24 our committee supports the goal of more affordable
25 housing in LIC, we do have concerns about the very

1 high density and the vertical scale of development
2 enabled by the proposed rezoning, especially when
3 coupled with a lack of usable public open space.

4
5 CB2's recommendations thus include some
6 modest adjustments to the rezoning actions:

7 First, we urge that unlimited height
8 provisions be removed where they are currently
9 proposed. While we understand DCP's goal of design
10 flexibility, we see clearly in the 3D massing studies
11 that the towers permitted by the current actions
12 would be out of scale, even with recent development
13 along the waterfront and in Court Square. We urge the
14 Council to replace these provisions with defined
15 height limits that balance flexibility with
16 neighborhood context.

17 Second, we ask that the base zoning on the
18 waterfront and in inland areas now proposed at R-10
19 be modified slightly downward. This would incentivize
20 developers to use the Open Space Bonus in order to
21 achieve the densities assumed in the DEIS. We see
22 this as a win-win, allowing creation of the proposed
23 4,000 MIH units, but also providing critically needed
24 open space.

1
2 Finally, we stand with Queen CB1 in asking for
3 a reduction in the zoning adjacent to Queensbridge
4 Houses on the blocks facing 21st Street. Any new
5 market rate development here should respect and not
6 overwhelm (TIMER) the scale and character of this
7 historic complex.

8 An important stated goal of OneLIC is to serve
9 diverse types of households and family needs. We feel
10 strongly that affordable housing (TIMER) and well-
11 planned neighborhoods are not either-or propositions.
12 They should go hand in hand. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much. Next,
14 we'll hear from Paula Kirby.

15 PAULA KIRBY: Good afternoon. Hi, my name is
16 Paula Kirby, and I work at Plaxall, a family business
17 my grandfather started in the early 1940s in Long
18 Island City. Over the past 80+ years, four
19 generations of my family have seen incredible change
20 take place in LIC. What was once a purely industrial
21 area of the city has become a vibrant mixed-use
22 neighborhood. And with the LIC neighborhood plan,
23 there's potential to provide even more for our
24 community. At Plaxall, we are also doing our best to
25

1
2 give back to current and future members of the
3 community.

4 As our Council Member just announced, we have
5 signed an MOU with the School Construction Authority
6 to fast-track the delivery of a site for a standalone
7 school at 46th Avenue within Plaxall's property.
8 Further, as long-term supporters of the arts and
9 founding members of Culture Lab LIC, we are planning
10 to provide a space for them at Anable Basin for the
11 long term.

12 Additionally, and subject to necessary funding
13 from the City, we are also exploring the possibility
14 of providing a site for a much longed-for rec center
15 in our neighborhood.

16 OneLIC provides a real opportunity to
17 positively shape the future of New York City. I
18 strongly urge all council members to vote in favor of
19 the LIC Neighborhood Plan. Much thought and hard work
20 have gone into the development of this plan, and I
21 would like to thank Dan Garodnick and the Department
22 of City Planning, our tireless Council Member Julie
23 Won, and her staff. Thoughtful change can provide
24 opportunity for so many. Opportunity in the form of
25 housing, jobs, schools, open space, community

2 facilities, and space for arts and culture, and I
3 believe the thoughtful change is what this rezoning
4 will achieve. Thank you.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
6 hear from Manuel Romero.

7 MANUEL ROMERO: Good afternoon, Honorable Chair
8 Riley and Council Member Julie Won. I'm Manny Romero,
9 Vice President for Communications and External
10 Affairs at LaGuardia Community College. I'm
11 testifying today on behalf of President Kenneth
12 Adams.

13 La Guardia, an anchor institution in western
14 Queens, is deeply committed to the prosperity of Long
15 Island City. Several aspects of the plan are
16 particularly important to La Guardia. As the largest
17 provider of non-degree workforce training in CUNY, we
18 offer vocational education and training to local
19 residents. La Guardia is committed to working with
20 employers to ensure that Long Island City residents
21 have the skills needed to succeed in the positions
22 these firms depend on. We strongly support the
23 proposed plan to provide affordable housing for its
24 residents. Unfortunately, many students suffer from
25 homelessness and housing insecurity. We are

1 encouraged by the possibility that the proposed
2 zoning changes will lead to the construction of
3 affordable housing, including student housing.
4

5 LaGuardia has been an LIC since 1971 and
6 serves over 25,000 students annually. Capital funding
7 for sewage and plumbing infrastructure is critical
8 for the future of the college and LIC. We have old
9 industrial buildings, and infrastructure upgrades
10 will help address current needs as well as
11 accommodate the growth of LaGuardia.

12 As the plan moves forward, we strongly support
13 the creation of new public open spaces, which are
14 urgently needed. In fact, our College has been
15 collaborating with the Department of Transportation
16 to develop the LaGuardia Community Greenway that
17 features one of the largest city street murals.

18 Open spaces play a vital role in promoting
19 mental and physical well-being. By providing spaces
20 for recreation, stress relief, and social connection,
21 we advocate for the health and well-being of our
22 community. (TIMER)

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. There being no
24 questions, this panel is excused. Thank you so much.
25

1 The next panel we're going to hear from
2
3 consists of Jubaire Salim, Connie Butler, Elena
4 González, Edjo Wheeler, and Kevin Douglas.

5 Okay, I'll just actually start from my right.
6 Just state your name for the record, then you may
7 begin.

8 EDJO WHEELER: Thank you for this time. Good
9 afternoon, I'm Edjo Wheeler, Executive Director of
10 Culture Lab LIC.

11 There are 112 arts organizations and
12 independent artists working inside the proposed
13 rezoning footprint. If we don't build structural
14 incentives or requirements for free or low-cost space
15 into this plan, they will disappear. Once the
16 buildings go up, the time has passed. Cultural Lab
17 alone brings over 60,000 people to the area each year
18 and contributes more than \$2.5 million to the local
19 economy. No other sector can say that. And yet the
20 current plan does not mention arts and culture at
21 all. NYC could not survive without tourism, neither
22 can a new LIC. If this plan is about long-term health
23 and livability, you must include the arts. Without
24 structural inclusion, the arts will not survive here.

25 We are asking for three things:

1. Zoning incentives to provide free or affordable long-term space for nonprofit organizations.
2. Percent for the Art, a developer-funded LIC arts fund managed by a third-party nonprofit like IndieSpace.
3. Investment in cultural infrastructure, like a permanent amphitheater and local artist-led installations.

If developers are going to benefit from fundamentally changing the fabric of this community, they need to give something back to it. Plaxall, one of the key property owners within the rezoning area, has already shown what's possible. By donating space to Culture Lab LIC, they've helped create a thriving arts hub that draws tens of thousands of visitors each year and delivers economic and cultural value to the neighborhood. This is the model—proof that when developers support the arts, the whole community benefits.

You have a chance to make LIC a destination, something future residents can be proud of, but it has to be baked into this deal. If you still don't think the arts are important, just look at the

1 economic studies. We're happy to provide them.

2 (TIMER) Let's give people a reason to come here, stay
3 here, and invest here. That can only happen with the
4 arts. Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, uh, just for the
7 public, Sergeants, can you show them where they can
8 record if they-- you guys are trying to record-- the
9 areas that they could record at? All right, so, just
10 look at the sergeants real quick. If you want to
11 record, those are the areas that you record at. All
12 right? Because I see some people recording the back
13 of your head. So I just want to make sure everyone
14 knows. All right?

15 Next, we're going to hear from Jubaire.

16 JUBAIRE SALIM: Hello, my name is Jubaire, I
17 speak for myself. I wanted to show support OneLIC.
18 The City urgently needs housing. And every year of
19 delay only makes construction and rents more
20 expensive. For the first time, we have mandated
21 affordable housing, and our council member, Won, is
22 fighting for more school seats. We should really
23 seize this opportunity now. I also ask that you
24 evaluate private developments holistically to ensure
25 they remain financially viable. Even fully stabilized

1 buildings, including those run by nonprofits that
2 have no tax obligations, are going bankrupt.

3
4 Please balance residents' needs with financial
5 realities so that these projects can succeed and the
6 overall project is a success. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Please re-state
8 your name for the record.

9 ELENA KETELSEN GONZÁLEZ: Good afternoon, I am
10 Elena Ketelsen González, I testified previously as a
11 worker and resident of LIC. Every day, I walk 20
12 minutes to MoMA PS1, taking in the neighborhood
13 change and rising luxury towers. I remain extremely
14 concerned that the current OneLIC rezoning does not
15 do enough to address deeply affordable housing and
16 will only continue to exacerbate racial wealth
17 disparities.

18 As a cultural worker at MoMA PS1, I have the
19 pleasure of working with many local artists and CBOs,
20 all of whom repeatedly say the greatest resource PS1
21 provides them and they are lacking is space. We
22 welcome partners like Malika, Fortune Society, Teen
23 Art Salon, and more. We recently planted native
24 plants in our public Plaza with Matinecock artists,
25

1 the original stewards of LIC who used to come to
2 youth programs at PS1 in the 90s.

3
4 When migrant Street workers are criminalized
5 just for trying to work, we partner with them for our
6 openings and events. And with young New Yorkers,
7 court-mandated youth, instead of serving sentences,
8 come to PS1 to do arts diversion programs and heal
9 through art. So really, art is not a luxury, it's not
10 a privilege, just like housing is not a luxury or a
11 privilege. It's essential to community well-being and
12 safety.

13 PS1 is one of the very few cultural
14 institutions that is still completely free to New
15 Yorkers. I've seen in the past few weeks art spaces
16 open in the neighborhood that charge exorbitant fees
17 to families to make art. All of our programs are
18 free, and this plan requires investing in what
19 already exists, from Queensbridge Houses to our local
20 institutions, to preserve what makes our neighborhood
21 what it is today.

22 Our vision at PS1 includes offering even more
23 space, this valuable resource to our partners. We can
24 open our campus to the public, transform our
25

2 courtyard into a green space, and create a better
3 dedicated (TIMER) area for families and children.

4 So we urge the Community Board to support
5 investments not only in PS1, but also in the 100+
6 arts organizations in the neighborhood that are
7 essential to our community's well-being and
8 preservation of its history. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Connie Butler?

10 CONNIE BUTLER: Thank you. Good afternoon,
11 Chair Riley and Council Member Won.

12 My name is Connie Butler, and I'm the director
13 of MoMA PS1. For nearly 50 years, MoMA PS1 has been
14 proud to serve Long Island City through our art
15 exhibitions, community partnerships, and free public
16 programs, welcoming over 150,000 visitors annually
17 and contributing millions to Long Island City.

18 The OneLIC rezoning presents a rare
19 opportunity for our community to receive much-needed
20 investments in several areas, including public space,
21 and as you've heard today, in arts and culture.

22 We believe that MoMA PS1 can serve as a
23 cultural anchor within the rezoning for city
24 investment. We proudly provide free admission to all
25 New York City and New York State residents, host art-

1 making workshops for families, amplify and celebrate
2 Queens-based artists and organizations through our
3 homeroom program, and host community programs in our
4 courtyard. We also manage the 46th Avenue Public
5 Plaza, scheduled for a major renovation through the
6 DOT by 2028.

8 This rezoning has inspired us to be more
9 ambitious and consider new ways to provide more open,
10 clean, accessible, and safe public spaces within Long
11 Island City. Our vision includes opening up the
12 Jackson Avenue wall, renovating our courtyard and
13 making it ADA accessible green space, and revamping
14 our first floor to create a dedicated space for
15 learning and creative exploration for children and
16 families.

17 With City investment, we can not only expand
18 our physical space, but also our arts education and
19 community engagement programming. We're so grateful
20 to the Queens Borough President for including our
21 capital project in his recommendations for the
22 community programmatic needs of the rezoning.

23 Additionally, Community Board Two has provided
24 a letter of support for our project. We've also
25 received a number of letters of support from

1 community partners, including but not limited to
2 Fortune Society, Teen Art Salon, Socrates Sculpture
3 Park, Street Vendor Project, Court Square Civic
4 Association, and Jamaica (TIMER) Center for Arts and
5 Learning.
6

7 We ask that the City Council consider
8 supporting City investments in cultural and public
9 space projects such as ours as part of the OneLIC
10 rezoning. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
12 hear from Kevin Douglas.

13 KEVIN DOUGLAS: Good afternoon, my name is
14 Kevin Douglas; I am the Director of Philanthropy at
15 the Floating Hospital—We're located at 1029 41st
16 Avenue in Astoria. And I'm speaking today as a
17 community member and nonprofit leader affiliated
18 with, but not on behalf of, my organization.

19 I would like to express my support for the
20 vision of the OneLIC Rezoning Proposal. As someone
21 who works daily with families experiencing
22 homelessness and housing insecurity, I see how
23 critical it is to invest in the long-term health,
24 resilience, and inclusivity of Long Island City.
25

1 This plan, shaped through years of community
2 dialogue, charts a path toward making LIC a place
3 where families can both live and thrive. I especially
4 support the community priorities to develop nearly
5 15,000 new residential apartments, including more
6 than 4,000 permanently affordable homes for our
7 neighbors; true affordability at levels that meet the
8 needs of working families and low-income residents is
9 essential to stability and health; increase school
10 capacity and add over 1,300 new classroom seats—
11 families we serve tell us that education access is a
12 top concern for their children's future; create new
13 and accessible open spaces along the East River
14 waterfront and under the Queensboro Bridge—safe
15 green space is not only about recreation, it is about
16 public health and is particularly a public health
17 issue for children; improve aging sewer and drainage
18 infrastructure to reduce flooding, as we've talked
19 about a lot today, for our community—environmental
20 resilience is health resilience.

21 At the Floating Hospital, our mission for
22 almost 160 years has been to ensure that every New
23 Yorker, regardless of circumstance, can access
24 compassionate care. We know that health is determined
25

1 not just by what happens in a clinic, but by housing,
2 schools, transportation, safety, and stability. And
3 in that sense, this rezoning is a health plan as much
4 as it is a Land Use plan.

5
6 At the same time, I want to acknowledge the
7 concerns raised by many of our neighbors around
8 displacement, affordability, and whether
9 infrastructure services will keep pace with growth. I
10 am hopeful that these concerns can be seen as an
11 opportunity to strengthen the final plan and ensure
12 that its benefits are broadly shared.

13 If we get this right, (TIMER) OneLIC can be a
14 model for equitable development, new homes that real
15 families can afford, open spaces and classrooms that
16 welcome every child, and the infrastructure to keep
17 our neighborhoods healthy and safe. Thank you for
18 this opportunity to testify.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you for testifying.
20 This panel is excused.

21 The next panel we are going to hear from
22 consists of Laura Rothrock, Charles Yu, Alan Suna,
23 William Xu, Jarad Lewis, and Rachel Cohen.

24 LAURA WOLF-POWERS: Hi, actually, the name is
25 Laura Wolf-Powers; my handwriting is abominable.

1 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: It's Laura-- Laura what?

2 LAURA WOLF-POWERS: Wolf-Powers.

3 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Wolf-Powers?

4 LAURA ROTHROCK: (INAUDIBLE) my name.

5 LAURA WOLF-POWERS: Oh, you might have-- okay,
6 I'm sorry.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Oh, no, we-- we didn't call
8 you yet.

9 LAURA ROTHROCK: Okay.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Sorry.

11 LAURA ROTHROCK: I apologize.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Is Laura Rothrock here?

13 LAURA ROTHROCK: Yep, that's me.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: That's you, Laura?

15 LAURA ROTHROCK: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: All right.

17 LAURA ROTHROCK: Good afternoon, Chair Riley
18 and Council Member Won. My name is Laura Rothrock,
19 and I am the President of the Long Island City
20 Partnership.
21

22 We strongly support the OneLIC Plan as a vital
23 step toward a more inclusive, connected, and
24 sustainable future for Long Island City. The plan is
25 the result of months of community engagement and

1 addresses urgent needs that our neighborhood cannot
2 delay, including more housing, better schools,
3 resilient infrastructure, and accessible open space.

4 We're particularly encouraged by the
5 commitments and the Council Member's support for over
6 1,300 new school seats, new and accessible open
7 spaces, affordable family-sized housing, and home
8 ownership opportunities, resilient waterfront access,
9 a transformed DOE building, and critical sewer and
10 drainage upgrades.
11

12 Long Island City is a neighborhood
13 experiencing tremendous growth with new residents,
14 businesses, and visitors arriving every year. Yet
15 this growth has outpaced the capacity of our
16 infrastructure, leading to frequent flooding,
17 overcrowded schools, and limited public spaces.
18 Investment in infrastructure is urgently needed to
19 ensure that growth is sustainable, equitable, and
20 beneficial to everyone who lives and works here.

21 As a neighborhood known for its creative
22 spirit, we believe the final plan must also preserve
23 and expand space for the arts. In that spirit, we
24 strongly support MoMA PS1 Courtyard and Plaza Access
25 renovation project, which will expand public access

1
2 and green space while keeping arts and culture at the
3 heart of the community. We encourage the Council to
4 join CB1, CB2, Borough President Richards, and the
5 City Planning Commission in supporting the plan to
6 ensure it will create housing, sustain jobs, update
7 infrastructure, and enhance cultural spaces. Thank
8 you.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank You, Laura. Next, we
10 will hear from Charles Yu.

11 CHARLES YU: Hello, can you hear me?

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you,
13 Charles. Go ahead.

14 CHARLES YU: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair
15 Riley and Council Member Won. My name is Charles Yu,
16 Vice President of Economic Development at the Long
17 Island City Partnership. I'm here today to support
18 the OneLIC rezoning, which I believe offers an
19 opportunity to strengthen the future of businesses in
20 Long Island City.

21 The OneLIC Plan is an exciting and important
22 step toward building a stronger, more inclusive
23 future for our neighborhood. LIC is experiencing
24 tremendous growth, with new residents, businesses,
25 and cultural institutions arriving every year. This

1
2 growth creates opportunities, but it also highlights
3 the urgent need for infrastructure investments to
4 keep pace. By upgrading sewers, drainage, and public
5 space infrastructure, this plan can help ensure that
6 LIC continues to thrive as a place where businesses
7 can operate efficiently and residents can enjoy a
8 high quality of life.

9 We are especially encouraged that the plan
10 recognizes LIC's role as both a residential and
11 industrial hub. A significant portion of the rezoning
12 area lies within the Industrial Business Zone (IBZ),
13 home to firms that provide thousands of good-paying
14 jobs and keep our city's economy running. Ensuring
15 that infrastructure investments support both
16 residents and businesses will help retain these
17 employers and allow them to grow alongside new
18 development.

19 The City also released the draft NYC
20 Industrial Plan today. We look forward to working
21 with the City and Council to explore potential
22 synergies between the Industrial Plan and the OneLIC
23 rezoning, where appropriate, given the overlap with
24 the IBZ. Together, these initiatives have the
25

1 potential to support balanced growth while sustaining
2 jobs and strengthening the industrial base.

3
4 We urge the Council to support the OneLIC Plan
5 and to ensure its implementation advances housing,
6 sustains jobs, delivers critical infrastructure
7 upgrades, and enhances LIC's unique mix of industry,
8 culture, and community. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
10 hear from Alan.

11 ALAN SUNA: I've never been Alan, but I'm Alan.

12 (LAUGHTER)

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Alan Suna?

14 ALAN SUNA: It's okay, yeah, that's me.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, that's your nickname
16 now, Alana.

17 (LAUGHTER)

18 ALAN SUNA: There you go. Maybe I'll become a
19 great tennis player. I don't want to use my time for
20 that, though.

21 I'm Alan Suna, Chairman of Silver Cup Studios
22 in New York, which I started in Long Island City 45
23 years ago, when our area was characterized by crime,
24 drugs, and prostitution. Today, it's a much better
25 place than it was back then. And these are the kinds

1 of things-- change makes things better. All right?

2 While we don't have a dog in the fight, per se, in
3 the OneLIC effort, we continue to support the effort
4 of Council Member Won, and we think it's going to
5 bring much-needed improvements in Long Island City.
6

7 Contrary to some of the things that you've
8 heard, there will be new and better schools, four of
9 them, and they'll be mixed-income housing, with 25 to
10 30% of all housing being affordable. There'll be
11 better flood controls throughout the improved
12 shoreline protections and the most new open space of
13 any neighborhood in Western Queens, which includes a
14 waterfront, pedestrian, and bicycle connection from
15 Queensbridge Park South, which I've worked on with
16 the Council Member. None of these changes will force
17 anyone out of their homes in Queensbridge, nor will
18 it increase the cost of living in Queensbridge.
19 Streets will see improvements in sewerage and safety.
20 More people, more rides in the streets, will just
21 make it a safer place.

22 We further look forward to working with the
23 City and the Department of City Planning to rethink
24 Long Island City's IBZ, both North and South of the
25 bridge, to continue to develop a long-term plan for

2 all of western Queens for living, working, learning,
3 and playing safely in the decades ahead. I'm done.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: With time to spare, thank
6 you, Alan. Next, we will hear from William. William,
7 how do you pronounce your last name, if you could
8 just educate me?

9 WILLIAM XU: It's pronounced "Zoo".

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Xu?

11 WILLIAM XU: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Go ahead,
13 William.

14 WILLIAM XU: Good afternoon, Chair Riley, and
15 Council Member Won. My name is William Xu; I am
16 currently a Long Island City resident for over five
17 years now, and I am a lifelong Queens resident. I am
18 also the Vice President of United Construction and
19 Development Group, which is a family-owned business
20 based in Queens that my uncle started over 30 years
21 ago. Our company has built homes for countless
22 families throughout the borough, and that includes
23 families of all sizes and income levels.

24 I'm here today to ask for your support for the
25 OneLIC Neighborhood Plan, because our city needs more

1 housing and, more importantly, our borough needs more
2 housing. Building more housing is crucial for the
3 growth of any city and also keeps the rents from
4 running rampant. This plan will bring over 14,000 new
5 apartments and over 4,000 permanently affordable
6 apartments to the market, but it'll also bring more
7 waterfront, open space for residents, and more
8 commercial space to allow for small businesses to
9 grow.
10

11 Long Island City has become a neighborhood
12 where many people want to live. This plan will ensure
13 that the neighborhood can welcome both new neighbors
14 without displacing the people who already call LIC
15 home.

16 Building more housing should not be
17 controversial during a housing crisis, and I urge you
18 both to vote yes on the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan.

19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Thank you. Is
21 Jared Lewis here?

22 RACHEL COHEN: Jared is going to be testifying
23 remotely.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Remotely, online, thank
25 you. Rachel?

1 RACHEL COHEN: I am Rachel.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead, Rachel.

3 RACHEL COHEN: Good afternoon, my name is
4 Rachel Cohen, and I'm here today in support of the
5 OneLIC Neighborhood Plan.
6

7 The energy and participation throughout this
8 process, from community workshops to the turnout for
9 hearings like today, reflect just how much we all
10 care about the future of Long Island City. This plan
11 presents a long-overdue opportunity to invest in the
12 basics that every neighborhood needs to thrive:
13 Schools, sewers, streets, and open space.

14 Too many areas of LIC remain disconnected,
15 defined by aging infrastructure, underutilized
16 zoning, and public spaces that don't serve the people
17 who live and work there. In parts of the
18 neighborhood, unsafe and uninviting streets create a
19 physical and perceptual barriers between residential
20 areas, transit hubs, and the waterfront. The One LIC
21 plan addresses those gaps head-on. It supports
22 thoughtful growth, creates safer and more engaging
23 streets, expands access to open space, and brings
24 real investment into the infrastructure that sustains
25 a growing community. It's a plan that prioritizes

1
2 people and lays the foundation for a more connected,
3 inclusive, and resilient Long Island City. Thank you
4 so much for the opportunity to speak.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, everyone. Thank
6 you for your testimony and your time. You are
7 excused, thank you.

8 Next, we will hear from Annalisa Iadicicco. I
9 am sorry if you mispronounced your name.

10 UNIDENTIFIED: (UN-MIC'D) (INAUDIBLE)

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, thank you.

12 Matt Quigley, Jordan Hare, Peter Papamichael,
13 Carlo Casa, Rob Basch, and Barbara Etzel. Thank you,
14 you may begin. We will start with Matt. Matt Quigley?

15 MATT QUIGLEY: Thank you for your time. My name
16 is Matt Quigley, and I'm with Plaxall. My cousin was
17 up here before speaking in favor of the plan, which,
18 unsurprisingly, I'm in favor of, too.

19 We've been in Long Island City for a long
20 time. And we know that there are areas that are more
21 dense and areas that are less dense, but I think
22 density is definitely a requirement if the City is
23 going to get out of crisis, and the areas that can
24 accept density, like on the waterfront, should take
25 as much as they can. You know, density should not be

1 a dirty word. It means more housing, which we need.
2 Especially when there are some other areas where we
3 sort of can't put housing, like Sunnyside Gardens and
4 places like that.
5

6 One quick point about housing costs—we've
7 owned a four-unit building on Vernon Boulevard for
8 like 40 years. And in the 2000s, when the area was
9 getting more popular, you know, we were able to raise
10 the rents on our tenants, because more people were
11 interested in taking these non-luxury units. And then
12 when Queens West opened up and gave people more
13 options, a lot of our tenants left. So then we had to
14 reduce the rents in order to find new tenants. And
15 that's, you know, I think all the economic studies
16 will tell you that's the way it works. You know,
17 you'll end up with a higher, you know, average rent,
18 because you put in these more fancy apartments, but
19 the non-fancy apartments get cheaper.

20 And the last thing is, you know, Long Island
21 City has most likely taken more than its fair share
22 of the housing burden, but with that, taking on that
23 burden, you know, for sure, the City should be
24 funding the infrastructure that's needed. You know, I
25 just think the City should use it as a carrot for

1 more neighborhoods to say, you accept more housing,
2 and we will devote more City funds. (TIMER) But Long
3 Island City, it's not a carrot—Long Island City
4 needs it. So, please help with that. Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thanks, Matt. Next, we are
7 going to hear from Jordan.

8 JORDAN HARE: Hi there, my name is Jordan Hare;
9 I work at Plaxall in Long Island City, and I am
10 raising three kids in Jackson Heights. I would like
11 to express strong support for the LIC Neighborhood
12 Plan, along with sincere gratitude to Council Member
13 Won, DCP, City Hall, and all the agencies that have
14 been working so hard for the last two years. I
15 respectfully encourage the City Council to vote in
16 favor of the Long Island City Neighborhood Plan,
17 which will do so much good for Long Island City.

18 This plan will improve the resiliency of the
19 LIC Waterfront. We at Plaxall will be able to open up
20 Anable Basin with up to 3 acres of new world-class
21 resilient open space, which will also include
22 resilient shorelines, the elevation of new and
23 existing streets, and more. It's a big step forward.

24 But in addition, we would also strongly
25 encourage the City to make complementary investments

1 in Long Island City's aging sewer network. These
2 long-awaited improvements would upgrade our aging
3 local infrastructure and significantly benefit the
4 wider neighborhood. This plan is also a big
5 opportunity to celebrate and champion LIC's artists
6 who add so much vitality to our neighborhood—the
7 arts are what make LIC such an amazing place. Plaxall
8 has been a supporter of LIC arts and artists for many
9 decades. We are proud to donate space to Culture Lab,
10 and we look forward to creating a permanent home for
11 Culture Lab and a redeveloped Anable Basin.

12 In addition, we would strongly encourage the
13 City to make significant investments in LIC's arts
14 and culture, such as the creation of a local arts
15 fund that can support existing and emerging arts
16 nonprofits—the Arts need to grow—capital funding
17 for nonprofits like Culture Lab and others, and
18 capital funding for arts infrastructure like an
19 outdoor amphitheater and the renovation of PS1's
20 Plaza. Once again, thank you very much for the
21 opportunity to speak.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Peter?

23 PETER PAPAMICHAEL: Good afternoon, my name is
24 Peter Papamichael. I was born and raised in Queens,
25

1 and over a decade ago, I founded the VOREA Group, a
2 local business in Long Island City.
3

4 I'm here to urge you to vote yes on this plan,
5 because it has been thoughtfully shaped around the
6 real needs of our community. I urge you all to look
7 around the room. I'm hoping City Hall is taking
8 notice. Despite the stormy weather outside, countless
9 neighbors and constituents have shown up today.

10 They're here in this room. Their presence is proof of
11 just how important this project is to the people of
12 Queens, the people of Long Island City. And it's
13 proof that capital needs are required to make this a
14 reality. This is about balance—balance between
15 growth and community needs, and balance between
16 opportunity and responsibility. And with your
17 support, we can get it right.

18 A vote of yes means for Long Island City and
19 for Queens, a vote for education, for equity, for
20 opportunity, for infrastructure, for resilience, for
21 open space, and also for the expansion of arts and
22 culture.

23 This plan reflects years of community input
24 and delivers benefits we desperately need. So I ask
25

1
2 you, on behalf of local businesses and families and
3 generations to come, please vote yes. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Carlo?

5 CARLO CASA: Good afternoon. My name is Carlo
6 Casa, and I'm the Director of Policy and Research at
7 the New York Building Congress. Thank you for the
8 opportunity to speak today.

9 The Building Congress represents over 500
10 organizations and over 250,000 skilled tradespeople
11 and professionals, all dedicated to the growth and
12 prosperity of our city. We strongly support the
13 OneLIC Neighborhood Plan. The plan is a
14 comprehensive, community-informed, and much-needed
15 initiative that addresses Long Island City's pressing
16 needs for affordable housing, public spaces, and
17 resilient infrastructure.

18 Nearly *half* of renters in LIC spend more than
19 30% of their income on rent. Why? Because our city is
20 in a growing housing crisis where the demand for
21 housing far outpaces our supply of homes.

22 The OneLIC Plan will create almost 15,000 new
23 homes, including over 4,000 permanently affordable
24 units. This is a critical step towards fixing our
25

1 housing crisis while providing housing for families
2 at all income levels.

3
4 The plan will also transform areas beneath the
5 Queensboro Bridge into vibrant public spaces that
6 reconnect Queensbridge Houses with the broader
7 community. The plan aims to unify the waterfront,
8 creating a continuous esplanade that improves
9 recreational opportunities and waterfront access for
10 all residents.

11 OneLIC includes investments in sewage and
12 plumbing infrastructure to address current flooding
13 issues and prepare the neighborhood for the future.
14 The current proposal reflects extensive community
15 engagement, incorporating feedback from dozens of
16 meetings, as well as thousands of public comments,
17 all to ensure that the plan aligns with the
18 community's priorities and needs. Simply put, the
19 OneLIC Neighborhood Plan is a huge step forward in
20 addressing New York's (TIMER) housing crisis, and we
21 urge its approval. Thank you for your consideration.
22 And thank you for the pizza.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Rob?
24
25

1
2 ROB BASCH: Hi, and thank you for holding this
3 committee meeting. My name is Rob Basch, and I am the
4 President of the Hunters Point Parks Conservancy and
5 a resident of LIC since 2009.

6 Since about 2017-2018, I have been testifying
7 at various redevelopment projects for LIC. Whether
8 it's your LIC and Anable Basin rezoning, Amazon, or
9 others, nothing ever gets done.

10 When Amazon backed out of LIC, I heard people
11 say in the neighborhood, "Oh, we dodged a bullet,
12 and now the neighborhood can get something we really,
13 really want." But here we are six years later, and
14 again, nothing is done.

15 When I go jogging down Vernon Boulevard, I see
16 the same boarded-up properties that I saw when I
17 moved here in 2009. The community has not benefited,
18 and the only ones benefiting from this are the Canada
19 Geese and the rats that live behind those walls.

20 This project is not perfect, and I will
21 continue to advocate for more parks and green spaces,
22 but this is our best opportunity to get something
23 great done for our community.

24 'No' to this project will mean nothing gets
25 done. A new project will not materialize in six

1 months that everyone will love. It's time to get
2 something done, and I trust our Councilwoman to bring
3 this plan to fruition that will greatly impact LIC in
4 a very positive manner. Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Rob. Ms.
7 Barbara?

8 BARBARA ETZEL: I am Barbara Etzel, and I have
9 lived in the Long Island City neighborhood since
10 2009. I fully support the OneLIC Development Plan.

11 No plan is ever going to get 100% agreement.
12 People will always have different viewpoints.
13 However, this plan has incorporated over 18 months of
14 community feedback during dozens of meetings, 2,300
15 survey responses, and over 5,000 written comments. If
16 this plan is not enacted, then we can expect to have
17 inertia and the status quo for the next decade. That
18 would be a tragedy—that's too long to wait to unlock
19 more housing and sites for commercial development.

20 This plan will give us 14,000 new housing
21 units, including 4,300 affordable units. And it is
22 also essential that these units accommodate families.
23 Too many people live in the neighborhood, love it,
24 and just as soon as they have child number two, they
25

1 are priced out of the neighborhood and leave for the
2 suburbs.
3

4 However, while I support the plan, there are
5 some adjustments that should be made. We should
6 ensure that this includes space for arts
7 organizations, gallery space, and artist studios that
8 the artists can afford. One of the special things
9 about LIC is the number of artists who live in the
10 neighborhood. Let's not price them out of the
11 neighborhood by trying to do a great thing for the
12 neighborhood.

13 We also need a connected waterfront from
14 Queensbridge Park to Gantry State Park across both
15 public and private sites and the city-owned sites
16 under Queensbridge should be returned to the
17 community and park uses. This plan should also
18 include an extensive investment in sewage, plumbing,
19 and resilience in infrastructure. (TIMER) Too many
20 areas in our neighborhood experience flooding and
21 sewer issues now. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. There being no
23 questions, this panel is excused. Thank you so much.

24 I just want to state for the record, online,
25 we have about 20 more people in person, and then we

1
2 are going to transition into online testimony. So we
3 should be on to online testimony in the next 30 to 40
4 minutes.

5 The next panel you are going to hear from
6 consists of Jessica Sechrist, Muhammad Rijaz
7 (phonetic), Chowdhury Islam, Muhammad Abdullah
8 Kashif, Chris Batres, and Juhaib (phonetic)
9 Chowdhury. Sorry if I have mispronounced any names.

10 Jessica?

11 JESSICA SECHRIST: Hi, I'm Jessica Sechrist,
12 Executive Director of the Hunters Point Parks
13 Conservancy...

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Jessica, one second. I just
15 want to call these names again.

16 Uh, Jessica, what's your name? So we have
17 Jessica and Chris. Is Muhammad Rijaz here? Do we have
18 a Chowdhury Islam? Do we have a Muhammad Abdullah
19 Kashif?

20 Okay, all right, you may begin, go ahead.

21 JESSICA SECHRIST: I do just want to mention
22 that a group did go out looking for a prayer room
23 earlier, so they may still be doing that.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No, problem, thank you so
25 much.

2 JESSICA SECHRIST: Of course.

3 I'm Jessica Sechrist, Executive Director of
4 the Hunters Point Parks Conservancy and a Long Island
5 City resident whose building touches the plan area.

6 As the neighborhood's primary parks group, our
7 mission is to support and advocate for the green
8 spaces and waterfront of Long Island City and to
9 ensure the parks remain an indispensable asset to the
10 community.

11 We support the approval of the OneLIC Plan. We
12 feel that an overall plan is superior to approaching
13 individual properties on a case-by-case basis, as we
14 feel this is the best and most effective way to
15 address the neighborhood's current needs, as well as
16 plan for its sustainable growth in decades to come.

17 Our organization can attest to the incredible
18 benefits that have resulted from the new acres of
19 waterfront parks built over the last two decades. We
20 see OneLIC's focus on new open space along the
21 waterfront and in the core that are high quality,
22 resilient, sustainable, accessible, and designed to
23 meet the needs of an expanding community as a major
24 advantage of this project. We know our neighborhood
25

1
2 desperately needs more park space, and the current
3 approach to development has not delivered that.

4 We appreciate the work done by our Council
5 Member Julie Won, the Department of City Planning,
6 and the plan consultants for providing many venues
7 for community engagement and feedback, and feel it's
8 essential that the approved plan incorporate the
9 community priorities identified through this process.

10 We particularly appreciate our Council
11 Members' dedication to equitable park spaces and
12 championing of projects like the reclamation of
13 Queensbridge Baby Park as part of this.

14 We recognize that with growth comes challenges
15 and that to fully support approving this plan, it
16 must address infrastructure needs ranging from sewers
17 to transportation to school capacity and affordable
18 housing.

19 The neighborhood needs more open space, and we
20 feel that an overall community plan is more likely to
21 bring these goals to the forefront rather than
22 approaching development lot by lot. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Chris? Go ahead.

24 CHRIS BATRES: Good afternoon, my name is Chris
25 Batres, and I am proud to serve as the Council

1
2 Representative for the New York District Council of
3 Carpenters. I'm also a local resident and a part of
4 the Latino community in Queens, Astoria.

5 I'm here this afternoon in strong support of
6 OneLIC Neighborhood rezoning. This rezoning
7 represents an opportunity for families like mine and
8 thousands of others in Queens. This plan means access
9 to good middle-class jobs that provide real wages,
10 health benefits, and retirement security. As a Latino
11 and Hispanic, I can tell you firsthand how critical
12 initiatives like this are for the community. For
13 communities of color, too often, working people are
14 left out of the economic growth around them. But
15 OneLIC Rezoning is different. It will be built with
16 union labor, guaranteeing that our neighbors have a
17 fair shot at careers that can support their families.

18 Beyond the jobs, the rezoning will bring long-
19 term community benefits, new affordable housing,
20 improved infrastructure, and spaces to bring people
21 together. This is the kind of investment that Queens
22 deserves and needs. Queens deserves to lift working
23 families (INAUDIBLE) Astoria neighborhoods and give
24 opportunities right here in Queens, Astoria.

2 On behalf of the Carpenters Union, as a proud
3 local resident, still living in Astoria—I grew up
4 in Astoria—I urge you to approve this rezoning to
5 allow Queens to keep building a better Astoria for a
6 better future for all the families that still live in
7 Queens. Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

9 Council Member Won?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Hi, thank you for being
11 here. Jessica, I just wanted to ask from your
12 perspective, as you and Rob Basch, the chair of
13 Hunters Point Conservancy (TIMER), have been leading
14 on green space advocacy. How dire do you think the
15 need is, considering that the city testified that on
16 their goal of 2.5 acres of park space for every 1,000
17 residents, we are currently at 0.9% of that goal.

18 JESSICA SECHRIST: We think it's incredibly
19 important, you know, we are advocating for green
20 spaces throughout the District, as you know, and we
21 think that, for the well-being of the community, for
22 mental health, and crucially, as this becomes a more
23 economically and racially diverse community, it's
24 important that we are providing residents in
25 affordable housing the same access to quality public

1 spaces that have been enjoyed by people who live in
2 much higher income areas. And honestly, this is an
3 unsustainable amount of open space for the size of
4 our community. And it's only getting worse every year
5 with more development.

6
7 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: In the summertime, when
8 the weather is nice, how many people do you see on
9 average within, like, the Oval?

10 JESSICA SECHRIST: Hundreds, like, hundreds, I
11 mean... (CROSS-TALK)

12 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Which is just a small
13 parcel of the park.

14 JESSICA SECHRIST: Gantry Plaza State Park,
15 which has more capacity for tracking attendance than
16 the city parks, reported 3 million visitors last
17 year.

18 Some 2021 data from a consulting call we took
19 with a geocaching company, so it's not exact, showed
20 that we were seeing a million visitors to Hunters
21 Point South Park. And those numbers have certainly
22 gone up with all of the new towers coming in. And
23 it's a real challenge, because we are desperately in
24 need of both passive and active public spaces to
25 serve our rapidly growing community.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: This is just a note for my
3 team: I think we need to follow up on the
4 calculations of if we were to only move forward with
5 six acres of forecasted public park space with this
6 project as is, what that would lead to in our current
7 0.9%, and what that calculation is.

8 And then we should also look into the one to
9 three million person visits number to also compare
10 that to how many residents we currently have in
11 Hunters Point alone.

12 I also wanted to ask: From the years that
13 you've worked at Hunters Point Conservancy, you've
14 also witnessed and reported unmaintained parcels,
15 large parcels of publicly owned land in Hunters Point
16 South. Do you foresee that there would be a lot of
17 public support if we used one of the public parcels,
18 even if it's temporary—because we know that it goes
19 on for more than a decade—if it were to be converted
20 to active sports use?

21 JESSICA SECHRIST: Absolutely. We actually--
22 we've had a petition running for less than a month
23 that we started ahead of a meeting with Parks, and
24 we've gotten close to 1,000 signatures, just off of
25 our own efforts to run this, uh, in support of

1 transforming the remaining publicly owned parcel to
2 section D.
3

4 I have queued up on my list today to send your
5 office some of the concerns with the new bus stop,
6 because HPD has not maintained the walkway around
7 that. We have a gala tonight, but that is on my list
8 for this week, because that's an ongoing issue as
9 well. Because it's very difficult, when you see these
10 overused spaces, and then you see these empty rat-
11 filled, weed-filled lots that are owned by the City
12 that could be used by the community and are just not.

13 And I do think, you know, a lot of
14 neighborhood organizations like Plaxall have been
15 really leading the way in allowing creative uses of
16 lots that aren't going to be developed right away.
17 And it would be wonderful if the City could follow in
18 that to address this real need. Obviously, we need
19 housing, but especially low-income housing, which
20 deserves adequate and well-maintained public space as
21 part of that.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So, just for a public
23 record, you are proposing that Parcel D be converted
24 to temporary active sports use for the public to have
25 access to?

1 JESSICA SECHRIST: Yes, I think that would
2 help--it would not-- it's not that much space; it's a
3 City lot, but it would help address some of the
4 incredible overuse of the current park assets.
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: And for your current
7 proposal for converting Parcel D to a temporary
8 active sports area, I believe I had read in some of
9 the public forums that there are light commitments
10 from local developers to fund this project. Can you
11 share some more information on how this would be
12 funded?

13 JESSICA SECHRIST: So we've talked-- I mean,
14 there's the ideal way that we would all like
15 development to happen in our city, and then there's
16 the reality of limited city budgets and how things
17 are paid for--So we've talked to some of the large
18 developers in the area who are looking at building
19 projects that would be adjacent to these lots that
20 have already started building them. And they are
21 potentially interested in the, you know, the standard
22 New York City agreement of you invest in something
23 like MTA structures, or you invest in improving an
24 adjacent publicly owned property, in exchange for
25 building more density, they are even-- you know, I

1 can't speak for them obviously, but they have
2 potentially committed to adding affordable housing on
3 some of their existing properties through the, you
4 know, through the ULURP (phonetic) process to get a
5 waiver in exchange for helping construct the space.
6 Obviously, we all know that there are challenges with
7 New York City Parks' capital construction process and
8 how long-term it, uh, is finding the funding for it—
9 You have supported so much investment in the parks,
10 I'm sure you know how that works—So, finding
11 private-- public-private partnerships to help support
12 this, to serve the needs of this community--because
13 developers benefit hugely from public space, they're
14 able to charge higher rates in market rate units,
15 they are able to really bring more economic gain to
16 support that. And it's so much easier to add
17 something like that as a change order on an existing
18 project than for the City to pursue the entire thing
19 directly.
20

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay. So, what I've
22 learned from your testimony right now is that there's
23 no such thing as a free lunch. In order for us to get
24 the capital funding from these other developers, who
25

1 are not part of this rezoning, there would have to be
2 a separate rezoning to get them to fund the project?

3 JESSICA SECHRIST: I don't think it would be--
4 I think that they've already started some of the
5 rezoning. It's in the area that is currently a lot of
6 warehouse space near the Amtrak and LIR yards
7 (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

8 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: (INAUDIBLE) be a separate
9 rezoning...

10 JESSICA SECHRIST: Yeah...

11 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: that has not come to
12 ULURP...

13 JESSICA SECHRIST: Yeah...

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: So that would not be part
15 of this project...

16 JESSICA SECHRIST: No, it's-- because it's out
17 of the project area. But, it is-- It is also a model
18 that could potentially work in the project area in
19 either Court Square or in the areas closer to the
20 water in the current industrial zone, I think.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, noted. Thank you for
22 doing double time while you have that big gala
23 tonight.

24 JESSICA SECHRIST: I mean...

1 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you so much.

2 JESSICA SECHRIST: Thank God for smartphones so
3 that I can do both at the same time.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much for your
5 testimony. You're excused.

6 The next panel we are going to hear from is
7 Muhammad Islam, Muhammad Nasiruddin, April Adams,
8 Paolina Hsia (phonetic), I think it's P A O L I N G,
9 H S I A, sorry if I have mispronounced your name, and
10 Denis Ibric and Andrew Ebenstein.

11 The following panel is going to consist of
12 Kevin Dantonio, Francis Sheilds, Austin Celestin,
13 Christopher Leon Johnson, Laura Wolf-Powers, Seth
14 Bazacas, and Olivia Munn-Shirsath.

15 All right, you can start from my right, sir.
16 Just please reinstate your name for the record, and
17 you may begin.

18 ANDREW EBENSTEIN: Thank you. My name is Andrew
19 Ebenstein.

20 I hope that the City Council will vote in
21 favor of the rezoning. The city needs more housing,
22 it needs more affordable housing, and it needs more
23 market-rate housing. And the OneLIC plan will provide
24 both. The plan will also bring real, tangible
25

1 neighborhood improvements that benefit the Long
2 Island City community, including public access to the
3 waterfront, new schools, and important infrastructure
4 upgrades. Without this rezoning, these investments
5 simply won't happen. We can't continue to let the
6 perfect be the enemy of the good. The boarded-up
7 sites across the neighborhood aren't benefiting
8 anyone, and it's time to approve the OneLIC rezone so
9 Long Island City can finally move forward. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next?

12 APRIL ADAMS: Hi, thank you, Chair Riley. Good
13 to see you, Council Member Won.

14 My name is April Adams, Manager of Government
15 Affairs at JetBlue Airways. We are located at 27-01
16 Queens Plaza North.

17 On behalf of JetBlue, I would like to express
18 our support for the OneLIC Rezoning Proposal. Since
19 2012, New York's hometown airline has been
20 headquartered in the historic Brewster Building in
21 Long Island City. As a major employer in Queens, we
22 have 88,500 crew members in Long Island-- in Queens,
23 and we have more than 1,600 crew members based at our
24 Long Island City Support Center.

We recognize how critical it is to invest in this neighborhood.

As a result of thoughtful community engagement, the OneLIC Rezoning Plan outlines how to make LIC a place where top talent will want to live and work. We especially support the plan's priorities to create new accessible open spaces under the Queensboro Bridge, develop affordable family-sized housing to retain a diverse workforce, improve aging sewer and drainage infrastructure to reduce flooding, open public waterfront access with resilient design, increase school capacity, which is essential for families living and working in LIC, and transform the publicly owned DOE building, who is our next door neighbor, to better serve the community.

We hope that these priorities will be included in the final plan. For JetBlue, these investments are vital to creating a strong local economy, attracting and retaining talent, and ensuring that LIC remains a place where both families and businesses can thrive.

We urge the City Council to support this (CELL PHONE RINGS), apologies. We urge the City Council to support the OneLIC and prioritize the needs of the employees, residents, and businesses in this

1 community. Thank you for the opportunity to share our
2 support.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

5 DENIS IBRIC: Good afternoon, everyone. My name
6 is Denis Ibric. Like my colleague, Chris, I'm also a
7 Council Representative with the New York City
8 District Council of Carpenters. But more importantly,
9 I am a lifelong Queens resident.

10 I grew up in Queens, I live in Queens, and
11 I've seen firsthand what happens when development
12 does not include the community. We have seen projects
13 go up that provide little to no real benefit for the
14 people who actually live there. That is why the One
15 LIC Neighborhood Rezoning stands out. This rezoning
16 is committed to creating thousands of good-paying
17 union jobs, jobs with training, benefits, and a
18 pathway to the middle class. These are careers, not
19 just paychecks.

20 But it does not stop there. OneLIC will bring
21 much needed affordable housing, community facilities,
22 and spaces that make this neighborhood more livable.
23 It is an investment in working people, families, and
24 the next generation of New Yorkers.

2 As someone who has spent his whole life in
3 Queens, I want to see rezonings that do not just
4 change the skyline but strengthen the community. The
5 OneLIC rezoning does exactly that.

6 And on behalf of my union brothers and sisters
7 and as a proud Queens resident, I urge you to approve
8 this rezoning—and I can't stress this enough—to
9 make sure development in Queens works for everyone.
10 Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next? Miss?

12 PAOLIN HSIA: Greetings, everyone. My name is
13 Paolin Hsia, speaking on behalf of small businesses
14 and property owners along 21st Street, between 39th
15 and 40th Avenue, within the IBZ zone.

16 We support the overall plan, but respectfully
17 urge that our block (INAUDIBLE) 392 to be modified to
18 mixed-use to allow some housing. We have been
19 surrounded by mixed-use for decades and never used
20 IBZ incentives, simply because the plan-- the program
21 isn't practical. Our area has become transit-rich and
22 pedestrian-friendly, with subway, bus lines, bike
23 lanes, and safe crossings. Industrial use poses a
24 very high risk. During the pandemic, a fire set by
25 homeless people left our buildings damaged and

1 unsafe. We desperately need to rebuild despite
2 repeated appeals and proposals for mixed-use, but we
3 have been told "No Housing allowed. You are an IBZ."
4 However, Rule 22-625 and 626 IBZ Boundary Commission
5 clearly grants its authority to designate, amend, or
6 repair in part or in total. We ask the Council to
7 establish a clear, published process for individual
8 blocks within IBZ to apply for a zoning variance,
9 including residential components based on character
10 and justification, without excessive burdens. After
11 all, 20 years have passed, and some IBZs have become
12 outdated.

14 We are not opposing IBZ policy. We are asking
15 for adaptive flexibility. Modify Block 392 to mixed-
16 use, including housing and affordable housing
17 (TIMER), aligned with the Council's goal to expand
18 housing supply and affordability. Thank you for your
19 time and consideration.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Council Member
21 Won?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you so much to
23 everyone who came to testify. I have a question for
24 the Carpenters.

2 So this is a very special rezoning, because we
3 are going to be going through 485-x, which has been
4 newly adopted. And developers have been a little
5 squeamish with it throughout the city, but not these
6 developers. They're ready to take on 485-x.

7 So I just wanted to get your take on the
8 Carpenters Union, and if you've had any recent
9 experience with the success of 485-x, where it has
10 given you union jobs in the city of New York?

11 DENIS IBRIC: Sure, I can speak on that a
12 little bit. Thank you so much again, Julie.

13 So on Orchard Street, the high rise, the
14 general contractor is Triton, I believe. We were able
15 to get Union carpentry signatories on the project. It
16 started with just the drywall package and then
17 eventually moved into the millwork. You know,
18 historically, Long Island City has gone sort of the
19 nonunion route. If you're asking me, honestly, it was
20 a shame to see that. Hopefully, with this rezoning,
21 we can change that. It is important that we have
22 union jobs out there where workers are getting
23 benefits—area standard wages. But Orchard Park, I
24 think, is our sort of champion at the moment, where
25 it can happen.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Okay, glad to hear that it
3 is possible. That it's not just a lofty idea on paper
4 that the government has formulated. And you may want
5 to say hello to Schumann's (phonetic) properties
6 before you leave. Thank you so much, everybody.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we are
8 going to hear from Kevin Dantonio, Francis Sheilds,
9 Austin Celestin, Christopher Leon Johnson, Laura
10 Wolf-Powers, and Seth Bazacas.

11 After this, we will be transitioning to online
12 testimony. If you did not hear your name, and you
13 wanted to testify here in the Chambers, please see
14 one of the Sergeant at Arms and let them know. Okay?
15 This is the last panel that I have here.

16 You may begin.

17 KEVIN DANTONIO: Good afternoon, my name is
18 Kevin Dantonio. My wife and I are proudly raising our
19 son in Long Island City, just a few blocks from where
20 my grandmother was born in 1931. I also work right
21 here in the neighborhood, so I see the community's
22 growth and challenges every single day. Now, as a new
23 dad, I'm thinking even more about the future,
24 particularly quality schools, green spaces,

1
2 infrastructure improvements, and a strong local
3 economy.

4 The OneLIC Project brings all that closer to
5 reality. It's not just about buildings, it's about
6 jobs, housing, and smart development that keep
7 families like mine in the neighborhood. I want my
8 child to grow up in a place that's vibrant,
9 inclusive, and built to last. That's why I fully
10 support OneLIC. Thank you.

11 AUSTIN CELESTIN: Good afternoon, my name is
12 Austin Celestin, I am a lifelong New Yorker and an
13 urban planning graduate. I also led a walking tour of
14 Long Island City back in July with a Member of CB2,
15 Anatole [Ashraf]. I think all of us remember a time,
16 I think even 10 years ago-- 15 years ago, when the
17 Citigroup Tower was the only building in Long Island
18 City that stood alone. And now it's just one of many.

19 The 2001 rezoning gave a lot of housing to the
20 neighborhood. It helped make Long Island City one of
21 the most densely populated neighborhoods in the city
22 and the top producer of housing for the last 10
23 years. It also had no accountability. It was
24 originally a commercial rezoning, and instead, what
25

1 we got was a lot of housing with no accountability
2 metrics to enforce affordability.

3
4 OneLIC is different, and almost ironically,
5 OneLIC works because of the mistakes of the past.
6 Because of the high rents in a new housing in Long
7 Island City, it makes the mandatory inclusionary
8 housing viable and feasible. It's one of the
9 neighborhoods where that kind of mechanism would
10 actually work, which is why OneLIC makes so much
11 sense. It is the largest rezoning in recent memory.
12 It's bigger than Soho, bigger than Jamaica, bigger
13 than Midtown South. It's a model of how much housing
14 we actually need to build in this city. It's also
15 more than just housing. It's resiliency, investment,
16 and more green space. And obviously, those kinks need
17 to be worked out and adjusted accordingly to make
18 sure that the plan is as good as it can be. But as I
19 wrote in an op-ed three years ago, the goal should
20 always be to get to 'yes'. And while I support this
21 rezoning wholeheartedly, I would also like to make
22 this point:

23 As I said before, Long Island City is one of
24 the top producers of housing in the city, and that
25 should be recognized in a way that makes this

1 rezoning make sense, but also that Long Island City
2 cannot continue to carry this burden. Rezoning like
3 this, of this scale, should be exercised in areas
4 across the city and not just Long Island City. And
5 any adjustment should be made so that it's feasible
6 to be delivered. (TIMER) Thank you.

8 LAURA WOLF-POWERS: Hello, thank you for
9 listening. My name is Laura Wolf-Powers. I am part of
10 the Western Queens Community Land Trust, and I'm also
11 a Professor of Urban Planning at Hunter College. I've
12 testified in hearings along the way on the draft
13 scope, on the final scope of Community Board Two, and
14 I've submitted testimony to the borough president and
15 the City Planning Commission. So, along the way, I've
16 had a lot of opportunities to witness the advocacy
17 that Council Member Won has provided for the
18 extremely crucial needs that are necessary for
19 whether she's going to vote yes on this plan. And
20 that includes stormwater-related investments, it
21 includes investments in open space, it includes very
22 specific housing-related funding commitments,
23 including commitments on city-owned sites, and it
24 includes NYCHA. We've heard all that today, and I was
25 here when the panel of City officials was here. I

1 just wanted to say I appreciate you really holding
2 their feet to the fire, and making it very clear that
3 you did not intend to vote yes on the rezoning, with
4 all of the benefits that we people have been saying
5 that have, you know, unless there's some basic
6 provisions made.
7

8 I'd also like to, you know, correct what I
9 consider to be a misconception about the role of
10 housing supply and addressing the housing crisis that
11 we have in this city, and promoting affordability and
12 inclusion.

13 This is not-- many studies show that simply
14 up-zoning and allowing for more market-rate housing
15 does not alleviate rent burden. Up-zonings during the
16 Bloomberg administration resulted in neighborhoods
17 that were wider, where rents were higher, and where
18 low-income people of color were pushed out. (TIMER)

19 So I think that it makes sense to really
20 double down on your insistence that there be
21 significant affordability for very low-income people
22 as part of this plan.

23 SETH BAZACAS: Hi, my name is Seth Bazacas; I'm
24 the Founding Director of Renew Queens and Wellspring
25 Church and the Renewal Collective for a bunch of

1 nonprofits and for-profits in the Long Island City
2 neighborhood. I've been a resident just shy of 20
3 years, and we are strong supporters and fans of the
4 plan put forth for the OneLIC project.
5

6 We want to see this come to a reality. We've
7 seen many, many iterations that have failed to live
8 up to the needs of the people, and I'm just in great
9 admiration of the work that Councilwoman Won has
10 done, in particular to represent a huge swath of
11 voices and diversity groups. It's very important that
12 we bring LIC together—no longer a divide, both
13 through infrastructure and affordability, through our
14 poorer neighborhoods and those in Black and brown
15 communities, and the parts that are not, that are
16 more wealthy and have access to other spaces. Our
17 nonprofit alone is doing its best to hold the middle
18 ground on that. This week alone, one of our
19 facilities will have four different church
20 organizations from various backgrounds and religious
21 perspectives, using our facilities. We try to give as
22 much away as we can for free. We are trying to hold
23 that gap between the two different LICs as much as we
24 can. We will host events, one of them being like the
25 Queens Easter Festival, and it will sell out for

1
2 over--not sell out, it's free--for over 10,000 people
3 in less than 24 hours. The need is so great. We
4 can't, we can't keep up with that. We'll host an
5 event, and we can barely send out an email without
6 the need being there for young families. We support
7 thousands and thousands of young families in the
8 neighborhood.

9 To be clear, though, I think we can get this
10 done with, well, OneLIC, but for that to be a
11 reality, we do need public investment from the City
12 to do their part. A huge part of what we need is for
13 young families. That's schools, that's sewage, that's
14 plumbing, that's parks. And we cannot ignore NYCHA
15 housing.

16 So we need the City to do its part and to come
17 alongside the radical generosity of private
18 developers, which we're beginning to see, but just
19 needs to come to fruition for community
20 organizations, for places of worship, so this truly
21 can be a fully comprehensive community plan. That
22 supports everybody. I think it's possible with
23 OneLIC. (TIMER)

24 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah, hello, Chair
25 Riley, Chair Won. My name is Christopher Leon

1 Johnson, and I'm showing my support for OneLIC. I
2 appreciate you, Julie Won, for doing this plan. Hope
3 you vote yes for the plan. Hope this goes to the City
4 Council and the mayor signs it.
5

6 So I want to make clear that what we need to
7 start doing more of is to find a way to revamp the
8 Queensboro Bridge to make it more accessible for a
9 deliverista hub and for street vendors. And what
10 needs to start happening more is with Queensbridge
11 projects; you have to find a way to really get rid of
12 Queensbridge projects and implement the RAD/PACT into
13 the Queensboro projects. The Queensbridge project is
14 an eyesore, a big eyesore in Long Island City. I
15 think that Queensbridge projects need to be
16 demolished and have something different put over
17 there. Because it is high crime, the quality of life
18 is garbage, and it makes Long Island City look bad.
19 It makes Long Island City-- it gives Long Island City
20 a bad look, uh, the Queensbridge projects. I call for
21 the demolition of the Queensbridge projects and to
22 build something new. While you're there, you should
23 put the people somewhere else around there until you
24 build something new around there. That's my opinion.
25

1 I think that this plan is a great, great
2 layout. I believe that the City, the DOT, need to
3 come forward with what the plan is for the open space
4 within this plan. Because why is it only three spots?
5 They could do open space. They should be all over
6 the area.
7

8 And I believe these waterfronts, they need a
9 big renovation. I've been to a few of them. They're
10 not looking good. They're horrible. So I'm like I
11 said before, 20 seconds left, I think, like I said,
12 demolish the Queensbridge projects. It's an eyesore
13 in the city. I hate it over there. It's like, it
14 gives the whole Queens a bad name—crime,
15 prostitution, the drugs, the gang violence, and once
16 you get rid of Queensbridge projects and build
17 something new better over there, Long Island City
18 will be way better. (TIMER) Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. No questions,
20 but I just have to state that I think Queensbridge is
21 a beautiful community. I actually just went there not
22 too long ago, and it was a very, very beautiful
23 community. I do feel like the City needs to invest
24 more into it, because those (INAUDIBLE) are
25 struggling, but it is a very beautiful community. And

1 I just want to thank Council Member Won for the great
2 things she is doing in that area.

3 No questions for this panel. This panel is
4 excused, thank you so much.

5 The next panel I am going to hear from
6 consists of Olivia Munn-Shirsath and Jackson Chabot.

7 Like I said, if I did not mention your name
8 and you do want to testify, and you're in the
9 Chambers, please raise your hand right now.

10 Is there anybody in here who wants to testify
11 that we did not call on?

12 (NO RESPONSE)

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Thank you.

14 After this panel, we will transition into
15 online testimony. The first panel I'll be calling
16 online will consist of Shawn Campbell, Daniel
17 Talylor, Kenny Greenberg, Anatole Ashraf, and Riley
18 Owens. That will be the next panel I call on online.

19 Okay, you may begin. I'm sorry, go ahead.

20 OLIVIA MUNN-SHIRSATH: Hi, my name is Olivia
21 Munn-Shirsath, and I live and work in Long Island
22 City. I am a beneficiary of affordable housing in
23 Hunters Point, and I want that for more families like
24 mine. I'm also a pastor at a local church, Wellspring
25

1 Church, and part of my role as pastor is to listen to
2 the community. And so I have tried to spend the last
3 six months or so listening to my congregants, hearing
4 their perspective and their needs. And what I hear
5 and what I see is that people are looking for
6 stability, for long-term housing options that could
7 last. They're also looking for schooling. So I do ask
8 the City to keep their promises to provide
9 elementary, middle, and high schools for all ages, so
10 families don't have to leave.
11

12 And I see that this is a thriving community
13 that loves its neighborhood and wants to put down
14 roots. So I support OneLIC, and I'm grateful for all
15 the work that Councilwoman Julie has done.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much.

17 JACKSON CHABOT: Good afternoon, my name is
18 Jackson Chabot, and I am the Director of Advocacy and
19 Organizing at Open Plans.

20 At open Plans, we think a lot about livable
21 neighborhoods and specifically livable streets. So
22 I'm here today to testify in support of OneLIC from
23 the infrastructure perspective. And I'd like to
24 highlight several key points:
25

1 First and foremost, this plan must include
2 north-south connections through the bridge to provide
3 neighbors in all parts of the community access to
4 each other.
5

6 Second, this should include the restoration of
7 the Queensbridge Baby Park. Recently, I saw some of
8 the historical photos from the Queensbridge Houses,
9 specifically when the Queensbridge was built, and it
10 was gorgeous, and it was gorgeous because there was
11 an investment in the infrastructure, and we need to
12 return to that. Neighbors, specifically in and around
13 the Queensbridge houses, deserve more access to
14 public space. They deserve more access to the
15 waterfront, and this plan is an excellent opportunity
16 to provide that. It is imperative, and it must be a
17 part of this final plan.

18 Third, the plazas and open space under the
19 Queensboro Bridge ramps must be open, fully
20 accessible, and fully usable by the neighbors and the
21 community.

22 Fourth, traffic safety, and specifically
23 pedestrian safety improvements throughout the area,
24 must be prioritized. Council Member Won has a
25 fantastic bill, Intro 1138, that would provide

1 daylighting, and specifically hardened infrastructure
2 at intersections where there are the most points of
3 potential for conflict between drivers, folks
4 driving, walking, biking, scooting, rolling, as we're
5 talking about families. And that must be at the
6 forefront of this plan, specifically having the
7 agencies, DDC, amongst others, put in the curb
8 extensions from the get-go, so we don't have to fight
9 for intersection safety down the line.

11 And all neighbors moving into the neighborhood
12 or living in the neighborhood presently have access
13 to improved Traffic Safety.

14 And then finally, a connected waterfront.
15 Queens is beautiful, and the Queens waterfront is
16 amazing, but far too many neighbors do not have
17 access to Queensbridge Park and Gantry State Park, so
18 this plan must have a connected waterfront. (TIMER)
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much for your
21 testimony. There being no questions, this panel is
22 excused.

23 We will now transition to online testimony.
24 The first panel will consist of Daniel Taylor, Kenny
25 Greenberg, Anatole Ashraf, and Riley Owens.

2 The panel following will consist of Jenny
3 Dubnau, Pamela Herrera, Memo Salazar, and Mandana
4 Limbert.

5 We will hear from Daniel Taylor first.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

7 DANIEL TAYLOR: My name is Daniel Taylor. I'm a
8 lifelong resident of the Queensbridge Houses. I've
9 been living there for 69 years.

10 First, I would like to say, uh, I'm in favor
11 of the OneLIC plan only because I don't want to throw
12 the baby out with the bathwater. There are some
13 things that are terribly wrong with the plan that I'm
14 hoping can be worked out with the City Council and
15 the city itself. Because we do need jobs, we do need
16 schools, we do need infrastructure, and we do need
17 open spaces.

18 I've been advocating for the open space under
19 the Queensbridge, uh, Queensboro Bridge, for about a
20 decade and a half. I've been trying to see why they
21 took that park from us and trying to get it back.
22 That little half-acre of land that they are trying to
23 call the baby park for renovation of the baby park is
24 an insult to me because nothing in there has anything
25 to do with the baby park. That entire strip of almost

1
2 a baseball-- I mean a football field was that park,
3 and it was a vital connection to the Queensbridge
4 Houses where our parents took us to so we can grow up
5 and thrive in safety. I took offense to it when the
6 guy said about tearing Queensbridge down. Because
7 Queensbridge, let me tell you, is one of the best
8 places you can come to live. There are a lot of
9 people there and positivity that you're missing. And
10 a bunch of them spoke today at that panel, the
11 residents of Queensbridge. It's a shame that, you
12 know, NYCHA has failed us in a lot of ways, but, you
13 know, I'm hoping that with this plan that we can, you
14 know, benefit from it. I know we will if, in fact, it
15 goes through (TIMER), maybe not the way it's
16 designed, but the way that City Council Julie Won is
17 trying to make it, uh, designed to do. Thank you.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you so much

19 Next, we are going to hear from Kenny
20 Greenberg.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

22 KENNY GREENBERG: Hello, I'm Kenny Greenberg. I
23 am on the Queens CB2 Land Use, Small Business, and
24 Arts committees. I'm a business owner and homeowner
25 for over four decades.

2 CB2 volunteered hundreds of hours to arrive at
3 carefully thought-out recommendations. LIC needs to
4 be a mixed-use, affordable neighborhood where small
5 businesses, makers, and industry can survive. The
6 present plan does not guarantee this. We need
7 affordable grocery stores, fresh food markets, and
8 opportunities for small retail operations. The
9 present plan does not guarantee this.

10 We need to avoid encouraging speculative
11 development at the cost of existing businesses. New
12 development should complement, not replace, Long
13 Island City's industrial and creative communities. We
14 call for a downzoning to the M1 and M2 districts with
15 targeted bonuses that encourage affordable, creative,
16 and maker spaces. This would promote economic
17 diversity while retaining the area's unique mixed-use
18 identity. We've seen more than one up-zoning where
19 promised mitigation never happened. The Innovation
20 Center achieved new zoning, but now the Community
21 Benefits Agreement is in doubt. We need to see
22 guaranteed allocations before shovels go into the
23 ground.

24 Finally, climate change and sea level rise,
25 the most significant threats to local business and

2 the community, are barely addressed. We need
3 resiliency for the entire neighborhood, not just the
4 new buildings.

5 We urge the Council to set advanced conditions
6 for approval as clearly expressed by Council Member
7 Won and CB2. Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
9 hear from Anatole Ashraf.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

11 ANATOLE ASHRAF: Thank you. Good afternoon.
12 Thank you, Chair Riley, good to see you again. And
13 Council Member Won.

14 My name is Anatole Ashraf. I'm the chair of
15 Queens Community Board Two, which represents most of
16 the OneLIC rezoning area. And thank you, CB2, for
17 showing up. Proud of your teamwork.

18 I'm the first Bangladeshi Queens Community
19 Board chair in New York City history. I've lived in
20 this district since I was a teenager, and I was
21 homeless from 1999 to 2000, and I was as anti-Amazon
22 HQ2 as they come. I've seen what happens when the
23 City doesn't plan for working families with growth,
24 leaving people behind. I've also seen LIC change. And
25 now, as chair, I'm urging you to bake into this plan

1 the public guarantees our community asked for,
2 please.

3
4 Community Board Two voted 37 to 7 in favor of
5 OneLIC with conditions, after, like Kenny said,
6 hundreds of hours of deliberation—that none of us
7 got paid for. So we work for (INAUDIBLE) 99. We want
8 growth, but only growth that delivers real public
9 benefits, deeply affordable housing, infrastructure,
10 schools, parks, cultural space, and accountability.

11 Per the email testimony we received in June,
12 before we took our CB2 vote, roughly 75% of testimony
13 supported the plan, another 15% was mixed or
14 conditionally supportive, and only 10% opposed fully.
15 This council has the power and the responsibility to
16 make this plan real. That means another summary,
17 please. Homes at 40 to 60% AMI, not just a few units
18 buried in luxury towers, public land for public good,
19 schools, parks, 100% deeply affordable housing,
20 infrastructure upfront, open space that meets our
21 needs, like Daniel said, more than the tiny bit that
22 promised, and real access to the waterfront, zoning
23 with a purpose, scale bonuses to deliver community
24 benefits, protect arts, makers, small businesses, the
25 people who made LIC what it is, like Kenny and Ernie

1 Brooks I'm sure is somewhere, all the music people,
2 arts people, and above all binding accountability. We
3 need a community oversight body and enforceable
4 timelines—and also, particularly, millennials and
5 Gen-Z in particular, (TIMER) need this if they're
6 going to stay and grow old in NYC...

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired. Thank
9 you.

10 ANATOLE ASHRAF: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Ashraf. Next, we
12 will hear from Riley Owens.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

14 RILEY OWENS: Hello, thank you. My name is
15 Riley Owens, and I'm the Chair of the Transportation
16 Committee of Community Board Two.

17 I'm here today because I am in favor of the
18 OneLIC Plan—with our Community Board's
19 recommendations. This plan works to meet the need for
20 new housing and job growth in an area that is well
21 served by mass transit and a proximity to Midtown
22 Manhattan.

23 Growth in Long Island City is inevitable, and
24 a holistic plan to properly address that growth is
25 important. Our concerns, addressed with our

1 recommendations, are about city infrastructure that
2 is already overtaxed by the explosive growth of this
3 neighborhood in the last two decades.
4

5 While LIC benefits from multiple subway lines
6 and bus routes, they are nearly always overburdened
7 here, and train cars and subway stations become
8 dangerously overcrowded. Mass transit must serve its
9 customers with safety, comfort, accessibility, and
10 dignity, especially if the city seeks to prevail in
11 reducing automobile dependency. We were dismayed that
12 the plan did not include any participation with the
13 MTA to address the expansion of the area's subway
14 stations, which the DIS states will not be able to
15 safely accommodate peak hour traffic, nor did the
16 plan address the expansion of Long Island Railroad
17 service to a future Sunnyside station or, with the
18 EDC, the expansion of New York City ferry service.
19 Many of the problems of crowding on the subways can
20 be fixed with frequent and reliable bus service,
21 which would require a dedicated bus lane on the
22 Queensboro Bridge and the Queens-Midtown Tunnel.

23 We seek a formalized transit coordination plan
24 that addresses the current and future needs of this
25 community. Likewise, we are asking for a long-term

1 streetscape master plan that implements a
2 comprehensive Vision Zero strategy, tailored to LIC,
3 including the Queens Waterfront Greenway Project and
4 DOT's citywide greenways plan. Rather than a
5 piecemeal redesign of streets and corners, this
6 neighborhood rezoning is an opportunity to plan
7 safety and space for pedestrians, cyclists, and
8 drivers from the ground up.
9

10 And finally, lacking available parkland, our
11 streets must be re-envisioned as open space, creating
12 open streets and plazas safe from auto traffic, and
13 repurposing city lots for parks, such as the lots
14 under the Queensboro Bridge and the proposed 29th
15 (TIMER) Street Park and the head of the Dutch Kills
16 Tributary... (CROSS-TALK)

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired...

18 RILEY OWENS: Thank you.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you.

20 RILEY OWENS: Thank you very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. There being no
22 questions, this panel is excused.

23 The next panel we will hear from is Jenny
24 Dubnau, Pamela Herrera, Memo Salazar, and Mandana
25 Limbert.

1 The following panel will consist of Christine
2
3 Garner, Lior Brimberg (phonetic), Dan Miller, and
4 Thomas Mituzas.

5 We will hear first from Jenny Dubnau.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

7 JENNY DUBNAU: Hi, there. Is it possible for me
8 to swap with a friend who has to leave for work soon?

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No, but I could call her
10 next. What's that friend's name?

11 JENNY DUBNAU: Rachel Brown.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Rachel Brown?

13 JENNY DUBNAU: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, I will call Rachel
15 Brown next. Go ahead, Jenny.

16 JENNY DUBNAU: Thank you so much. Tell me when
17 I should begin.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: You can begin now.

19 JENNY DUBNAU: Okay, my name is Jenny Dubnau. I
20 am testifying on behalf of a coalition of community
21 groups in LIC, which will later submit written
22 testimony on the zoning in its entirety. But today
23 I'm focusing on the issue of displacement in the
24 industrial zones.

1 According to the DEIS, the OneLIC rezoning
2 would lead to the net loss of almost 800,000 square
3 feet of industrial space. Yet unbelievably, DEIS
4 predicts no major results in job losses. Industrial
5 buildings house manufacturers, small startups,
6 streetcar vendors, auto repair shops, and a ton of
7 working artists. These crucial sectors are dependent
8 on affordable space, and the outer borough industrial
9 vacancy rate of approximately 8% is actually rather
10 low. In fact, in central Queens, it's only 4.9%.
11 Western Queens Community Land Trust and Pratt
12 Institute's Made in NYC recently conducted a survey
13 of Queens-based manufacturers. The vast majority said
14 they are at risk of displacement, and on average,
15 they can afford only about \$20 a square foot
16 annually.

17 To be clear, the current industrial vacancy
18 rate will be even lower if the rents were truly
19 affordable. Rezoning manufacturing zones to mixed-use
20 residential means the destruction of older, lower-
21 rise industrial buildings with higher-rise
22 residential towers. Many industrial tenants will be
23 immediately displaced when their buildings are torn
24 down, and others when their rents are raised.
25

1
2 Meanwhile, the DEIS states that more than 2.5
3 million square feet of office space will be added in
4 LIC, via OneLIC, even though, according to Crain's
5 New York, fully one-third of Class A high-end office
6 space in LIC is vacant.

7 The rezoning should be modified to preserve
8 industrial buildings, not incentivize their
9 demolition, and no more unneeded, unaffordable office
10 space should be added. It's hard to see how the
11 current OneLIC plan supports the preservation of
12 manufacturing and the arts, two important stated
13 goals.

14 And finally, to help mitigate the
15 manufacturing affordability and supply crisis that
16 would be worsened by this rezoning, the City should
17 ensure that the final RFP for the DOE building
18 (TIMER) follows the vision of the Queensboro
19 (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired. Thank
21 you... (CROSS-TALK)

22 JENNY DUBNAU: (INAUDIBLE) provides over
23 600,000 square feet of permanently affordable space.

1
2 Thank you very much. We can't support this
3 plan unless the above issues are addressed. Thank
4 you.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, I am going
6 to call Rachel Brown.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

8 RACHEL BROWN: (INAUDIBLE)

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead, Rachel.

10 RACHEL BROWN: Hi, can you hear me?

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can.

12 RACHEL BROWN: I'm not sure why I don't have a
13 camera, but that's okay. I can just go without.

14 Thank you for moving me up in the line. I'm
15 also part of this kind of coalition of community
16 groups in Long Island City and Western Queens in
17 general. I focus on food, housing, and environmental
18 justice. And I'm here to urge you to vote no on the
19 OneLIC Plan unless it's changed substantially.

20 This process I've been involved in from the
21 beginning, and it really is upsetting to hear it
22 called extensive community engagement when it doesn't
23 feel like that, when it feels like it's been rigged
24 for for-profit development with no concern for
25

1 RACHEL BROWN: I'm a working artist... (CROSS-
2 TALK)

3 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you.

4 RACHEL BROWN: Thank you so much.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Ms. Brown. Thank
6 you for your testimony. And I just wanted to clarify,
7 AMI is determined by the federal government, and we
8 definitely need them to help us out with that. But
9 thank you for your concerns and everything you
10 stated.

11 Next, we are going to be hearing from Pamela
12 Herrera.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

14 PAMELA HERRERA: Good afternoon, Chair Riley
15 and Council Member Won. My name is Pamela Herrera,
16 and I am the Land Justice Coordinator at the Western
17 Queens Community Land Trust.

18 The Western Queens CLT is not against
19 development. We are for equitable development. What
20 we need is deep affordability, truly community-led
21 planning, and protections for permanent, deep
22 affordable housing. We need public investment in
23 services and infrastructure, not luxury towers that
24 none of us can access. This development will
25

1 constrain the working class further, displacing them
2 from the roots they have set here.

3
4 As a community org, we are here to support the
5 marginalized communities that the City continues to
6 neglect. We are working closely with businesses,
7 community members, and I'm here to urge the committee
8 to consider the harm this massive 54-block rezoning
9 will cause.

10 Vote no on the rezoning, unless there is a
11 prioritization of long-standing community-led plans
12 for the public sites in a commitment to keeping all
13 public sites out of private hands; a legally binding
14 mechanism that funds deeply affordable housing far
15 beyond the minimum required by law; a resilient
16 waterfront public park connecting Queensbridge Houses
17 with Anable Basin; specific funding for upgrading
18 current infrastructure in schools; sewage lines, and
19 transportation proportional to the anticipated
20 increase in population; concrete financial investment
21 in nearby NYCHA housing, the removal of unlimited
22 height zoning, especially across the street from
23 Queensbridge Houses; and stricter regulations on
24 mixed-use zoning to prevent displacement of
25 manufacturing spaces and jobs.

1 Thank you for listening and for your continued
2 service to our community.

3 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
4 hear from Memo Salazar.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

6 MEMO SALAZAR: Hi, thank you-- Hi, my name is
7 Memo Salazar. I am also with the Western Queensland
8 Trust and with the big coalition of groups that are
9 very concerned about OneLIC.
10

11 I want to be clear that everyone who
12 testified today or at any of these public forums,
13 other than the developers and landlords, of course,
14 has been telling you the same thing—it's not about
15 counting the yes and no votes. That's a distraction
16 from reality. No one who lives in LIC is okay with
17 the current OneLIC plan. We are all in favor of a
18 true community plan that addresses our needs, and
19 we're all voting no on the plan as it now stands,
20 which is an embarrassing hundreds of pages with zero
21 useful provisions for the community.

22 The community boards and the borough president
23 have also said the same thing. Yes, for the plan—
24 only if their conditions are met. The City's
25 responses to Council Member Won's questions today

1 show that with only a few weeks left, they still
2 don't have a solid plan, and that equals a no vote.

3
4 So here are a few of those conditions that
5 they have set throughout the different-- the
6 community boards, borough president, and
7 councilperson votes before they can give you a yes:

8 First of all, District 26 Land Use principles
9 from the council person's own Land Use office have
10 said clearly that new developments should provide
11 more income-restricted units at deeper affordability
12 than required by MIH Option One. So that goes beyond
13 MIH, which currently our plan does not. Rent should
14 be affordable for the 53% of Community Board One and
15 Two residents who earn less than \$75,000 a year and
16 the 25% of households that make less than \$35,000.
17 MIH alone does not meet that demand.

18 Other things: Infrastructure sequencing plan
19 to fix the issues left by past rezonings, including
20 upgrades to sewers and transit. Public land must
21 remain publicly owned and leased, not given away or
22 sold. The EDC's RFP needs to reflect that policy. You
23 need to downzone downward in key areas that encourage
24 the use of bonuses for public benefits. You have to
25 create a new public park, a minimum of two acres, by

1 Court Square. You have to create a park on the public
2 parcel of land by Waterfront and 44th Drive, uh,
3 funded street tree initiative, and arts fund (TIMER)
4 paid for by a \$10 (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

5
6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired...
7 (CROSS-TALK)

8 MEMO SALAZAR: surcharge on all (INAUDIBLE)...
9 (CROSS-TALK)

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you.

11 MEMO SALAZAR: non-affordable housing. There's
12 a huge list I could go through. Please read the
13 testimonies and the voting, because all of it has to
14 be in the plan, or this is a no. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
16 hear from Mandana Limbert.

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

18 MANDANA LIMBERT: (NO RESPONSE)

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: For those logged in and
20 standing by to testify, when asked to be promoted to
21 the Zoom, you need to accept the promotion in order
22 to be able to speak. I just want to set that for the
23 record.

24 Mandana, are you there?

25 MANDANA LIMBERT: (NO RESPONSE)

1 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Mandana Limbert, are you
2 there?
3

4 MANDANA LIMBERT: (NO RESPONSE)

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. We will move on to
6 the next panel, which consists of Christine Gardner,
7 Lior Brimberg, Dan Miller, Thomas Mituzas, and Morry
8 Galonoy. We will hear first from Christine Garner.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

10 CHRISTINE GARNER: (NO RESPONSE)

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Christine Garner, are you
12 there?

13 CHRISTINE GARNER: (NO RESPONSE)

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Christine Garner, are you
15 there?

16 Okay, Lior Brimberg?

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Lior, you may begin.

18 LIOR BRIMBERG: Yeah?

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead, Lior.

20 LIOR BRIMBERG: You can hear me?

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes.

22 LIOR BRIMBERG: Okay, yeah, you can see me,
23 thank you.

24 Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Lior
25 Brimberg. I am a proud mother of (INAUDIBLE), who is

1 an 8th grader at Baccalaureate School for Global
2 Education, BSGE, I'm here to testify on his behalf
3 because that's a school day, or at least it was when
4 we started today.
5

6 So I'm going to just say what he told me, what
7 he asked me to say:

8 As a proud student at the Baccalaureate School
9 for Global Education, BSGE in Queens, I'm here to ask
10 city leaders to give our school a real home,
11 including a new building for BSGE in the LIC
12 development, in the OneLIC Development. So my name is
13 (INAUDIBLE)—this is my son—I live in Bayside,
14 Queens, and I choose to commute daily to BSGE in
15 Astoria, which is about an hour away, one Long Island
16 Railroad and two subways, and I am here to tell you
17 why.

18 BSGE is the first public school in New York
19 City to offer an International Baccalaureate program.
20 This IB program is a highly challenging program, but
21 we all meet the challenge together. This is a
22 (INAUDIBLE) that starts in 7th grade and runs to 12th
23 grade, and the acceptance is based upon grades, but
24 also upon (INAUDIBLE) dynamic schools, leadership
25 qualities, and this school has a very strong emphasis

1 on community involvement. This school represents and
2 reflects New York's diversity, many of us coming from
3 immigrant families, and we represent all religions
4 (INAUDIBLE). Although we are one of the top schools
5 in New York City and in New York State, we have no
6 gym and no auditorium; in fact, we call our cafeteria
7 (INAUDIBLE) "cafegymatorium", I cannot say that, but
8 just basically saying that our cafeteria is our gym
9 as well as the auditorium (TIMER) when we need it.
10 (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

11
12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired. Thank
13 you.

14 LIOR BRIMBERG: especially for a high school in
15 New York. Without this space, it means for school-
16 wide assemblies, no proper place for sports, no stage
17 for theater or concerts. We have a crammed
18 classrooms. Our entire school is squeezed into
19 (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Ma'am, your time has
21 expired.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Thank you, Ms.
23 Brimberg.

24 LIOR BRIMBERG: So, I am just going to add and
25 say that-- I do want to say that we do want LIC

1 (INAUDIBLE) is one in a generation chance to give
2 BSGE students that building that they never had. And
3 I also want to say that this kind of (INAUDIBLE)
4 Council Won has mentioned earlier thrived for growth
5 to come (sic).

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we are
8 going to hear from Dan Miller.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

10 DAN MILLER: (NO RESPONSE)

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Dan Miller?

12 DAN MILLER: (INAUDIBLE)

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Dan Miller?

14 DAN MILLER: (INAUDIBLE)

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Dan? We hear you a little
16 bit, but I think you're breaking up.

17 DAN MILLER: (INAUDIBLE)

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: We will come back to you,
19 Dan. Next, we will hear from Thomas Mituzas...

20 (CROSS-TALK)

21 DAN MILLER: Is this better?

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, Dan?

23 DAN MILLER: Yes, I'm here.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: All right, go ahead, Dan.

1 DAN MILLER: All right, so my name is Dan. I'm
2 a market-rate renter and I live in Astoria, Queens,
3 nearby. And I just want to speak in support of the
4 plan, and I want to urge Council Member Won to
5 really-- hope you can get to yes and get to a yes
6 quickly. Housing delayed is such a huge problem.
7 We're in a giant shortage already, and waiting
8 another year or a couple of years for just the right
9 plan means more and more market-rate renters like me,
10 facing increased pricing pressures and competition
11 from people who won't have housing that would have
12 been built in Long Island City if this plan passes.

14 It's important that we get it right,
15 absolutely, but it's also important that we get it
16 right quickly. The more years we have to delay, the
17 greater the pressure gets, and market-rate renters
18 like me are already facing a huge issue of just
19 competition; there are too many people looking for
20 too few apartments. We need to build more so that we
21 can accommodate all the people who want to live in
22 this incredible city. Letting this plan go forward is
23 absolutely the right thing to do, and I hope that,
24 you know, you'll negotiate and you'll make the best
25 deal you can for the district. But I also hope that

1
2 you will get to yes. Because this is the kind of
3 thing that needs to happen. We need to build more. We
4 need to build tall, we need to build dense. And like,
5 concerns about, you know, neighborhood contacts and
6 that kind of thing are less important than just
7 getting it done and getting the quantity of units
8 that we need so that we can accommodate everyone who
9 wants to live here. It's really important that the
10 neighborhood keeps growing. I love this city,
11 (TIMER), and I hope that you do the right thing and
12 keep it building. Thanks.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thanks, Dan. Next, we are
14 going to hear from Thomas Mituzas. Tom...

15 THOMAS MITUZAS: Thank you, Chair Riley.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead.

17 THOMAS MITUZAS: Thank you, Council Member Won.

18 My name is Tom Mituzas, a lifelong resident of
19 Blissville, living in the home that my family
20 established in 1907. Today, I am representing the
21 Blissville Civic Association.

22 We call for the New York City Council to vote
23 in favor of the plan, a plan that includes Community
24 Board Two and the Honorable Donovan Richards'
25 recommendations to invest in Blissville—Investments

1
2 for stormwater management to combat the unprecedented
3 frequency of sewer backflows already experienced,
4 particularly on 37th Street and Greenpoint Avenue;
5 the creation of an inland park for the context area
6 of the plan to move Blissful from the 15% of New
7 Yorkers who are not within walking distance of a
8 park; and we seek investments to combat the pollution
9 identified in the DEIS that will come to Blissful as
10 a result of the plan—A neighborhood who is already
11 experiencing issues with pollution.

12 Please vote in favor of a plan that includes
13 investments for the Long Island City on “the other
14 side of the tracks”. We have an opportunity to end
15 the tale of two Long Island cities. We are confident
16 that Council Member Won will negotiate investments
17 for all those living, working, and sheltering in the
18 Blissville section of Long Island City. Thank you
19 very much.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Thomas. Next, we
21 will hear from Morry Galonoy.

22 MORRY GALONOV: Exactly, thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: You’re welcome.

24 MORRY GALONOV: Good afternoon, Chair Riley,
25 Council Member Won, and the Subcommittee Members. My

1 name is Morry Galony, and I serve as Chair of the
2 Small Business Committee for Queens Community Board
3 Two, and also a member of the Land Use and the
4 Transportation Committees. And I'm a small business
5 owner in the community.
6

7 I am grateful to Council Member Won for her
8 leadership in prioritizing affordability in Long
9 Island City and making it clear that she won't
10 support the plan without it. Thank you, Council
11 Member Won.

12 I want to express conditional support for the
13 OneLIC Plan. While it presents real opportunities for
14 growth, it must include the specific stipulations
15 recommended by the Queens Community Board Two. There
16 is serious concern that the proposed housing doesn't
17 include enough deeply affordable or enough
18 affordability for long-time residents, risking the
19 displacement of families who've lived here for
20 decades or generations.

21 As a small business owner, I'm also concerned
22 about the future of small and micro businesses,
23 especially immigrant and family-owned shops that are
24 vital to the identity and economy of the entire city.
25 These businesses make up 90% of the city's economy

1 and half of its jobs. They need meaningful, tailored
2 support. The City and private industry must expand
3 what they define as business incubators. Beyond tech
4 and food incubators, we need retail and creative
5 incubators that offer affordable storefronts, shared
6 space, and real resources for local entrepreneurs,
7 artists, and makers.
8

9 Long Island City has a vibrant small business
10 and creative ecosystem. Let's build on it and not
11 replace it. That means affordable commercial space,
12 Flexible leases, and supporting diverse business
13 models. Development and inclusion are not mutually
14 exclusive. The plan must adopt CB2's recommendations
15 for greater affordability as well as investment in
16 schools, (TIMER) open space, and infrastructure.

17 (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

19 MORRY GALONNOY: accountability...

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you.

21 MORRY GALONNOY: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much.

23 Christine Garner?

24 CHRISTINE GARNER: Hello, can you hear me?

25 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, go ahead.

2 CHRISTINE GARNER: Okay, I don't have the
3 option for video, but I'll go ahead.

4 Good afternoon, my name is Christine Garner,
5 and I am an Urban Design Associate at the Regional
6 Plan Association. Thank you for the opportunity to
7 testify in support of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan.

8 RPA has long supported and advocated for
9 increased housing in central transit-rich areas such
10 as Long Island City. This neighborhood is a vibrant
11 part of New York City known for its excellent
12 transportation options, diverse economy, and
13 beautiful waterfront. However, many areas of Long
14 Island City are currently hindered by outdated zoning
15 regulations that restrict the construction of new
16 multi-family buildings. Moreover, large sections of
17 the waterfront remain closed or inaccessible to the
18 public. At the same time, both the neighborhood and
19 the city are in urgent need of new income, restricted
20 affordable housing, as well as resilient multi-
21 purpose open space infrastructure.

22 The OneLIC Neighborhood Plan has been a
23 collaborative and comprehensive effort that will help
24 address these challenges. We commend the Department
25 of City Planning and Councilwoman Julie Won for their

1 dedication and commitment to this neighborhood
2 planning process. As proposed, the plan supports
3 developing residential areas at higher densities
4 along the waterfront and 44th Drive corridors, where
5 such uses are currently not allowed. With the
6 appropriate design and resiliency standards, the plan
7 will promote the redevelopment of underutilized
8 properties and create connected open spaces along the
9 East River and Anable Basin. To facilitate this, the
10 existing Waterfront Access Plan will be amended to
11 guide the development of up to six acres of high-
12 quality open space that links the waterfront with the
13 community.
14

15 As described in our recent Averting Crisis
16 Report, LIC faces the dual challenge of managing
17 significant climate risks while accommodating
18 substantial housing growth. To effectively tackle
19 this complexity, the proposed plan prioritizes
20 policies that integrate climate-resilient, multi-
21 purpose open space with mixed-use and affordable
22 housing development. The forward-looking land use and
23 zoning policies being considered today can shape a
24 more vibrant, resilient, and inclusive Long Island
25 City. As such, we recommend that the Subcommittee on

1 Zoning and Franchises adopt this measure. As always,
2 RPA (TIMER) is available to discuss concerns or offer
3 insights to help realize this (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-
4 TALK)
5

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired...

7 CHRISTINE GARNER: priorities...

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you.

9 CHRISTINE GARNER: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much. This
11 panel is excused. The next panelist we will hear from
12 is-- will consist of Valentin Cannucci (phonetic),
13 Lisa Deller, Sarah Helden, Kristina Chaise, and
14 Joanna Levinger.

15 We will start first with Valentin Cannucci.

16 VALENTIN CANNUCCI: (NO RESPONSE)

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Valentin, if you can hear
18 me, please unmute, and you may begin.

19 VALENTIN CANNUCCI: (NO RESPONSE)

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Valentin, can you hear me?

21 VALENTIN CANNUCCI: (NO RESPONSE)

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay...

23 VALENTIN CANNUCCI: Yes...

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Oh, go ahead.
25

VALENTIN CANNUCCI: My name is Valentin

Cannucci. I have lived in Long Island City for over 55 years. I am against the project. They have not done any infrastructure in Long Island City for that long. Right now, my house, for 18 months, since all the backup of white and gray water, due to DEP-- I finally ended up spending close to \$25,000 to fix it myself. But they have done nothing. Everybody wants new projects, everything could do something-- do something first. They cannot even fix lousy dog park in Murray Park, which is probably 500 feet. Me and my crew of two people, we could have cleaned that up in two hours, and then put some rocks. But, anyway, I have been through this whole back and forth through the Zoning Commission. I note that they have received 1,358 votes against the project, which they seemed not to have acknowledged. But, because of Julie Won and OneLIC, I think they are in collusion. They pushed this project while people were at work or on vacation with their kids. And everything seems to be One, One, One, and that's it. They have not let the people in Long Island City to know (sic). I live in 11101. They didn't include us in the zoning. They just decided-- when I asked the people from OneLIC

(TIMER), I was told, the next one (INAUDIBLE)...

(CROSS-TALK)

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired. Thank you.

VALENTIN CANNUCCI: Bye-bye.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Bye-bye, I'll see you later, thank you. Next, we will hear from Lisa Deller.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

LISA DELLER: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair Riley and Council Member Won. My name is Lisa Deller, I have been a CB2 member for over 20 years, and I previously served as Land Use and Community Board Chair. I've spent my entire career working to expand and preserve affordable housing.

I'm here today to testify in regard to the failure of the rezoning proposal to adequately address the need for public park land and adequate social infrastructure. While the 40-foot waterfront access plan is welcome as a continuous waterfront connected walkway, it does not increase the accessible parkland for the rezoning. As others noted, the statistics for accessible parkland in this community are abysmal. (INAUDIBLE) CB2 is ranked 57-

59 community boards for the percentage of parkland;
36-59 within a 5-minute walk from a park; 54-59 per
tree covers by New Yorkers for Parks.

As we've seen in the Court Square rezoning,
failure to plan and incorporate significant parkland
leaves families retroactively working to address
mistakes of past planning. As the Hunters Point
Conservancy testified, the existing parks are
overutilized. The Long Island City Coalition and
Hunters Point Community Coalition have noted that the
existing open space is hidden behind small gains. The
draft DIS claims the project has 4.3 acres of open
space, but buries the fact that open space per
resident drops by nearly 20%. This is way below the
(INAUDIBLE) parkland of 2.0.

The existing public land presents the
opportunity of a lifetime. This is our last chance to
preserve the public land for public uses, including
parkland, affordable housing, (TIMER) schools, and
community facilities. The (INAUDIBLE)...

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

LISA DELLER: (INAUDIBLE)

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you.

LISA DELLER: Thank you very much.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
3 hear from Sarah Helden. Sarah, you can press "*6" to
4 unmute yourself if you are using your phone, and you
5 may begin.

6 SARAH HELDEN: (INAUDIBLE)

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Sarah?

8 SARAH HELDEN: (INAUDIBLE)

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Sarah Heldon, if you can
10 hear me, please press *6, and you may unmute yourself
11 and begin.

12 SARAH HELDEN: Hi, can you hear me now?

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you.

14 SARAH HELDEN: Okay, great, thank you.

15 Hi, my name is Sarah Helden. I'm here as a
16 concerned resident of Sunnyside, a member of Western
17 Queens CLT, as well as a coalition of Long Island
18 City-based groups.

19 Chief among my concerns for this rezoning plan
20 is the fact that four publicly owned parcels are
21 situated in the affected area. There are precious few
22 of these sites left. While they could provide the
23 perfect opportunity to create 100% affordable
24 housing, flood-resilient public parks, and truly
25 affordable spaces for the arts, small businesses,

1 manufacturing, and community organizations, the
2 OneLIC Plan, as it currently stands, protects none of
3 these sites from being handed to private developers.
4 And CB2's recommendations they state that public
5 lands must be retained in public ownership and
6 (INAUDIBLE) not (INAUDIBLE) to ensure long-term
7 accountability and community benefits.
8

9 Time and again, we have seen valuable public
10 lands being sold to private developers, and this is
11 an opportunity to improve on past mistakes and give
12 residents and community groups agency in determining
13 the use of these spaces based on the unique needs of
14 the people who have lived and worked in this area for
15 years.

16 When Amazon tried to take over, it was the
17 individuals and community groups in the area that led
18 efforts against that acquisition. This rezoning
19 cannot reward such efforts with more speculation and
20 private development. Public sites should remain in
21 public hands, and residents of the neighborhood
22 should be able to determine the use of these areas
23 based on community-driven planning.
24
25

2 I urge the Council not to approve the rezoning
3 plan while there is no guarantee that these public
4 sites will be exempt from upzoning. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
6 hear from Christina Chaise. Christina, if you can
7 hear me, please unmute, and you may begin.

8 CHRISTINA CHAISE: Good afternoon. I'm
9 Christina Chaise, born and raised in Queens, and grew
10 up in Queensbridge in Ravenswood. I'm now Second Vice
11 President of Ravenswood Resident Association, a
12 member of Justice for All Coalition, and a board
13 member of Queens Community Board One, and on the Land
14 Use Committee.

15 But I'm not here on behalf of the Community
16 Board. I'm here on behalf of residents of Ravenswood
17 and Queensbridge and longstanding LIC residents in
18 general who are working and cannot be here today to
19 convey their dissent—exhausted from broken promises
20 and outright lies.

21 We've collected hundreds of signatures
22 opposing this plan, primarily from NYCHA residents,
23 and we will keep getting more. We ask that our
24 elected officials vote no on this plan because it is
25 criminal. The EIS in this proposal did not include

1
2 Queensbridge Houses and Ravenswood Houses, omitting
3 about 15,000 predominantly Black and brown, poor
4 working-class and middle-class residents, with larger
5 proportions of elderly, children, and disabled
6 residents—even though we will be directly impacted—
7 their lives matter. It is criminal to invest all
8 around Queensbridge and not in Queensbridge. This
9 plan does not include a penny for Queensbridge or
10 Ravenswood, which is less than four blocks north of
11 the rezoning site.

12 It is criminal to propose unlimited-height
13 luxury towers that will literally leave Queensbridge
14 in the shadows and destroy access to air and light,
15 and subject us to years of major construction hazards
16 in what is already known as "asthma alley". We don't
17 need or want 700+ story luxury towers with sprinkles
18 of affordable housing that our people cannot access
19 or afford. As a day-one participant in this study, I
20 can tell you that our voices are not reflected in
21 this plan. We asked for green space, community space,
22 and investments in public housing. LIC is already an
23 enclave for the wealthy; it does not need more luxury
24 skyscrapers. MIH is 70 to 80% luxury housing. It is
25 not affordable housing. I urge my Council Member

1 Julie Won, and all council reps to vote no, because
2 it's planning spends \$0.00 for NYCHA residents. A
3 Community Center means nothing if my home is falling
4 apart and my plumbing isn't working. We need a full,
5 comprehensive modernization of Queensbridge and
6 Ravenswood, not bread crumbs—According to NYCHA's
7 2023 Physical Needs Assessment, that would be \$1.7
8 billion for Queensbridge (TIMER) and \$1.2 billion for
9 Ravenswood. This must be part of the condition...

10 (CROSS-TALK)

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired. Thank
12 you.. (CROSS-TALK)

13 SARAH HELDEN: If the City cannot procure this
14 funding for Queensbridge and Ravenswood, then this
15 plan should be jettisoned altogether. NYCHA is
16 affordable housing, and we warrant the deep
17 investments. Thank you. Vote no.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Christina. Next,
19 we will hear from Joanna Levinger.

20 JOANNA LEVINGER: Hi, my name is Joanna
21 Levinger, and I have lived in Long Island City for 12
22 years. This plan will affect me on a deeply personal
23 level, as I live on the borderline of 44th Drive,
24 where three of the four of the windows in my
25

1 apartment will be blocked by the height of these new
2 proposed buildings in my corridor.

3
4 I am always deeply shocked to hear
5 neighborhood landlords and tenants voice their
6 support for the plan, citing that it would bring
7 other neighborhood rents down, as this has not been
8 my or many of my neighbors' experiences at all.

9 I live in a building that is mixed-use,
10 market-rate--Excuse me, it's mixed market-rate and
11 rent-stabilized tenants. It was built in 1917, and
12 prior to living in my rent-stabilized apartment,
13 which is the only reason I can afford to live in the
14 neighborhood, from 2013 to 2021, I lived in a market-
15 rate apartment that was relatively affordable in the
16 building. But after the overhaul of the LIC
17 Neighborhood that we saw from 2013 to 2021, our
18 building was purchased by a private equity real
19 estate firm, and the market rate apartments in my
20 tiny pre-war building suddenly went from a one-
21 bedroom at \$1,800 a month in 2019 to today, the same
22 apartment is listed for over \$3,400 a month—a
23 relative steal when looking at the other market rate
24 one bedrooms down the street going for \$4,200 a month
25 or \$5,100 a month for one-bedroom apartments.

1 While I am not against development or
2
3 rezoning, I am against any plans that serve only
4 corporate greed-- corporate real estate greed and not
5 the needs of the existing and future Long Island City
6 community, which is why I urge you to vote no for the
7 plan in its current state.

8 This plan lacks the guarantee of a people-
9 first approach we were hoping for, with a guarantee
10 of truly affordable housing, expansive green space
11 with tree cover, and neighborhood infrastructure
12 improvements. Instead, we are offered monstrous high
13 rate rises which contribute to a terrible heat
14 effect, where it becomes so dangerous to walk
15 around—and I have a dog—because she could burn her
16 paws.

17 I have lived in the neighborhood since before
18 the redevelopment of Court Square and the Queensboro
19 Plaza areas (TIMER), and I was deeply hopeful that
20 the redevelopment would include public space
21 (INAUDIBLE)...

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.

23 JOANNA LEVINGER: and shade, and that did not
24 happen. Thank you.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Joanna. This
3 panel is excused. The next panel we will hear from is
4 Zariana Cepeda (phonetic), Ping Ying (phonetic),
5 Christina Tirado (phonetic), Sarah Dole (phonetic),
6 and Rosamond Gianutsos (phonetic).

7 We will begin with Rosamond Gianutsos.

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Rosamond?

10 ROSAMOND GIANUTSOS: Good afternoon. Yes, I'm
11 trying to...

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead.

13 ROSAMOND GIANUTSOS: turn my video on. Come
14 on. There we go. All right.

15 My name is Rosamond Gianutsos, and I've been a
16 resident of this district, now so ably represented by
17 Council Member Won, for over 55 years. Not that
18 longevity really matters because our community is one
19 that we proudly can say welcomes new neighbors.

20 As First Vice Chair of Queens Community Board
21 Two, I observed my colleagues reviewing and
22 deliberating on this plan for months and years. I
23 don't see how anyone can say there wasn't outreach.
24 Council Member Won is amazing in that effort. I am
25 very proud of our colleagues' work and efforts, and I

1 fully support our 37 to 7 yes vote, together with
2 carefully thought out conditions.
3

4 I would especially resonate with the call for
5 upgrades to public transit and street calming. With
6 this plan, we will see our population increase, and
7 in addition to infrastructure upgrades, we need to
8 offer accessible public transit, which is so
9 plentiful and efficient that fewer people will want
10 to have their own vehicle. We need to create parks,
11 as people have been saying, instead of parking, and
12 say yes to permanently affordable housing, which is
13 what this plan will do.

14 Finally, over the years, I have learned that
15 plans and promises need to be monitored and reviewed
16 independently. I would propose that a task force of
17 (TIMER) CB2 and CB1...

18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired. Thank
19 you.

20 ROSAMOND GIANUTSOS: should be involved
21 throughout the evolution and implementation of the
22 OneLIC Plan. Thank you for your attention.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much. Next, we
24 will hear from Sarah Dole.
25

1 SARAH DOLE: Good afternoon. It's been a very
2 long day, so I'll do my best to keep this brief. But
3 I would like to express my support for the OneLIC
4 Neighborhood Plan.
5

6 LIC is an amazing neighborhood, and it seems
7 to be getting more dynamic by the minute. It's got
8 excellent transit options, the arts and culture scene
9 is amazing, and those waterfront views are beautiful.
10 So to me, it totally makes sense as to why current
11 residents want to stay and new people want to move
12 here.

13 However, when you walk through the areas that
14 are proposed for rezoning, that dynamism is totally
15 lost. These sites sit in some of the most well-
16 connected, high-opportunity parts of the
17 neighborhood, yet their potential is completely
18 wasted on empty lots and underutilized warehouses.

19 By transforming these underutilized spaces
20 into homes, OneLIC is directly responding to the
21 urgent need for more housing in New York. Like we've
22 heard over and over today, more than half of New
23 Yorkers are rent-burdened, and even market-rate
24 renters are struggling with the constantly rising
25 costs. To meet this crisis, we need to build both

1 affordable homes and market-rate homes. For this
2 reason, I'm asking you to please vote yes on the
3 OneLIC Neighborhood Plan. Thank you.
4

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
6 hear from Christian Tirado.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin, Christian.

8 CHRISTIAN TIRADO: Good afternoon, everyone.
9 Thank you, Chairman Riley, Council Member Won, for
10 giving me the opportunity to testify today.

11 I am Chris Tirdao, a Queens Resident and a
12 proud parent of a student attending the Baccalaureate
13 School of Global Education. I am also a member of
14 BSGE's Parent Teacher Association, representing
15 parents, teachers, and students who strive every day
16 to ensure that our school has the resources it needs
17 to succeed.

18 And I'm here today, I'm representing BSGE in
19 support of the OneLIC Plan—with the caveat that it
20 should have and ensure that there's education
21 infrastructure included in the plan.

22 BSGE is a prime example of a school that
23 urgently needs and deserves to be part of this
24 vision. Just a bit on BSGE, it remains the only
25 public school where every student completes a full IB

1 diploma. We provide rigorous, inclusive academics.
2
3 And yet, despite this, the school faces conditions
4 that no (INAUDIBLE) high school in New York City
5 should endure. We have limited classroom space and
6 resources. And I know that the School Construction
7 Authority was not here today, but we really need the
8 support to have schools like BSGE expand, and we
9 stand in support of this plan if they're committed to
10 do so.

11 The OneLIC development presents a once-in-a-
12 generation opportunity to correct this inequity. A
13 modern, purpose-built facility for BSGE would allow
14 the school to expand enrollment, give schools proper
15 athletic and arts spaces, and ensure that classrooms
16 are equipped with 21st-century learning.

17 I respectfully urge you to include a new BSGE
18 building as part (TIMER) of the OneLIC Project. Thank
19 you...

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired. Thank
21 you.

22 CHRISTIAN TIRADO: And your commitment to
23 education equity in our city.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
3 hear from Ping Yeung(phonetic). Ping, if you can hear
4 me, please unmute, then you may begin.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You begin.

6 PING YEUNG: (NO RESPONSE)

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Ping, if you can...

8 PING YEUNG: Can you hear me?

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead.

10 PING YEUNG: Yes. Okay. Hi, my name is Ping
11 Yeung, and I am a resident of Long Island City. I
12 live in Court Square. I am raising three kids with my
13 husband in the neighborhood, and I am speaking here
14 in support of the OneLIC Plan. And I urge a yes vote
15 on OneLIC.

16 The area that's proposed to be developed is
17 within a few minutes walk from my apartment, and I
18 look at it every day from my window. As a resident of
19 the neighborhood, I want to see this area redeveloped
20 for the benefit of myself, my children, and the
21 entire community. We see ourselves living in this
22 area for many years to come, for my children to go
23 through middle school and high school in the
24 neighborhood, and I would hate to see this

1 neighborhood still looking exactly the way it does by
2 the time they get to high school.

3
4 The area, as it currently is, is an
5 underutilized area that feels vacant and abandoned. I
6 don't feel comfortable walking around there with my
7 kids.

8 While I hear all the different ideas and all
9 the different objections that people have to the
10 current plan, I think that there's a need to be
11 realistic. There's never going to be a plan that's
12 perfect. There's never going to be a plan that will
13 make every single person happy, and more importantly,
14 be financially workable.

15 The plan that is in front of us has been
16 discussed by many different stakeholders. A lot of
17 things have been taken into consideration, and I
18 really think it's time the community makes a move and
19 does something.

20 Please vote yes. I really hope that we can
21 change this area, and that by the time my children
22 get to high school, it won't still be looking the way
23 it does right now. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
25 hear from Yarianna Céspedes.

1 YARIANNA CÉSPEDES: Hello, can you hear me?

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes, we can hear you.

3 YARIANNA CÉSPEDES: Okay, I never did this
4 before, but I am going to try my best.

5 Okay. Hello, and thank you for having me. My
6 name is Yarianna Céspedes, I live in Queensbridge
7 Housing, and I believe that OneLIC has the benefit to
8 change and improve the quality of life. However, I
9 cannot fully and authentically support it if there is
10 not more information about how Queensbridge Housing
11 will be funded and in detail, concrete detail, and
12 prove that they will hold NYCHA accountable in giving
13 more support in our community.

14 Not only should there be more affordable
15 housing, but we should also support the housing
16 public system that is there, so that everyone can
17 grow and prosper together. And my main concern is
18 just making sure that the 4,300 rent-stabilized
19 housing, uh, apartments, if there's a way to
20 prioritize born and raised New Yorkers, because what
21 tends to happen is that a lot of people who are out
22 of state or not even born in the country tend to get
23 those luxury-- not luxury, but affordable housing
24 instead of the actual born in this city. So I think
25

1 it would be a disservice not to prioritize actual
2 people who live here and have lived here for years—
3 and yeah, that's it.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

5 YARIANNA CÉSPEDES: Hello? Oh, okay...

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, are you complete?

7 YARIANNA CÉSPEDES: Well, have a good
8 (INAUDIBLE). Yeah, have a good, uh, afternoon,
9 everyone.
10

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, thank you for your
12 testimony. This panel is excused. Next, we will call
13 on David Gordon, Leo Guttman, Nick Long, and Adam
14 Ganser.

15 We will first start with David Gordon.

16 DAVID GORDON: Hi, thank you so much for
17 allowing me to testify and for holding this hearing
18 today. I just want to testify in favor of the OneLIC
19 rezoning plan. I think that this is an incredible
20 opportunity for my neighborhood. I am a resident of
21 the Court Square area, directly adjacent to where the
22 project area would be for OneLIC.

23 I'm a renter here. I came to Long Island City
24 because it was more affordable than Manhattan while
25 also being an incredibly vibrant and exciting

1
2 community for me. But I do know that, myself, my
3 roommates, other renters in the area, without
4 additional housing being built and the ability to
5 rent and have affordable housing opportunities in
6 this area, they may be even priced out of Long Island
7 City itself.

8 I know that there have been a lot of comments
9 today about the different types of red lines and the
10 different demands that everyone has for this
11 rezoning, and all of them, I think, are great ideas.
12 But like my Court Square neighbor said previously, I
13 don't want "perfect" to be the enemy of the good
14 here. This is an incredible rezoning opportunity to
15 build lots of new housing. In fact, to be completely
16 honest, I think some of the proposed areas could go
17 even further for even more new housing.

18 I do want to quickly address that-- I know so
19 many people have brought up green space. I'm a
20 relatively new resident of the Long Island City area,
21 and as a runner, I have loved using the Gantry Plaza
22 area to go on runs since I moved here. And this
23 rezoning plan would give us the opportunity to
24 potentially connect that area all the way up to
25 Queensboro Park, and I think that that would just be

1 a great idea. And I know so many people have thrown
2 out different numbers as to what the green spaces
3 are, but I think that's one type of green space that
4 this rezoning plan already offers us, and would be an
5 incredible opportunity with it.

6 So, more green space, more new housing. This
7 is a great plan, and I really encourage Councilwoman
8 Won and the rest of the Council to approve this plan.
9 Housing delayed, is housing denied (TIMER), and we
10 need more housing here. Thank you so much.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
12 hear from Leo Guttman.

13 LEO GUTTMAN: Hello, I am Leo Guttman. I live
14 in Court Square. And I would like to thank Council
15 Member Won for leading on this. And I am here to
16 speak in favor of OneLIC.

17 The first meeting I went to for this was
18 nearly two years ago. I'm pretty excited to get it
19 over the line, and I really hope we get to a yes.
20 This will provide a lot for the neighborhood that we
21 need. Even if all it provided was the housing, I
22 think that's one of the most urgent issues facing the
23 city. It'll create a lot of new housing in all
24 different affordability level, and will allow people
25

1
2 to stay in the neighborhood for a long time—and move
3 to the neighborhood if they're not here now—or for
4 people to be able to move out of housing situations
5 that they don't like into situation they like more
6 and, you know, into nice new housing.

7 Fortunately, that's not all the plan provides.
8 Long Island City Neighborhood Plan allows us to
9 comprehensively, you know, consider all other kinds
10 of factors like open space, creating effective
11 greenways, allowing for more school seats, and
12 updating infrastructure. And I'm glad we're
13 considering all that and that, you know, I hope that
14 some of what the Council and the community board have
15 been pushing for will make it into the final plan.
16 But ultimately, I think we really need to get to a
17 yes. And I'm excited to see how the neighborhood
18 develops as we move forward, because it is great
19 today, and I think this will make it even better.
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
22 hear from Nick Leung. Sorry if I mispronounced your
23 name, Nick.
24
25

2 NICK LEUNG: Thank you. Good afternoon, I'd
3 like to thank everyone for the opportunity to testify
4 today.

5 I'm calling as a resident of Long Island City.
6 I live in Queens Plaza, which is just outside the
7 OneLIC Plan. And I strongly urge the Committee and
8 Council to vote yes on the OneLIC Plan.

9 As a resident, there are so many great parts
10 of Long Island City, and I've seen so many benefits
11 of the rezoning over the past few decades. There's
12 amazing food and a very lively art scene, and I know
13 these are things that me my roommate and I have
14 really come to enjoy.

15 But, you know, despite all the things that I
16 love about Long Island City, when I look towards the
17 next year, when my lease expires in January, you
18 know, I'm thinking there's a real possibility that,
19 you know, I won't be able to stay here due to the,
20 you know, increasing unaffordability of housing.
21 That's why I'm in strong support of the OneLIC Plan.
22 This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to provide
23 really everyone an opportunity to enjoy Long Island
24 City, and even enhance more of Long Island City. When
25 walking through here, you see that there's a lot of

1
2 water that could be transformed into a beautiful
3 waterfront. There are plenty of empty warehouses, as
4 I walk through the grocery store, so I support this
5 plan because it seems like such a great opportunity
6 to rezone Long Island City and make it even better
7 than it is now. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
9 hear from Adam Ganser.

10 ADAM GANSER: Hi, can you hear me?

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you, Adam.
12 Go ahead.

13 ADAM GANSER: Great. My name is Adam Ganser,
14 and I am the Executive Director of New Yorkers for
15 Parks. We are a fully independent, not-for-profit
16 organization that focuses our advocacy and research
17 solely on New York City's parks and open spaces.
18 Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

19 The proposed rezoning of Long Island City is
20 comprehensive and transformative. Based on our
21 research, Queens Community Board Two, in which the
22 majority of this rezoning is sited, is ranked nearly
23 last among all 59 community boards in the amount of
24 parkland available and in tree canopy.

1
2 New Yorkers deserve vibrant, accessible public
3 spaces, and broad zoning changes like the one
4 proposed offer unique, once-in-a-lifetime
5 opportunities to provide those spaces.

6 In Long Island City, from the East River to
7 Court Square, there are 8.5 acres of underutilized
8 city land underneath and around the Queensboro
9 Bridge. This land was once home to Queensbridge Baby
10 Park and a recreational area with swing slides,
11 basketball courts, sprinklers, and open space for
12 families and children.

13 We urge City, New York City Parks Department,
14 and the Department of Transportation to convert these
15 owned lots under and around the Queensboro Bridge
16 to high-quality open space for the Long Island City
17 and Queensbridge residents—to restore the full
18 Queensbridge Baby Park and the waterfront site next
19 to the Queensbridge Park for public use as it was
20 originally intended and generally to increase open
21 space in Long Island City by creating new parts,
22 playgrounds, plazas, and community spaces under the
23 Queensboro Bridge and the ramps.

2 This is a unique opportunity, and we should
3 not let these lots stay as they are. (TIMER) They
4 are critical to providing (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired. Thank
6 you.

7 ADAM GANSER: open space and connectivity from
8 the neighborhood to the waterfront. And I very much
9 applaud the Council Member for her efforts. Thank
10 you.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. The next panel
12 we are going to hear from-- this panel is excused.

13 I just want to state, for anyone wishing to
14 testify regarding this proposal remotely, if you have
15 not already done so, you must register online by
16 visiting the Council's website and
17 council.nyc.gov/landuse.

18 Okay, the next panel I am going to be calling
19 on consists of Salma Haque, Roshni Karnavat
20 (phonetic), Deborah Diggs, Maddie DeCerbo, and
21 Sabreen Rahman.

22 We are going to begin with Ms. Sabreen Rahman.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin, Sabreen.

24 SABREEN RAHMAN: Yes, okay, thank you.
25

2 I'm not very sure if the camera is on. Thank
3 you, Chair Riley and Councilwoman Won, for giving me
4 the opportunity. Are you able to hear me?

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes. You're good. Go ahead.

6 SABREEN RAHMAN: Oh, thank you so much. I am
7 Sabreen Rahman. I'm a resident of Sunnyside with
8 strong ties in Long Island City. I have family and
9 friends, and I happen to be a social work provider as
10 well, so I know the growing community in that area.

11 So Long Island City is an area where the
12 Bangladeshi Muslim community is growing very fast.
13 And this community does not have any mosques, any
14 place to pray. So we often see that people from Long
15 Island City come to the mosque in Sunnyside,
16 Woodside, or Astoria, and they're always coming to
17 this site to these areas, to this mosque. And what
18 happens is, because of all the men coming here, the
19 women hardly have any space in this mosque to go and
20 pray.

21 I would request Councilwoman Won to consider
22 planning for space for a mosque in Long Island City,
23 for the Muslim community, specifically the Muslim
24 Bangladeshi community, so that they can have a space
25

1 to go to, you know, to go for prayers, as well as to
2 meet up for cultural events.

3
4 At the same time, I would suggest, if
5 possible, at the same time, to establish the Muslim
6 Community Center by the mosque (TIMER) so that the
7 women also have a space where they can meet...

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired. Thank
9 you.

10 SABREEN RAHMAN: Okay, thank you so much for
11 allowing me to give my view. A mosque for the
12 Bangladeshi community in Long Island City, please.
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Sabreen.

15 Next, we are going to hear from Salma. Salma,
16 if you can hear me, please unmute.

17 SALMA HAQUE: If I can hear you.

18 Thank you, Council Member Riley and Council
19 Member Julie Won, for this opportunity to speak.

20 So my name is Salma Haque, and I'm here on
21 behalf of BHALO, a nonprofit organization serving
22 BIPOC individuals and families in NYC. We're here in
23 support of the OneLIC Neighborhood Plan, but with
24 conditions to ensure immigrant families are included
25 in the future.

1 So our mission is to strengthen neighborhoods
2 through advocacy, resources, and community building.
3 And Long Island City is a home to a rapidly growing
4 immigrant population, including Bangladeshi, South
5 Asian, and Muslim families. Many are long-time
6 residents, while others are new arrivals. Yet Long
7 Island City still lacks a dedicated cultural and
8 religious space that reflects and supports these
9 families, like my predecessor, Ms. Sabreen Rahman,
10 said. We respectfully request that the neighborhood
11 plan include investment (BACKGROUND NOISE) in a
12 cultural and religious space in Long Island City.
13 Such a space would provide (BACKGROUND NOISE)
14 (INAUDIBLE) for Muslim residents, serve as a
15 gathering place for cultural events and interfaith
16 dialogue, and offer programming that connects
17 seniors, youth, and new immigrants. Without this
18 commitment, the plan risks leaving behind communities
19 that are already underrepresented.

20
21 On behalf of BHALO and the families we serve,
22 I thank you for your leadership and urge you to make
23 the creation of a culture and religious base a
24 condition for building a stronger and more inclusive
25 Long Island City. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much, Salma.

3 Are you finished? All right, thank you.

4 Next, we will hear from Roshni Karnavat
5 (phonetic).

6 (NO RESPONSE)

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, I believe Roshni
8 dropped off. Okay, I believe Roshni dropped off.

9 Next, we will hear from Deborah Diggs.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

11 DEBORAH DIGGS: Yes, hi. I am Deborah Diggs. I
12 live in Queensbridge, Long Island City. I've been a
13 resident for a very long time. I raised my children
14 here. The thing is that you know they are gone. I
15 told my children a long time ago—where you live,
16 it's not where you have to be. And I told them, you
17 go to college, you live in a residence, okay, or you
18 go into the military. My children have done exactly
19 that. I have Military. I have the Armed Forces. I
20 have everything, so I am very proud of them.

21 Queensbridge has helped me a great deal, just
22 like a lot of the residents here. I heard one
23 gentleman say something about, and I will say
24 "gentlemen" say something about demolishing. Well, I
25 mean, I don't know why he felt that way, but I mean,

1
2 maybe it was something that he did or did not do, the
3 reason why he feels that way. But it's a lot of us in
4 this, in this community that feels like family. We
5 are family here. Okay? The center is family.
6 Everything around here is family. We work with each
7 other, the parks, we work with each other. I hear
8 something about the waterfront, but I have not heard
9 one thing about development, constructing development
10 the way it should be. Okay? Making sure that
11 everything works fine. I saw some of my residents
12 online saying, you know, let's make sure that the
13 center works fine. Yeah, because this is where the
14 seniors go. So, why not make sure that everything in
15 the area is proper for everyone to come to? We have
16 people who come from outside of Long Island City to
17 go into that park across the street on Vernon, the
18 Queensbury Park, the river park. They go right there,
19 they play the games, they barbecue, they do
20 everything that they want to do. So let us work
21 together. Let us make sure-- and I am 100% behind Ms.
22 Won, (TIMER) Council Member Won for what... (CROSS-
23 TALK)

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.
25

2 DEBORAH DIGGS: I heard some people say that
3 they don't even have percentages. They don't know
4 what they want to do yet. So, wait.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Ms. Diggs.

6 Next, we will hear from Maddie DeCerbo.

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

8 MADDIE DECERBO: Oh, sorry, if you can't see
9 anything, the camera's in a weird spot.

10 But hi, my name is MADDIE Decerbo, and I'm
11 testifying on behalf of the Real Estate Board of New
12 York. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in
13 support of the One LIC Neighborhood Plan.

14 REBNY strongly supports the OneLIC
15 Neighborhood rezoning, a critical step towards
16 addressing the housing crisis and spurring necessary
17 housing production. New York City's residential
18 vacancy rate is an all-time low of 1.4%, and in
19 Queens the rate is even lower at just .88%.

20 Long Island City is one of the fastest growing
21 neighborhoods, and demand for housing continues to
22 outpace supply, making plans like OneLIC urgently
23 needed to meet the current and future needs of Queens
24 residents.

1 The rezoning paves the way for up to 14,000
2 new homes, including 3,500 affordable units through
3 MIH. It incorporates new tools advanced through City
4 of Yes, such as the Active Recreation Bonus, which
5 will help facilitate housing development while
6 creating publicly accessible open spaces for
7 residents and improving upon the public realm.

8 Importantly, the plan will create a continuous
9 waterfront in Long Island City. This long overdue
10 connection will link the shoreline to Court Square,
11 enhancing neighborhood cohesion and improving
12 pedestrian access. We encourage the establishment of
13 long-term governance mechanisms to ensure that these
14 improvements become a reality.

15 Success on the housing supply front will be
16 measured by the ability to meet the projected housing
17 yield. This will require alignment between the MIH
18 requirements with the new 45-x tax incentive. It will
19 be critical to maintain the flexibility of multiple
20 MIH options so projects can remain financially
21 feasible while delivering the intended level of
22 affordability.

23 The OneLIC Plan is a thoughtful and balanced
24 proposal that addresses our city's urgent housing
25

1
2 needs while also investing in the long-term vitality
3 of a critical growth neighborhood. REBNY urges the
4 City Council to approve the OneLIC Rezoning. Thank
5 you for considering these points.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. There being no
7 questions, this panel is excused.

8 The next panel I am going to call up will
9 consist of Nellie Afshar, Charles Wang, Brian
10 Ferreira, and Michael Zoorob.

11 We will begin first with Charles Wang.

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin

13 CHARLES WANG: Thank you, Council Members. My
14 name is Charles Wang. I have lived in Long Island
15 City for over four years now and hope to stay for
16 many more. I love living here, and I'm here to
17 express strong support for OneLIC...

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Charles? Charles Wang?

19 CHARLES WANG: Hi, I think I was cut off.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, we'll start your time
21 over. You may begin. Go ahead.

22 CHARLES WANG: My name is Charles Wang. I have
23 lived in Long Island City for over four years now and
24 hope to stay for many more. I love living here, and
25 I'm here to express strong support for OneLIC. This

1
2 plan can deliver more housing, safer waterfront
3 access, better transit, stronger infrastructure, and
4 quality local jobs.

5 For decades, restrictive zoning and chronic
6 underbuilding across New York City have driven up
7 rents and forced working families, immigrants, and
8 longtime residents into overcrowding, displacement,
9 and homelessness. OneLIC's thoughtful upzoning and
10 development can help reverse that trend. It means
11 more public parks, more affordable housing, safer
12 streets, more school seats, and a stronger economy.
13 Most importantly, it means ensuring that Long Island
14 City, in particular, and New York City in general,
15 remain places where families can thrive rather than
16 face being pushed out. We also have to consider the
17 bigger picture. For 70 years, New York City's
18 population has been stuck at around 8 million. That's
19 not because we've run out of space. We can always
20 build taller, and the city itself actually owns
21 enough undeveloped land to house hundreds of
22 thousands of new New Yorkers. Instead, we've trapped
23 ourselves in restrictive zoning rules and layers of
24 red tape. While community voices must be heard and
25 are important, the current process makes it nearly

1 impossible to meet our housing needs. The upshot is
2 that New York has shut out growth and with it, shut
3 out families who want to stay here. If we don't
4 build, we risk becoming a city only accessible to the
5 wealthy. McKinsey estimates that it will need nearly
6 one million more homes by 2035 just to keep up with
7 demand. OneLIC alone can't solve this crisis, but
8 it's a critical step forward.

9
10 I urge you to let New York grow. We can choose
11 to build an abundant and equitable future where all
12 New Yorkers and people who want to become New Yorkers
13 have a place to call home. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Next, we will hear from
15 Brian Ferreira.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

17 (NO RESPONSE)

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Brian?

19 Okay, next, we will hear from Nellie Afshar.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

21 BRIAN FERREIRA: Can you hear me?

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Oh, there you go, Brian.

23 All right, after Brian, we will hear Nellie Afshar.

24 Brian, go ahead.

1
2 BRIAN FERREIRA: I am a longtime resident of
3 Queens, and I currently live in Sunnyside. I have
4 lived in Long Island City for about eight to 10 years
5 in the 2010s. And when I was there, it always struck
6 me how great a neighborhood it was with its proximity
7 to the city and amenities, but how underutilized it
8 was. So I was glad when the Court Square rezoning
9 occurred. And I'm a strong supporter of this OneLIC
10 Plan, which I think is a balanced and comprehensive
11 plan.

12 I think a perfect plan will never exist. There
13 will always be competing interests. But New York has
14 to move forward. We need more housing. It's a
15 desperate need that is crippling the city at this
16 point. And I strongly support it and urge the Council
17 Members to support it. Thank you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

19 Next, we will hear from Nellie Afshar.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

21 NELLIE AFSHAR: Thank you to the City Council,
22 Department of City Planning, and City agencies.

23 My name is Nellie Afshar, and my family and I
24 have proudly called Long Island City home for over a
25 decade. I'm not just a resident, I'm raising my

1 family here and deeply committed to the diverse
2 community that makes this corner of Queens so
3 special. I also serve as a Second Vice Chair of Queen
4 CB2, where we carefully reviewed, assessed, and
5 proudly voted in support of the OneLIC Plan with
6 conditions. These conditions were designed to ensure
7 that the growth of LIC happens with public benefit at
8 its core, and its people, not profit, are driving the
9 vision.
10

11 Today, I want to emphasize that OneLIC is not
12 just about building an infrastructure. It is about
13 people, public health, and quality of life. Every new
14 tower adds pressure to overcrowded classrooms, parks,
15 sewers, and subways. This time, we need a binding
16 infrastructure plan—schools, healthcare, parks,
17 transit, including bike lanes, delivered with
18 development, not years later.

19 Open space is a public health necessity. It
20 supports physical and mental health, builds
21 community, and ensures equity. Court Square
22 specifically, urgently needs a park, more trees for
23 shade, and a public pool to fight extreme heat and
24 flooding.
25

2 We must also ensure that the construction
3 itself does not harm public health. LIC has a legacy
4 of industrial land, and we need thorough monitoring
5 of air, water, and soil during construction.

6 In closing, this rezoning is a once-in-a-
7 generation opportunity. Growth must come with public
8 good, affordable housing, infrastructure, parks,
9 culture, jobs, and a healthy environment so that LIC
10 remains livable, equitable, and inclusive for
11 generations to come. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

13 Next, we will hear from Michael Zoorob.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

15 MICHAEL ZOOROB: Thank you. Thank you, Council
16 Members. Thank you, Council Member Won, in
17 particular, for your leadership on this process over
18 the last several years.

19 I'm a resident of Sunnyside and a member of
20 Community Board Two. Like the Board, I'm excited to
21 be here to express my support for the OneLIC Rezoning
22 Plan, and I'm speaking in my individual capacity.

23 We on Community Board Two have just done a
24 survey of community district needs as part of that
25 process. And one thing that people say again and

1 again, more than any other issue, is that the top
2 pressing issue in our district is affordable housing.
3 And that's the lens through which I see OneLIC.
4

5 I looked at how much affordable housing has
6 been built in our district since 2014. And we're not
7 a district that's slouching. We're one of the more--
8 the district's building a lot more than other places.
9 But it's only like 1,300 or so new affordable housing
10 units constructed in our district since 2014.

11 This plan would produce more than double that
12 number by itself in just one small corner of our
13 community district. And that's really exciting to me.

14 I also love the mixed-income aspect of it,
15 that these affordable units, which, if the Board
16 adopts the MIH options that the Community Board
17 recommended, would be deeply affordable, and would be
18 in buildings integrated with market-rate units. So
19 we'll have a truly mixed-income community with
20 thousands of low and moderate-income residents
21 joining our neighborhood.

22 I think that's a really exciting thing to
23 achieve for the Council, and I hope that you can get
24 to a yes that achieves that goal while also bringing
25 investments that we need in our district. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

3 Just for a reminder, if you are online, you
4 have to register in order to testify, and you can
5 register now at council.nyc.gov/landuse.

6 You must register in order to testify.

7 The next panel I will be calling up will
8 consist of David Chai, Émilie Decaudin, Mark Follo,
9 and Ciaran Gallagher.

10 The last panel I have consists of Lindsay
11 McCormack, Tyler Baldwin, and Vishnu Reddy.

12 If I did not call your name, that means you
13 did not register to testify, and you can register now
14 at council.nyc.gov/landuse.

15 We will begin with David Chai.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

17 DAVID CHAI: Hi, Council Members, can you hear
18 me?

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, go ahead.

20 DAVID CHAI: Hello, my name is David, and I am
21 a born and raised New Yorker. And I'm also a resident
22 of Long Island City, Court Square area, not a real
23 estate developer, so I've been paying market-rate
24 rent for the last three years. I am greatly envious
25 of citizens of other large-scale cities who can

1
2 afford renting. Again, emphasis on renting and not
3 buying, decent quality apartments at reasonable rates
4 like Tokyo and Seoul. And truthfully, while I hear
5 some concerns from the opposing side, I also don't
6 really know if we're talking about the same
7 neighborhood times, because the area that, you know,
8 that we're trying to preserve, somehow it's got
9 (INAUDIBLE) of the vibrancy and true urban beauty
10 that the part of Long Island City just across the
11 (INAUDIBLE) train tracks have. And whenever I walk
12 from Court Square to the waterfront, I have to cross
13 through a giant underutilized space that feels both
14 sterile and unsafe at night. And not to mention that
15 most of that space is sitting vacant. And yes, in a
16 city that had a historically low rent vacancy of 1.4%
17 back in 2023.

18 And truthfully, New York City is that one
19 place that people are going to want to move to,
20 regardless of whether we build or not. So I urge that
21 we stop using New York City exceptionalism as an
22 excuse. And I want to strong encourage the Council to
23 vote yes for OneLIC. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
25 hear from Emilia.

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

3 ÉMILIA DECAUDIN: Hi there, my name is Émilía
4 Decaudin. I'm a resident of Long Island City, and I'm
5 speaking in support of the OneLIC Plan.

6 A previous person who testified said that they
7 don't know anyone in Long Island City who supports
8 that plan, and I will happily give myself and a few
9 other friends who are on this call a shout-out,
10 because we do.

11 I'm looking through my window right now, and
12 I'm privileged to have a view of a decent portion of
13 Long Island City, and a big part of that view is the
14 (INAUDIBLE) area for the OneLIC Plan. And when I see
15 out my window, when I look in that area, there are
16 warehouses, dangerous streets with trucks, and an
17 area that is right next to the most vibrant part of
18 New York City, not Manhattan, (INAUDIBLE)
19 Queensborough Plaza, that could house thousands and
20 thousands of people who deserve homes, who deserve to
21 live in a neighborhood as exciting, as welcoming, and
22 as beautiful as ours. But it is currently, you know,
23 completely underutilized.

24 I think that we have a real opportunity to
25 build a significant amount of housing, and affordable

1 housing, open space, and infrastructure improvements
2 on this site. And I think that now is the right time
3 to do it. I'm grateful for Council Member Julie Won's
4 work in engaging the community on this plan, on
5 getting feedback, and on making demands to make sure
6 that this is the best plan we could get. And I would
7 urge the Council Member, and the Council at large, to
8 find the path to yes, and make sure that this plan
9 gets through the finish line when it's voted on later
10 this month. This is the right time to do it.

12 As another friend of mine on here said,
13 housing delayed is housing denied. There are so many
14 people who either could live in this neighborhood or
15 who otherwise will have to compete with people who
16 could live in the OneLIC Plan, because that housing
17 hasn't been built—a year away, two years late, 10
18 years late. We've had a number of previous plans for
19 the site, a lot of them were imperfect (TIMER), and I
20 think that this is a really good one, and I
21 (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time has
23 expired.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Next, we will hear from
25 Mark Follo.

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

3 MARK FOLLO: Hey everyone, thanks for the
4 chance to speak. My name is Mark Follo, I'm a
5 resident of Astoria, a proud military veteran of the
6 US Navy, and I support this plan.

7 I'm also about to be married to my fiancé,
8 who's a special education teacher at IS 10, an NYC
9 DOE middle school here in Astoria. We'd really like
10 to start a family, have kids, and move into a larger
11 space, but since there are so few housing options
12 available, we feel stuck in our one-bedroom
13 apartment. Many people directly in our friend group
14 also wanted to stay in New York, but had to leave
15 once they had kids. They moved to places like Texas,
16 North Carolina, and Florida because they couldn't
17 find a place for their family here. In fact, the NYC
18 Comptroller's Office has found that families with
19 young children are leaving New York at higher rates
20 than other residents. We don't want to have to make
21 that same choice. That's why I urge the City Council
22 to support the plan to redevelop this underutilized
23 area, and allow for even higher density where
24 appropriate.

2 The proposal is consistent with the existing
3 buildings around Queensboro Plaza and takes advantage
4 of the excellent transit accessibility in this area
5 by creating more housing in LIC. This plan will help
6 ensure that growing families like ours can stay and
7 thrive in New York. So I respectfully ask you to vote
8 in favor of this plan. Thanks.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

10 Next, we will hear from Ciaran Gallagher.

11 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

12 CIARAN GALLAGHER: Yes, I'd like to speak in
13 support of the plan. I almost missed testifying
14 today, because I was going around this neighborhood
15 in Astoria looking for an apartment with my pregnant
16 wife. We need more space. And even if you're in a
17 stabilized apartment right now or own, everyone's
18 family changes. Relatives get sick and need to be
19 moved in. Families grow. So everyone is subject to
20 the need to look for market-rate housing in this
21 neighborhood at some point in their life.

22 And so we desperately need more of that
23 because the prices are extortionate. We're unsure if
24 we're going to be able to stay. I've been a resident
25 near Long Island City for almost 10 years. I love the

1 culture and the communities here. But I may have to
2 leave. That's the reality. My wife is a Bangladeshi
3 immigrant, you know, of Muslim origin. We don't want
4 to have to move to Florida or Texas. We're scared of
5 what's happening there and the attitudes that are
6 happening better. And New York has the potential to
7 be a refuge. But we can't be a refuge if we put
8 conditions on housing here, that every other possible
9 problem and every other possible request has to be
10 solved before we can build housing. My red line is
11 more housing. It is a place to keep my family. I will
12 figure out the congestion and any other problems
13 after that. First, let's get the housing that will
14 bring the tax revenue that will allow us to solve any
15 problems we have with our services.

17 So please, as you search for a yes, make sure
18 that housing is the first priority. I know it's a
19 priority for me and my family, and I think that's
20 true of the overwhelming number of residents in Long
21 Island City and in Queens. Thank you very much.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much. There
23 being no more questions for this panel, this panel is
24 excused.

2 The last panel I have here will consist of
3 Lindsay McCormack, Tyler Baldwin, Vishnu Reddy,
4 Jasper Wu, and Salil Khanna.

5 I will say again, for anyone wishing to
6 testify regarding this proposal remotely, if you have
7 not already done so, you must register online by
8 visiting the council's website at
9 council.nyc.gov/landuse.

10 And if you would prefer to submit written
11 testimony, you can always do so by emailing it to
12 land use landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

13 We'll begin with Lindsey McCormack.

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

15 LINDSEY MCCORMACK: Hi, good afternoon. I'm
16 calling in to voice my strong support for the OneLIC
17 Plan. I live next door in Jackson Heights, and I
18 strongly believe that building more housing in Long
19 Island City and the associated amenities is really
20 going to directly and positively affect the quality
21 of life for the whole region, not just the Community
22 Board.

23 As a parent of two, I want to highlight that
24 Long Island City is a great place for kids. It can be
25 even better with more housing, more investments. The

1 park, shop, schools, and opportunity to meet kids
2 from other walks of life are just invaluable. And we
3 want to continue to make Queens, and especially LIC,
4 a great place to raise children.
5

6 I would just note in ending, that the reason
7 my partner and I have been able to raise our kids in
8 New York City is that we have a rent-stabilized
9 apartment. It was built by private developers almost
10 100 years ago. I think we want to give more people
11 the opportunity to live here. And, for that, we need
12 permanently affordable and market-rate housing. So
13 thank you so much for your time and for listening to
14 our voices.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Tyler Baldwin?

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

17 TYLER BALDWIN: Hello, I strongly support the
18 OneLIC Plan. The OneLIC Plan will really help create
19 economic development within the city, as well as
20 provide affordable housing throughout the city.

21 I live out in Astoria. Astoria is known for
22 its housing and businesses as well as restaurants and
23 other economic, you know, activities.

24 I support the OneLIC Plan because it will
25 support the economic opportunities in Astoria and

1
2 other parts of Queens as well—from people buying
3 things in Astoria and then bringing them back to LIC,
4 even through DoorDash, Uber Eats, etc.

5 The housing plan in the city-- Housing needs
6 to be built at the end of the day. The OneLIC Plan is
7 a very thoughtful plan that will increase schools,
8 infrastructure, and green space, and without this, we
9 risk not having enough schools and economic
10 opportunity, and other benefits that the OneLIC
11 proposal has. I fully support the proposal, and I
12 hope you pass it.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you so much. Next,
15 we have Vishnu Reddy.

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

17 VISHNU REDDY: I am Vishnu Reddy from
18 Sunnyside, and I strongly support OneLIC.

19 When I walk just a few blocks from Court
20 Square, I notice that the area becomes a lot less
21 inviting. It feels like there's a lot of missing
22 potential there. I'm excited for OneLIC to change
23 that so we can have more of what makes LIC great. And
24 I'm especially excited to have more neighbors of all
25 income levels, since this plan has many times more

1
2 subsidized affordable housing than we've ever seen in
3 LIC before.

4 We have a terrible housing shortage, and I
5 want us to be a part of the solution instead of the
6 problem. This process has gone on for years and has
7 thoughtfully included the public's input. And I want
8 to thank my Council Member, Julie Won, and DCP for
9 helping us get this wonderful and thoughtful plan.

10 It's time to finally get this across the
11 finish line after trying several times and failing
12 before. We cannot afford to delay any longer, and it
13 would be a damn shame if we threw away all this
14 effort and let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

15 I strongly encourage the Council to do the
16 negotiations you need to do to deliver the best plan
17 you can for the community and ultimately come to yes.

18 Thank you for your time, and please help get
19 this plan across the finish line. We desperately need
20 the housing. Thanks.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you, Vishnu.

22 Next, we have Jasper Wu.

23 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

24 JASPER WU: Good afternoon, City Council. My
25 name is Jasper Wu, and I am a six-year resident of

1 Long Island City. I am calling in to support the
2 OneLIC proposal.
3

4 In the six years that I've been living here,
5 I've seen this area experience tremendous growth.
6 Ever since I moved in, there has been an influx of a
7 variety of food, culture, and recreation that is
8 opened here, and I'm very happy to call this area
9 home.

10 I'm thrilled to support this opportunity for
11 this area to grow and develop further. I believe that
12 the proposed rezoning will bring significant economic
13 investment into the area, which will lead to a
14 further invigorated, lively, and welcoming Long
15 Island City.

16 Today, there are many blocks and areas where
17 people still do not feel comfortable pushing
18 strollers around, and the time is long overdue to
19 invest in these blocks and put them to use in
20 enriching our neighborhood. I strongly believe in the
21 future of Long Island City and see this rezoning as
22 an incredible opportunity we would be remiss to pass
23 up. Please vote yes to One Long Island City. Thank
24 you.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Thank you so much.

Next, we have Salil Khanna.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

SALIL KHANNA: Hi, I'm Salil. I am a Resident of Long Island City living in the Court Square area, and I strongly support the OneLIC Plan.

I love LIC, and I really want to see the area go further with an increase in housing, reducing rent in a city where prices are at an all-time high, one of the highest rents across all cities across America.

In addition to building more housing, I just hope to see the addition of better community infrastructure, something that I feel like LIC is lacking right now, uh, such as increased bike lanes, large numbers of shaded trees, and large park spaces.

Please vote yes on the OneLIC Plan.

COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Next, we are going to hear from the panel that has Mandana Limbert, Edith Adams, Evelyn Chango, and an identified iPhone. Please change your name and name yourself with a proper name.

We are going to start with Mandana Limbert

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

1 MANDANA LIMBERT: Hello, my name is Mandana
2 Limbert. I have lived in Court Square since 2011. I
3 am speaking on behalf of the Court Square Civic
4 Association and five other local organizations that
5 all oppose the OneLIC Plan as it currently stands. We
6 instead support modification of the current plan with
7 a focus on sustainable development, which has also
8 been outlined already by our city officials and
9 community boards, whom I'd like to thank.
10

11 Here, I'd like to focus on one particular
12 modification that is fundamental: scale. CB2 notes
13 that the plan needs to be scaled back to support a
14 more contextual and sustainable project, and that
15 would also, in fact, be aligned with the City of Yes,
16 extending development more evenly across the city.
17 CB2 has recommended lowering the base zoning heights
18 and densities to more contextual and sustainable
19 scales. As it is, the proposal has 100-story
20 buildings in R-10 and R-9 zones, and abutting
21 (INAUDIBLE) block of eight-story buildings.
22 Contextual heights along 44th Drive have also been
23 ignored, creating profound mismatches. In addition to
24 not maintaining contextual height, the DEIS itself
25 admits that the infrastructure of this neighborhood

1 cannot actually support the proposal as it stands and
2 has made no solid plans for mitigation. We believe
3 that, at a minimum, heights should be halved.

4 Remove unlimited height provisions. As it is,
5 the plan proposes buildings that are so tall they
6 would cast shadows all the way across the East River,
7 buildings that are so tall, they would cast shadows
8 all the way across the East River, never mind shadow
9 our tiny patches of green for 5-11 hours a day,
10 significantly longer than the 4-hour limit
11 established by CEQR. And without height provisions,
12 developers would have no legal requirement to ensure
13 appropriate sidewalk width or tree planting.
14 Developers not being held to such basic environmental
15 standards would worsen the heat island effects that
16 are already terrible in Long Island City.

17 In order to maintain and support livability
18 of this neighborhood, eliminate unlimited height and
19 reduce the (TIMER) base zoning heights to what the
20 neighborhood can actually support.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time has
22 expired.

23 MANDANA LIMBERT: Thank you.
24
25

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Thank you, Ms.
3 Limbert.

4 Next, we will hear from Edith Adams.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

6 EDITH ADAMS: Good afternoon, can you hear me?

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you.

8 EDITH ADAMS: Thank you for this opportunity. I
9 want to commend Julie Won for not falling victim to
10 the fluff of this plan and for challenging it. I
11 thank you very much. She has been a great
12 councilwoman in this neighborhood of Long Island
13 City.

14 I am a resident of Queensbridge, and I have
15 been here since the beginning of Gantry Park for 25
16 years. I've watched some promises being offered to
17 Queensbridge Park, such as redoing the baby park, and
18 that has never happened. And they kind of out-moved
19 us out of the zone. They rezoned us when we had
20 allocated monies for us to improve our neighborhood
21 based on our zones. And I feel as though, when they
22 start rezoning, Queensbridge gets left out.

23 Queensbridge is also an extremely highly political
24 community. Although we are of a low-income community,
25 we are very family-oriented, and we want to be taken

1 care of like the rest of the surrounding
2 neighborhood. But we always seem to catch the worst
3 end of the stick. You know, we give-- we apply our
4 votes, and plans are passed, but then we never
5 receive any rewards from it. So, I'm always skeptical
6 about having to vote for these new plans. I don't see
7 any jobs. I try to apply for Housing Connect, and
8 what is affordable? Affordable is not affordable for
9 my salary, maybe \$60,000. Affordable housing (TIMER)
10 for mixed-use income houses usually starts at...

11 (CROSS-TALK)

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time has
13 expired.

14 EDITH ADAMS: A \$100,000. That's not my salary.
15 And that's not the salary of...

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

17 EDITH ADAMS: Queensbridge. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

19 Next, we have Evelyn Chango.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

21 EVELYN CHANGO: Hello everyone, my name is
22 Evelyn Chango from Community Board Two, and I'm here
23 to speak in support of the OneLIC Plan, while also
24

25

1 raising the urgent need for the inclusion and
2 recognition of Blissville.
3

4 The OneLIC Plan represents a tremendous
5 opportunity to create a more equitable, vibrant, and
6 sustainable Long Island City, and I support its
7 goals. But I must stress that the future must include
8 Blissville. Blissville, though it's small, is a vital
9 part of Long Island City, and its neighborhood is
10 rich with history, hard-working families, and
11 residents who have long lived in the shadows of heavy
12 industrial use, environmental burdens, and limited
13 city investment. It is also home to multiple
14 shelters, which means Blissful shoulders a
15 disproportionate share of responsibility for
16 vulnerable populations without receiving the
17 proportional support.

18 OneLIC is about building one community, and
19 leaving Blissville at the margins undermines the
20 promise of this plan. The residents of Blissville
21 deserve cleaner air, safer streets, greener
22 infrastructure, and a fair share of investments in
23 parks, schools, and health services. They deserve the
24 same opportunities for affordable housing and
25 economic growth that the rest of Long Island City

1
2 will benefit from under this rezoning. Thank you for
3 your time.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

5 Next, we will hear from Emily Smith.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

7 EMILY SMITH: Hi.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Hi.

9 EMILY SMITH: Thank you for allowing me to
10 speak. I signed up super last-minute. I just got out
11 of work. I didn't think I was going to make it to
12 this hearing today. So this is very off the cuff.
13 I'll send an email with more organized thoughts.

14 My name's Emily. I'm a New York City resident,
15 and like about half of renters in New York City, I'm
16 a market-rate renter, and I am rent-burdened. I spend
17 well over a third of my income on rent. And so it's
18 really important to me to advocate for more housing.
19 I'm excited about the new homes that this proposal
20 could bring. I'm speaking in support of the OneLIC
21 Plan today.

22 I honestly think it could be more ambitious,
23 given that this is a once-in-a-generation opportunity
24 to ensure that we have enough housing in the area for
25 generations to come. And we need housing of all

1 kinds. I understand a lot of the concerns that were
2 raised today about other community benefits, but
3 income-restricted housing, of course, but. Market-
4 rate housing itself is a community benefit. We're in
5 a five-alarm fire emergency affordability crisis. And
6 I really want a future where landlords have to
7 compete for tenants, rather than the other way
8 around.

9
10 So I urge you to make housing your red line;
11 get to a yes, and support this plan. Housing delayed,
12 is housing denied. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

14 Next, we are going "iPhone".

15 (LAUGHTER)

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: iPhone, you may begin, if
18 you can hear me, please unmute or press *6.

19 ERNIE BROOK: Okay, I can hear you.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER WON: Ernie!

21 ERNIE BROOKS: This is Ernie Brooks. I think
22 I'm familiar to you, having testified many times
23 against this plan. I'm on my phone as opposed to the
24 computer that I signed up with, so I guess that's why
25 my name's not there.

1
2 Anyway, my name is Ernie Brooks. I've lived on
3 the corner of 44th Drive and Vernon Boulevard since
4 1977. I am strongly opposed to the rezoning of this
5 neighborhood as it is currently proposed. I
6 appreciate that Julie, my City Council person, has
7 indicated positive changes that she will require to
8 gain her vote. While extremely important, if met,
9 they still won't cover all my concerns.

10 Our country has seen a massive shift in wealth
11 from the less affluent to the rich over the past
12 crisis-ridden decades of this century. A disaster
13 that has intensified beyond imagining in the past
14 year, as a corrupt real estate tycoon has taken on an
15 unprecedented level of control over the reins of
16 power in this country.

17 Unfortunately, I believe that the rezoning as
18 presently proposed will mostly exacerbate these
19 trends, the trends of a large upward transfer of
20 prosperity. Rising rents in massive luxury towers
21 will continue to push out those who have lived and
22 worked here for years, as well as creating a
23 riverfront that is not more but less resilient in the
24 face of the climate changes that are already upon us.

1 I am a member of the Long Island City Long
2 Coalition, which has drawn up the community-based
3 Hunters Point North Vision Plan for resiliency that
4 contains a blueprint for a more equitable, resilient,
5 and ultimately saner and less ambitious development
6 of our East River waterfront. This plan resulted from
7 years of work by longtime members, longtime
8 residents, working with experts at Nautilus
9 International to find out what our neighborhood could
10 be if allowed to evolve in a way (TIMER) that
11 respects the (INAUDIBLE)... (CROSS-TALK)

12
13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time has
14 expired.

15 ERNIE BROOKS: equity and environmental
16 concerns. So, anyway, I say, vote against this bill,
17 unless changes sought by the two community boards and
18 our City Councilperson are not met. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Ernest.

20 The last person we have is Corinne Haynes.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

22 CORINNE HAYNES: (NO RESPONSE)

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Miss Haynes?

24 CORINNE HAYNES: (NO RESPONSE)

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead, Miss Haynes. We can hear you, Ms. Haynes. Go ahead.

CORINNE HAYNES: Oh, hi, good evening. How are you?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: We're all right.

CORINNE HAYNES: My name is Corinne Haynes, and I'm the President of Queensbridge Houses Resident Association, the largest housing development in North America. I was born and raised here.

The previous rezonings in Long Island City have mostly benefited wealthy developers, and the improvements in Long Island City have always missed Queensbridge. Just as our demand for our existing services has increased over the years, we now need to change it.

With the OneLIC Plan, the City has the opportunity to invest in Queensbridge. Every day, I get calls from residents about plumbing issues, water that leaks from above that destroys the bathrooms and the kitchen. Today, as I speak, there is a water shutdown affecting four buildings on Queensbridge South, due to a shut-off valve being improperly repaired. We also, on the north side, have another, maybe three to five, they haven't finished assessing

1 yet, how many buildings are affected. No water right
2 now as we speak.
3

4 Public housing residents deserve better in
5 Queensbridge. They are living with chipping paint,
6 mold, water damage, flooded apartments, you name it.
7 The plumbing infrastructure has not been changed
8 since 1930. And in Queensbridge, it needs to be
9 updated. We need millions of dollars of City
10 investment for NYCHA to replace plumbing in
11 Queensbridge.

12 In addition to that, we have a new residents'
13 association office that needs to be renovated to
14 house job training, a recording studio, and a kitchen
15 to help young adults in life skills programs.

16 Queensbridge also has about 150 vacant
17 apartments that are completely rundown and need to be
18 renovated, and this will increase the affordability
19 for housing and improve the quality of life of the
20 residents of Queensbridge.

21 I fully support the restoration of the
22 Queensbridge Baby Park, which I grew up with as a
23 park, so we can get it back to that, and increase our
24 open space—maybe have a dog park and other things
25

2 that will improve the quality of life of the
3 residents in Queensbridge.

4 So I do urge the City Council to approve the
5 One Long Island City Plan.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Ms. Haynes.

7 CORINNE HAYNES: Only if it includes capital
8 investments from the City for Queensbridge Houses.
9 Thank you for your time.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

11 All right, if there are any members of the
12 public who wish to testify regarding this rezoning
13 proposal remotely, please press the raise hand button
14 now. We will stand at ease for 30 seconds.

15 (PAUSE)

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, seeing no one-- there
17 being no members of the public who wish to testify on
18 Preconsidered LU 373 through 378 relating to the Long
19 Island City Neighborhood Plan, the public hearing is
20 now closed and the items are laid over.

21 That concludes today's hearing. I would like
22 to thank Committee Counsel, all those who testified,
23 Sergeant at Arms, the Land Use Team, and Council
24 Member Won for staying for the entire hearing and
25 hearing her community.

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This hearing is closed. Thank you. [GAVEL]
(APPLAUSE)

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 no interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date September 19, 2025