

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 1

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND
FRANCHISES

----- X

April 29, 2025
Start: 10:22 a.m.
Recess: 1:57 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

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

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

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

2

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

James Howard

Jeff Blau

Andrew Rosen

Elise Wagner

Patrick Blanchfield

Jordan Wright

Ambur Nicosia

Paul Devlin

Susan Marshall

Sally Greenspan

Keith Forest

Joseph Rocco

Cobi Levy

Winston Majette

Andrew Rosese

Joe Restuccia

Jeff Gardner

Pamela Wolff

Aletta Lafarge

Kevin Jones

Frank Clarke

Jacob Dickson

Dale Burnett

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

3

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

- Robert Hammen
- Cynthia Stark
- Catherine Laferty
- Michael Walsh
- Cindy Ruby Estrada
- Wright Harvey
- Matthew Riker
- Brian Chen
- Sharon Brown
- Irati Castell
- Andrea Adelman
- Luana Green
- Pat McCane
- Shakar Crawford
- Chandra Singh
- Ahbat Depas
- Inahee Selden
- Alan Van Capelle
- Hiba Sigar
- Vivek Singh
- Ash Wolston
- Tasha Miller
- Michael Vestoreli

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

4

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

Lawrence Lipman

Patricia Sharkey

Reverend Noel Vanek

Cathy Rugros

Richard Graziano

Kareem Holmes

Amor Ahmed

Wasim Ahmed

Karen Flaherty

Layla Law Gisiko

Tappy Hightower

Ietty Adelona

Kenin Porter

Aletta Laferg

Carmen Mattis

Ana Aust

Joe Keen Alenal

Bridgett Gramling

Tru Sims

John Collins

Tom Morris

Maria Ortiz

David Slos

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

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

5

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

- Lydia Andre
- Chante Bunch
- Denise Lugo
- Veronica Thaxton
- Leslie Sloan
- Reverend Dr. Johnny Green
- Elizabeth Velez
- Renee Keet
- Rodney Harrison
- Ford Adams
- James Duckett
- Kevin Carmichael
- William Fraser
- Schamane O'Connell
- Julie Haterer
- Christopher Leon Johnson

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: This is a microphone check on
3 the Committee on Zoning and Franchises recorded by
4 James Moreno on April 29, 2025 in the Chambers.

5 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning and welcome to
6 today's New York City Council hearing for the
7 Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchise. Please silence
8 all cell phone and electronic devices and do not
9 approach the dais. If you wish to submit testimony,
10 you may do it via email to testimony@council.nyc.gov.
11 Once again, do not approach the dais unless you are
12 testifying. Thank you. Chair, we are ready to
13 begin.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [GAVEL]. Good morning
15 everyone and welcome to a meeting on the Subcommittee
16 on Zoning and Franchises. I am Council Member Kevin
17 Riley, Chair of this Subcommittee. This morning, I
18 am joined remotely by Council Member Hanks and in
19 chambers by Council Member Schulman, Salaam, Carr,
20 Abreu, Nurse and Bottcher.

21 We are holding today's two hearings but first we
22 will vote on a Proposal known as 2510 Coney Island
23 Avenue Rezoning in Council Member Vernikov's
24 District.

2 We will then hold a hearing regarding the
3 Proposal known as Grace Houses in Council Member
4 Nurse's District followed by a second hearing
5 regarding the Proposal known as Western Railyards
6 Modification and Mapping Action in Council Member
7 Bottcher's District.

8 Starting with the vote on the Proposal known as
9 2510 Coney Island Avenue Rezoning and consists of
10 LU's 267 and 268. This is the proposed residential
11 mixed use development in Sheepshead Brooklyn. The
12 development as modified by Applicant will have
13 approximately 27 apartments, of which approximately
14 nine are projected to be affordable. The proposal
15 consists of two actions. The first is a proposed
16 zoning map amendment to change an R4 residential
17 district and a C8-1 commercial district to an R7 D
18 residential district with a C2-4 commercial overlay.

19 The second action is a zoning text amendment to
20 map a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing area. We are
21 recommending to modify the proposed zoning districts
22 for the rezoning area to the R6B and R6D districts
23 with a C2-4 commercial overlay, which are more
24 consistent with the height and built character of
25 buildings along the section of Coney Island Avenue.

2 The entire proposal rezoning area will remain an MIH
3 designated area.

4 In addition, we are recommending to remove MIH
5 Option 1 so that the 30 percent of the apartments
6 will have to be affordable to families with a
7 household income of 80 percent AMI. Making them
8 accessible to both low and middle income families.

9 Counsel, are there any Council Members with
10 questions or remarks at this time?

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. I will now call for a
13 vote to approve of modification LU's 267 and 268
14 relating to the 2510 Coney Island Avenue Rezoning
15 Proposal. Counsel, please call the roll.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Riley?

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Aye.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Abreu?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ABREU: Aye.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Hanks?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: I vote aye.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Schulman?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Aye.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Salaam?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: I vote aye.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council Member Carr?

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Aye.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: By a vote of six in the
5 affirmative, zero opposing, zero abstentions, LU's
6 267 and 268 are approved with modifications. These
7 items are now referred to full Land Use Committee.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I will now open the public
9 hearing on Preconsiders LU's relating to the Grace
10 Housing Rezoning Proposal in Council Member Nurse
11 District. This is a proposal to develop a new
12 building with approximately 153 apartments in East
13 New York Brooklyn. The proposal consists of two
14 actions. The first, a rezoning action to rezone the
15 project area from R5B to an R6A rezoning district and
16 second, a zoning text amendment to map a Mandatory
17 Inclusionary Housing area.

18 The applicant intends to develop the building
19 under HPD's extremely low and low income
20 affordability program, also known as Ella with 100
21 percent affordability but at minimum, the MIH
22 requirements would mandate at least 38 to 54 units to
23 be permanently affordable.

24 For anyone wishing to testify regarding this
25 proposal remotely, if you have not already done so,

1 you must register online by visiting the Council's
2 website at council.nyc.gov/landuse.

3
4 For anyone with us in person, please see one of
5 the Sergeants to submit a speakers card. If you
6 prefer to submit written testimony, you can always do
7 so by emailing it to
8 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

9 I will now call the applicant panel for this
10 proposal which consists of James Howard. Counsel,
11 can you please administer the affirmation?

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Can you please turn on your
13 microphone? Thank you, could you please also raise
14 your right hand and state your name for the record?

15 JAMES HOWARD: Sure, James Howard.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you swear to tell the
17 truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony
18 today in your response to Council Member questions?

19 JAMES HOWARD: Yes I do.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

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

25 applicant team may begin. I just ask that you please

1
2 reinstate your name and organization for the record.
3 You may begin.

4 JAMES HOWARD: Thank you very much. My name is
5 James Howard with JT Realty Advisors. I'm here on
6 behalf of Grace Housing Development Fund Corporation
7 and Grace Baptist Church. They are the Co-owners of
8 the sites in question that we would like to have
9 rezoned. Next slide please.

10 So, as previously stated by the Committee Chair,
11 we're here for two purposes. One is for a Zoning Map
12 Amendment and one is for a Zoning Text Amendment.
13 The Zoning Map, we want to change from an R5B within
14 1.35 FAR to a R6A with a 3.6 FAR. That will result
15 in our ability to increase the square footage on the
16 respective sites. There are 13 sites currently owned
17 by the Grace Church and HDFC.

18 With those changes, we are looking to build two
19 buildings. One is a seven story building with 114
20 units on Vermont Street and one is a five story
21 building with 39 units on New Jersey Avenue above a
22 brand new church for Grace Baptist Church, along with
23 some community facility. There will also be
24 underground parking. 54 spaces on Vermont Street and
25 24 or so spaces give or take on New Jersey Avenue.

1 The spaces will be available to the tenants in
2 the building free of charge. There will be no
3 parking fees or costs for the parking spaces. The
4 affordability, we're projecting 153 affordable units.
5 Of those units, 30 percent will be at - I'm sorry, 15
6 percent will be at or below 30 percent of AMI, 15
7 percent at or below 40 percent of AMI, 10 percent at
8 or below 50 percent of AMI, 40 percent at or below 60
9 percent of AMI and finally 20 percent at or below 90
10 percent of AMI.
11

12 It's expected that this will be financed through
13 HPD's Ella Program with tax credits and tax exempt
14 bonds to make the project affordable to all. That's
15 essentially the presentation. We want to focus on
16 the affordability, the parking, uhm and going
17 forward, as a result of the various discussions that
18 we've had starting with our Council Member Nurse, the
19 Community Board, the president, Borough Presidents
20 Office, we've taken into consideration some of the
21 concerns about A, the unit sizes and B, the lack of
22 three bedroom units. So, if we could go to slide 14
23 please? Keep going please. Go back please, go back,
24 back, back. There is a - I don't see it there but
25 so, what we've done was we've reconfigured the

1 project. We haven't redesigned it yet but we've
2 reconfigured it to address some of the concerns
3 presented by the Council Members office, the
4 Community Board and the Borough Presidents Office and
5 that would result in an addition of nine three
6 bedroom apartments. The two bedroom units would go
7 down to 57 two bedroom units, 32 one bedrooms, and 37
8 studios for a total of 135 units.
9

10 The reason that the unit count would change is
11 because we've also decided that we could increase the
12 unit sizes. Originally the studios were averaging
13 between 300 and 350 square feet. One bedrooms were
14 roughly 500 to 550 square feet and the two bedrooms
15 were under 600 square feet. So, we have proposed to
16 change those to make the studios between 400 and 500
17 square feet. The one bedrooms between 650 and 750
18 square feet. The two bedrooms between 750, 800
19 square feet and the three bedrooms would be between
20 800 and 900 square feet.

21 As a result of those changes, increasing the unit
22 square footages and adding three bedroom units, it
23 obviously would result in a decrease in the number of
24 units that we could provide. The final numbers would
25 be determined after the architects redesign project.

1 With that, I will pause for questions.

2
3 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much. Just a
4 few questions before I toss it to Council Member
5 Nurse. Can you give me a breakdown on the units one
6 more time please?

7 JAMES HOWARD: Sure. As far as the unit
8 distribution or affordability?

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Unit distribution.

10 JAMES HOWARD: Absolutely. So, the current
11 proposal includes 29 studios, 53 one bedrooms, 71 two
12 bedrooms, and no three bedroom apartments.

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: How much three?

14 JAMES HOWARD: No, zero three bedrooms for a
15 total of 153 units.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Is there a reason why there's
17 no three bedroom apartments?

18 JAMES HOWARD: Uhm, we were trying to maximize
19 the number of affordable units so that's why the
20 original proposal did not have any three bedrooms.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: If you minimize the studios,
22 would you be able to produce any three bedrooms?

23 JAMES HOWARD: Yes, so what we've looked at now -

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Affordable three bedrooms.

1 JAMES HOWARD: Yes, absolutely. 100 percent
2 affordable under both scenarios. The original with
3 153 units and the proposed, which would total 135
4 units. We would have 37 studios, 32 one bedrooms, 57
5 two bedrooms, and 9 three bedrooms.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. I just want to
8 continue being consistent. I'm not a fan of studio
9 apartments. I believe that they're not conducive to
10 communities who are trying to grow families or even
11 have you know shared spaces where they can invite
12 loved ones over. So, I just want to put that on the
13 record as consistent as I've been.

14 The other two questions I have are, when did the
15 church acquire the residential properties on the
16 block?

17 JAMES HOWARD: I'd say over the last 20 years or
18 so.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: 20 years okay.

20 JAMES HOWARD: Yeah, so Grace Baptist Church had
21 developed Grace Houses down the street some time ago,
22 as a HUD project. They sold it and as part of the
23 sale, they had to use the proceeds to further
24 affordable housing development. So, they used those
25 proceeds to acquire the vacant lots along Vermont

1 Street, as well as New Jersey Avenue for future
2 development. So, it had always been contemplated
3 that the church would develop those sites. Given the
4 poor condition of the existing church, the church had
5 a need to redevelop their church as well and in an
6 effort to do that, we looked at kind of cross
7 subsidizing that by also building affordable housing
8 and creating a new church at the base of the New
9 Jersey Avenue residential building.
10

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Is the church going to be the
12 same square foot as the original church or are they
13 losing spaces?

14 JAMES HOWARD: For the most part yes, yes,
15 absolutely.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. I'm sorry I said two
17 questions. I have one more.

18 JAMES HOWARD: No, no, no.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Uhm, can you just educate the
20 Committee on why the church selected an R6A district
21 for this project?

22 JAMES HOWARD: Sure, absolutely. The R6A was
23 done to be consistent with the adjacent East New York
24 Rezoning that took place several years ago. In fact,
25 one of the sites that the church owns was in fact

1 included right off of Liberty Avenue but
2 unfortunately it did not extend down towards you know
3 the other end of the block, so -

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: So, just is to continue the
5 same makeup of the community?
6

7 JAMES HOWARD: Absolutely. Yes, absolutely.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Alright, okay thank you.

9 JAMES HOWARD: I have no more questions. Council
10 Member Nurse.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you Chair. Good
12 morning.

13 JAMES HOWARD: Good morning.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: I just want to thank you
15 for accommodating the need for larger family units.
16 I'd love to see the final breakdown that you've said
17 out loud to us today in written form.

18 JAMES HOWARD: Sure.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: And with the breakdown of
20 the affordability rent, just so we can have it on the
21 record.

22 JAMES HOWARD: Okay.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: But I appreciate that you
24 came today with an update. I agree with the Chair
25 that studios really aren't a solution for our housing

1 crisis and three bedrooms is a hill for me to die on,
2 so thank you. And also for making the unit sizes
3 bigger so if you could also provide in written format
4 the size of the studios, one bedrooms, two bedrooms,
5 and three bedrooms as you articulated here today.

6 We've had a couple conversations back and forth
7 and I just want to get on the record, where are we in
8 terms of coming up with a plan, a transition plan and
9 an eventual permanent housing plan for the people who
10 already live on that block?
11

12 JAMES HOWARD: Good question. So, as we have
13 recently seen, there are roughly three tenants
14 currently residing on the block within the properties
15 owned by the church. And we've committed to
16 providing them with affordable long term housing.
17 Initially obviously as those sites are demolished, to
18 develop the two new buildings, we would develop it in
19 phases. So, if these tenants reside in Vermont
20 Street. If we did the New Jersey Avenue site first,
21 then we could continually move them into the new
22 apartments on New Jersey Avenue and then you know
23 redevelop the Vermont Street site.

24 If that's not an option, we would find temporary
25 alternative housing until both sites are redeveloped

1 and then provide them with an opportunity to move
2 into the new buildings.

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Okay and covering the
5 moving cost that was made.

6 JAMES HOWARD: Yeah, I'm sorry. Yeah, so any
7 moving costs, short term rental costs would be
8 covered by the development team, yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Okay great. I would love
10 to see that in the final package.

11 JAMES HOWARD: Sure.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: I think those are my main
13 questions. I see that you've accommodated the larger
14 unit sizes as requested by the Community Board and
15 you've accommodated kind of like a wider range of AMI
16 to somewhat account for mixed income. So, I
17 appreciate that as well and I really don't have any
18 other questions given that you've come here with
19 those updates but I can follow up with you offline.

20 JAMES HOWARD: Sure, thank you very much.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER NURSE: Thank you Chair.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Council Member
23 Nurse. Are there any other Council Member questions
24 for this panel? There being no questions for this
25 panel, this panel is excused. Thank you for

1
2 testifying today. Counsel, are there any members of
3 the public who wish to testify on this project?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: There is no one online but
5 if you signed up in person, could you please see one
6 of the Sergeant at Arms?

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: This is regarding the LU's
8 relating to the Grace Housing Rezoning Proposal. If
9 you are in here in person and you signed up to
10 testify, can you please come up to the podium?

11 Okay, there being no members of the public who
12 wish to testify on Preconsidered LU's relating to the
13 Grace Housing Rezoning Proposal, the public hearing
14 is now closed and the items are laid over.

15 Okay, I will now open the public hearing on LU's
16 283, 284, 285, and 286 related to the Western Rail
17 Yard Modification Proposal in Council Member
18 Bottcher's District. This proposal consists of two
19 alternative scenarios. To develop the western
20 portion of the MTA Rail Yard located between 11th
21 Avenue and the West Side Highway and West 30th and
22 West 33rd Street, which is known as the Western Rail
23 Yard.

24 In 2005, the city established a special Hudson
25 Yard district and rezoned the eastern portion of the

1
2 railyards between 10th Avenue and 11th Avenue and West
3 30th and West 33rd Streets, known as Eastern Rail
4 Yard.

5 In 2009, the city rezoned the Western Rail Yard,
6 an objective was to create a mixed use residential
7 area with open spaces that had less density than the
8 eastern portion. The Eastern Rail Yard was developed
9 with a seven million square foot mixed use
10 development with four towers that were completed in
11 2019. Despite the 2009 rezoning of the Western Rail
12 Yard, this site has not been developed to date. The
13 applicant is now proposing an updated development
14 proposal for the Western Rail Yard under two
15 scenarios.

16 The first scenario involves building a casino
17 along with commercial and residential buildings. The
18 second scenario is to develop a mix of commercial and
19 residential buildings and would not include a casino.
20 The proposal involves four land use actions. The
21 Western Rail Yard is located in the special Hudson
22 Yard District. The special district specifies where
23 building can be built above the rail yards and
24 specific design features. The applicant is seeking a
25 special permit to modify these regulations to pursue

1 their updated development scenarios. The second
2 action is a zoning text amendment to broaden the
3 scope of the special permit to achieve the design
4 changes needed to pursue the proposed development
5 scenarios.

6
7 The third action is to amend the city's map to
8 change the elevation of West 33rd Street, which
9 borders the site to the north. The fourth action is
10 to amend the restrictive declaration associated with
11 this site and that governs the design and operation
12 of the required publicly accessible open space on the
13 sites.

14 Before we discuss this proposal further, I will
15 repeat what I said when we heard a proposal earlier
16 this year to develop a casino in Willets Point
17 Queens. Neither the actions we heard about Willets
18 Point nor the actions that we will hear about today
19 will authorize a casino.

20 In 2002, the state decided to issue up to three
21 gaming facility license in the downstate area, which
22 includes the city, and the state, is leading the
23 process to decide which proposals are awarded a
24 license. This state led process consists of three
25 steps that will begin this summer. The first step

1 consists of a review by a community advisory
2 committee, also known as the CAC, followed by the
3 review of the Gaming Facility Location Board, and a
4 final decision will be issued by the State Gaming
5 Commission. A decision by the state is expected by
6 the end of this year. The proposal before us today
7 concerns the design of the proposed buildings, public
8 open space and street configurations under two
9 different scenarios. One with a casino and one
10 without a casino. Under either scenario, it is
11 important for the public to understand that the
12 actions that will be discussed today will not
13 authorize the applicant to actually build a casino.
14 Whether the applicant can build a casino will be
15 decided by the state later this year. I hope this is
16 clear to everyone here today or listening online.

18 For anyone wishing to testify remotely, you must
19 register online by visiting the Council's website at
20 council.nyc.gov/landuse. For anyone with us in
21 person, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms to
22 submit a speakers card. If you prefer to submit
23 written testimony, you can always do so by emailing
24 it to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. And I will
25

1
2 now like to give the floor to Council Member Bottcher
3 for his opening remarks.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Good morning everyone.
5 Thank you so much Chair Riley. I also want to thank
6 Housing Committee Chair Pierina Sanchez who agreed to
7 swap hearing rooms with us today. They had us over
8 at 250 Broadway and that would have been tight, so
9 happy that we're able to be here today to accommodate
10 everybody.

11 Thank you to everyone for joining us for today's
12 hearing on the future of the Western Railyards. This
13 is not just another land use application. This is a
14 decision about one of the most valuable parcels of
15 land in New York City and therefore one of the most
16 valuable in the world. The choices that we make here
17 will help shape our neighborhoods, our city, and the
18 lives of New Yorkers for the next 100 years and
19 beyond.

20 Because of that, the stakes could not be higher.
21 Our responsibility is clear to ensure that this
22 extraordinary public asset is maximized for the
23 public good. Not for short term profits but lasting
24 public benefit.

1 This is not a decision we take lightly. Today,
2 under Chair Riley's leadership, we will conduct a
3 fair, thorough and robust hearing. We'll hear from
4 the applicant, from stakeholders and most importantly
5 the public. The people who will live with the
6 consequences of what gets built here. The applicant
7 has argued that the 2009 rezoning for this site, a
8 plan shaped by years of hard work and negotiation has
9 not stood the test of time and that the financing
10 assumptions made back then did not materialize as
11 expected and don't pencil out today.
12

13 We'll be exploring that aspect closely today.
14 We'll be asking, is the current zoning truly
15 unworkable? And if changes are to be made, are the
16 proposed alternatives financially sound, realistic
17 and truly in the long term interests of New Yorkers?
18 The fact that the applicants proposal involves
19 securing a casino license, a license that is by no
20 means guaranteed, makes these questions even more
21 urgent.

22 In a city as diverse and as passionate as ours,
23 you'll never achieve full unanimity but for a project
24 of this magnitude, there must be credible,
25 substantial buy in from the community that will live

1 with its impacts. And at the end of the day, this is
2 about making the most of an irreplaceable opportunity
3 to build the housing we need, the open spaces we
4 deserve and the resilient, equitable city we aspire
5 to leave for future generations. New Yorkers are
6 proprietary about our city, like this is our city and
7 that's true but in another sense, we are just
8 stewards of this great city. We are here for a
9 relatively short amount of time and it's our job to
10 care for our city, to cherish it, to pay it forward
11 and to leave behind a city that is even more
12 wonderful, fairer and more lasting than what we
13 inherited. Something that will stand the test of
14 time. Thank you again to everyone who is here today
15 to share you perspective. Your voices matter. Your
16 voices will be heard. Let's get started.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Council Member
19 Bottcher.

20 APPLAUSE

21 Oh, [GAVEL] Thank you, thank you. I love the
22 community that came into but we don't usually make
23 noise in here. If you like what's being heard, you
24 say this. If you don't like what's being heard, you
25

1 say this. Alright, let's try this right now okay. I
2 like it. I don't like it. Alright, we're there.

3 I will now call the applicant panel for this
4 proposal which consists of Jeff Blau, Andy Rosen,
5 Elise Wagner and Patrick Blanchfield.

6 Counsel, can you please administer the
7 affirmation.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Could you please make sure
9 your mics are turned on and raise your right hand and
10 state your name for the record?
11

12 ELISE WAGNER: Elise Wagner.

13 JEFF BLAU: Jeff Blau.

14 ANDREW ROSEN: Andrew Rosen.

15 PATRICK BLANCHFIELD: Patrick Blanchfield.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you swear to tell the
17 truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony
18 today and in response to Council Member questions?

19 PANEL: Yes.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you everyone. For the
22 viewing public, if you need an accessible version of
23 this presentation, please send an email request to
24 landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. And now the
25 applicant team may begin. I just ask that you please

1 reinststate your name and organization for the record.
2
3 You may begin.

4 JEFF BLAU: Thank you Mr. Chairman. I'm Jeff
5 Blau. I'm the CEO of Related Companies. Council
6 Members, Chairman, thank you very much for your time
7 and thoughtful review of our ULURP application for
8 the Western Railyard modifications and we appreciate
9 the opportunity to speak here today. I am Jeff Blau,
10 I am the CEO representing the applicant team. Slide.

11 To start, I want to turn your attention to the
12 photo on this screen. This is the project site
13 between 11th and 12th Avenues from 30th to 33rd
14 Streets, which has been a railyard in this
15 configuration since the 1980's. There have been
16 various proposals over the years to develop the site,
17 including a stadium for the 2012 Olympics. With the
18 operating train yard below, it is a challenging site
19 to build on logistically, but also a rare opportunity
20 with three contiguous blocks in Manhattan. Next
21 slide please.

22 Our proposal is to transform that empty railyard
23 into a vibrant connected part of the community with a
24 1,500 room convention hotel, wind resort as well as
25 5.6 acres of public open space and now up to 4,000

1 new housing units, a public school and a series of
2 other amenities. In the process, we will create over
3 30,000 union construction jobs and thousands of
4 permanent careers and deliver on all of the community
5 benefits agreed to in 2009. Meeting or exceeding
6 prior commitments to open space, affordable housing,
7 community spaces and a location for a public school.
8 Next slide.

10 Just to spend a minute on why we are here. I
11 want to highlight some of the changes since we first
12 acquired the rights to develop this site over 15
13 years ago. A platform over the rail tracks is
14 required in order to build on this site and the cost
15 of that infrastructure has basically doubled to over
16 \$2 billion. In addition, when this project was first
17 conceived, the intent was for luxury condominiums to
18 pay a large chunk of the infrastructure costs. Now,
19 the cost to build a condo building on this site is
20 higher than the value of the units in the market.
21 Meaning, nothing can be built without a change in
22 strategy.

23 For evidence of that, you can look at sale prices
24 for the condos we built across the street at Hudson
25 Yards, which are lower than it would cost with labor

1 and materials to build a new building on this site.
2 Just to reiterate, without a change here, this site
3 will remain an undeveloped railyard. Next slide
4 please.

5
6 While the gaming application is subject to a
7 separate process, this application paves the way for
8 that opportunity by adjusting the configuration of
9 the buildings. Importantly though, there is an
10 alternative scenario in the plans, which addresses
11 the site planning for the north side of the site in
12 the event a gaming license is not granted for this
13 site.

14 After a productive dialogue, the City Planning
15 Commission agreed it was reasonable to revisit this
16 plan after 16 years and approved the configuration
17 shown here, which keeps the total same density for
18 the site but reconfigures the site plan from six
19 building sites to three and expands the open space to
20 a cohesive connected space linking the existing
21 Hudson Yard out to the highline and Hudson River
22 Park. Next slide please.

23 Here is a view of what the railyard can become.
24 A beautiful new open space the size of Bryant Park
25 with lush landscaping and a clear connection between

1 the existing portion of Hudson Yards, Bella Abzug
2 Park, the Highline and Hudson River Park. One key
3 factor making this all possible is the change to the
4 elevation of 33rd Street. Its transformation into a
5 pedestrian friendly street activates the site
6 frontage, connects to the highline and allows for the
7 elimination of streets that previously were required
8 in the middle of the park. City Planning affirmed
9 that removing the interior streets would be an
10 improvement and create a green space that would be an
11 invaluable amenity for the neighborhood with seamless
12 connection points to the highline. Next slide
13 please.

14
15 Here is an image of the park with the highline in
16 the foreground. Next slide please. We have been
17 through a lengthy public review process to get here
18 today with hundreds of meetings with community
19 stakeholders, both before and during the formal ULURP
20 process and we've heard some pretty consistent
21 feedback. The community and the city want and need
22 more housing. We heard it from Community Board 4,
23 from the Borough President, from the City Planning
24 Commission, and from elected officials across the
25 city and state. Next slide please.

1 With that feedback in mind, we have been looking
2 for ways to significantly add to the housing in this
3 project, while acknowledging and addressing the
4 immense cost of that platform infrastructure over the
5 railyards.
6

7 We identified a path to create up to 4,000
8 apartments onsite, replacing the office building that
9 we were planning for 30th Street and 11th Avenue with
10 two additional residential towers. To make up for
11 the funding that the office building was contributing
12 to platform costs and payments to the MTA, we are
13 looking to replicate a financing mechanism that has
14 proven successful just across the street.

15 Using the projects future incremental taxes to
16 fund a portion of the infrastructure. Next slide
17 please.

18 This graphic illustrates that plan graphically,
19 transforming property taxes created by this platform
20 into platform infrastructure funding that enables up
21 to 4,000 residential units on this outside of the
22 site. Next slide please.

23 Specifically, we would revert back to the
24 existing zoning for the site at 30th Street and 11th
25 Avenue, which you can see here in this slide. Next

1 slide please. Importantly, this plan for additional
2 housing and pilot funding works with or without the
3 gaming resort and your decision on this application
4 is intended to set up the site for long term
5 development regardless of the future decision by the
6 state gaming commission and community and the CAC.
7 Next slide please.

9 Here is a view from 11th Avenue looking west
10 today. Next slide. Here is an image of the new
11 residential building from that same perspective.
12 Note the pedestrian crosswalks and the large open
13 space connection. Next slide and a view from the
14 newly landscaped West 30th Street looking east, which
15 is an immense upgrade from how the street looks
16 today. Next slide please. This is what 30th Street
17 looks like from that same angle today. Next slide
18 please. Flipping to the north side of the site,
19 here's a look at 33rd Street today. The street is
20 actually closed off to through traffic and is being
21 utilized as a police car parking lot. Behind that
22 wall on the background is the northern most of 30
23 train tracks. This long, blank wall is an impediment
24 to access and the viability of 33rd Street for
25 pedestrians and we are proposing to lift the

1 elevation of the street up to the top of the wall at
2 the same height as 11th Avenue currently exists.

3
4 Next slide please.

5 Our proposal is to transform that empty railyard
6 into a vibrant, connected part of the community with
7 a 1,500 room convention hotel, wind resort as well as
8 5.6 acres of public open space. And now up to 4,000
9 new housing units, a public school, and a series of
10 other amenities. In the process, we will create over
11 30,000 union construction jobs and thousands of
12 permanent careers and deliver on all of the community
13 benefits agreed to in 2009, meeting or exceeding
14 prior commitments to open space, affordable housing,
15 community spaces and a location for a public school.

16 Next slide.

17 Just to spend a minute on why we are here, I want
18 to highlight some of the changes since we first
19 acquired the rights to develop this site over 15
20 years ago. A platform over the rail tracks is
21 required in order to build on this site and the cost
22 of that infrastructure has basically doubled to over
23 \$2 billion dollars. In addition, when this project
24 was first conceived, the intent was for luxury
25 condominiums to pay a large chunk of the

1
2 infrastructure costs. Now, the cost to build a condo
3 building on this site is higher than the value of the
4 units in the market. Meaning, nothing can be built
5 without a change in strategy. For evidence of that,
6 you can look at sale prices for the condos we built
7 across the street at Hudson Yards, which are lower
8 than it would cost with labor and materials to build
9 a new building on this site. Just to reiterate,
10 without a change here, this site will remain an
11 undeveloped railyard. Next slide please.

12 While the gaming application is subject to a
13 separate process, this application paves the way for
14 that opportunity by adjusting the configuration of
15 the buildings. Importantly though there is an
16 alternative scenario in the plans, which addresses
17 the site planning for the north side of the site in
18 the event a gaming license is not granted for this
19 site.

20 After a productive dialogue, the City Planning
21 Commission agreed it was reasonable to revisit this
22 plan after 16 years and approved the configuration
23 shown here, which keeps the total same density for
24 the site but reconfigures the site plan from six
25 building sites to three and expands the open space to

1 a cohesive connected space linking the existing
2 Hudson Yards out to the highline and Hudson River
3 Park. Next slide please.

4
5 Here is a view of what the railyard can become, a
6 beautiful new, open space the size of Bryant Park
7 with lush landscaping and a clear connection between
8 the existing portion of Hudson Yards, Bella Abzug
9 Park, the Highline and Hudson River Park. One key
10 factor making this all possible is the change to the
11 elevation of 33rd Street. Its transformation into a
12 pedestrian friendly street activates the site
13 frontage, connects to the highline and allows for the
14 elimination of streets that previously were required
15 in the middle of the park.

16 City Planning affirmed that that removing the
17 interior streets would be an improvement and create a
18 green space that would be an invaluable amenity for
19 the neighborhood with seamless connection points to
20 the highline. Next slide please.

21 Here is an image of the park with the highline in
22 the foreground. Next slide please. We have been
23 through a lengthy public review process to get here
24 today with hundreds of meeting with community
25 stakeholders both before and during the formal ULURP

1 process and we've heard some pretty consistent
2 feedback. The community and the city want and need
3 more housing. We heard it from Community Board 4,
4 from the Borough President, from the City Planning
5 Commission and from elected officials across the city
6 and state. Next slide please.

8 With that feedback in mind, we have been looking
9 for ways to significantly add to the housing in this
10 project. While acknowledging and addressing the
11 immense cost of that platform infrastructure over the
12 railyards. We identified a path to create up to
13 4,000 apartments onsite, replacing the office
14 building that we were planning for 30th Street and
15 11th Avenue with two additional residential towers.
16 To make up for the funding that the office building
17 was contributing to platform costs, and payments to
18 the MTA, we are looking to replicate a financing
19 mechanism that has proven successful just across the
20 street. Using the projects future incremental taxes
21 to fund a portion of the infrastructure. Next slide
22 please.

23 This graphic illustrates that plan graphically,.
24 Transforming property taxes created by this platform
25 into platform infrastructure funding that enables up

1 to 4,000 residential units on the south side of the
2 site. Next slide please. Specifically, we would
3 revert back to the existing zoning for the site at
4 30th Street and 11th Avenue, which you can see here in
5 this slide. Next slide please.
6

7 Importantly, this plan for additional housing and
8 pilot funding works with our without the gaming
9 resort and your decision on this application is
10 intended to set up the site for long term development
11 regardless of the future decision by the State Gaming
12 Commission and community and the CAC. Next slide
13 please.

14 Here is a view from 11th Avenue looking west
15 today. Next slide. Here is an image of the new
16 residential building from that same perspective.
17 Note, the pedestrian crosswalks and the large open
18 spaced connection. Next slide, and a view from the
19 newly landscaped west 30th Street looking east which
20 is an immense upgrade from how the street looks
21 today. Next slide please.

22 This is what 30th Street looks like from that same
23 angle today. Next slide please. Flipping to the
24 north side of the site, here's a look at 33rd Street
25 today. The street is actually closed off to through

1 traffic and is being utilized as a police car parking
2 lot. Behind that wall in the background is the
3 northern most of 30 train tracks. This long blank
4 wall is an impediment to access and the viability of
5 33rd Street for pedestrians and we are proposing to
6 lift the elevation of the street up to the top of the
7 wall at the same height at 11th Avenue currently
8 exists. Next slide please.

10 Here is a diagram showing the transformation of
11 33rd Street. It would become a two way street with a
12 turnaround along with a pedestrian access to the
13 highline and an additional ramp, elevator and stair
14 connecting to the lower elevation at 12th Avenue.
15 There would be an access area at this lower elevation
16 for Long Island Railroad vehicles, as well as loading
17 into the Javet Center Marshaling Yard property
18 immediately to the north. Next slide please.

19 And this is what the new 33rd Street would look
20 like once completed. Next slide please. So, to
21 summarize the land use actions before you today,
22 these actions cover the proposed project, aside from
23 the gaming resort, which will be handled in a
24 separate process with the state and CAC.

1 There are no changes to the existing zoning
2 district, allowable uses, or density. There's also
3 no change to our commitment to affordable housing,
4 public school, cultural and daycare spaces. We are
5 requesting a city map change to adjust the height of
6 33rd Street, which will remain a mapped DOT city
7 street. We are also requesting a zoning text
8 amendment to expand the applicability of the special
9 permit for the site to enable modifications to ground
10 floor level and open space regulations.
11

12 Additionally, there is a request for a special
13 permit to authorize these changes to the site plan.
14 And finally, there's a modification to the
15 restrictive declaration filed for this site to
16 incorporate the changes noted above and all the
17 conclusions of our recently completed environmental
18 impact statement. All of the prior developer
19 obligations for this site area would be delivered.

20 Next slide please. Just to reiterate the
21 opportunity here, approval of a ULURP is the only
22 path to develop the Western Railyards. Without these
23 zoning changes, the site will remain undeveloped.
24 The 2009 plan is not financially viable and cannot be
25 built. We need updated zoning approvals to move

1 forward with any development on the Hudson Yards
2 West. The ULURP, this ULURP is not about a gaming
3 license. That is a separate state process yet to
4 begin. Next slide please.
5

6 The benefits to this project are robust. There
7 are over \$2 billion in benefits to the MTA, over
8 30,000 construction jobs during development, now up
9 to 4,000 units of new housing onsite including
10 affordable housing, a 5.6 acre green space, a K-8
11 public school, community facilities and daycare.

12 Next slide please.

13 So, the choice is stark. There's an opportunity
14 today to enable 4,000 new apartments, tens of
15 thousands of jobs, large scale open space, and
16 funding for the MTA or Hudson Yards West will remain
17 what it is today, a whole in the ground with parking
18 trains. Next slide.

19 Let's finish the yards. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Is that the end of the
21 presentation?

22 JEFF BLAU: Yes Mr. Chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, thank you. I'm just
24 going to ask a few questions, then I'm going to toss
25 it to Council Member Bottcher.

1
2 Okay, so currently right now, is there an
3 existing plan for the area that requires more housing
4 that was stated today?

5 ELISE WAGNER: The City Planning Commission
6 approved 1,500 units and as Mr. Blau said, the
7 proposal, we are proposing to modify that proposal to
8 make it 4,000 units and we're doing that by removing
9 the commercial building that was proposed for the
10 Southeastern portion of the project and instead there
11 would be two towers with 2,500 up to 2,500 units.
12 And that was essentially the plan that was approved
13 in 2009 for the southeast portion of the project.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: What is the affordability
15 level of the affordable housing units and how would
16 this be regulated?

17 JEFF BLAU: So, there were 1,100 affordable units
18 as part of the original commitment to Hudson Yards.
19 All but 324 have already been completed. Those 324
20 will be included within the 4,000 units.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Will the proposed housing be
22 a part of the application to the gaming facility
23 location board?

24 JEFF BLAU: Yes, the housing would be consistent
25 with or without the gaming.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: It will still be at 4,000?

JEFF BLAU: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Which of the four actions requested oh excuse me, let me go back to that question. Would the affordability remain the same?

JEFF BLAU: Correct, yes.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: So, the residential component of this proposal is a part of the gaming facility location board or is it separate from it?

JEFF BLAU: It is part of the zoning for the site regardless of the gaming onsite or the alternate proposal, which is commercial. So, there will be no change to the location of the 4,000 units in either plan.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Which of the four actions requested are needed for you to pursue your gaming facility application with the state? And I ask because my understanding is that the current zoning text allows an applicant who is awarded a state casino license to build their proposal. So, do you need any of these approvals to actually build a casino if you are awarded a license?

1
2 ELISE WAGNER: We don't need it to build the
3 casino but the project as a whole cannot be built
4 without these ULURP actions.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: That's the housing, the
6 school, all those components?

7 JEFF BLAU: And including in particular 33rd
8 Street.

9 ELISE WAGNER: 33rd Street and the park public
10 open space.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay and the renovations to
12 MTA as well, okay. Uhm and I believe you said it was
13 before but for the record, how would you proceed
14 should these actions you requested are not approved?

15 JEFF BLAU: At the moment, the Western Railyards
16 is not financially viable so nothing would proceed.

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, thank you. I will now
18 give the floor to Council Member Bottcher to start
19 his questioning.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Thank you Chair Riley.
21 I want to focus on the 2009 plan for a minute. When
22 did you reach the determination that the 2009 plan
23 was not going to pencil out? That that zoning
24 wouldn't support the construction of a platform?
25

1 JEFF BLAU: It's over the last five years post
2 COVID, post run up of interest rates and all the
3 inflationary impacts that have hit the construction
4 industry, and we recognize that the cost of the
5 platform had increased to over \$2 billion. And
6 obviously the cost of construction of vertical
7 buildings has also increased dramatically. So, if
8 your - the decision was totally independent of the
9 gaming licenses being proposed by the state.
10

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: And when you reached
12 that determination, did you notify the elected
13 officials, the community board, as to meet with us to
14 discuss the situation?

15 JEFF BLAU: Well, as you know we've met with over
16 100 community groups in this process, including a
17 meeting with the community board and thankfully you
18 were in attendance there where we did walk through
19 the economics and the viability of the old plan
20 versus the new plan. So, yes we did do that.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Right, I wish we had
22 had that meeting years ago. The 2009 plan, there's a
23 delta between how much revenue that would generate
24 and how much is needed to construct the platform and
25 make it - what's that like dollar amount?

1 JEFF BLAU: I'm sorry, could you just restate?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: So, the 2009 plan
3 doesn't pencil out when you on a sheet of paper you
4 pencil here's how much revenue the housing alone
5 would generate and here's how much it would cost to
6 build a platform. What's the delta there? How much
7 would the housing bring in and how much would it cost
8 to build that platform?
9

10 JEFF BLAU: I would say just in general, the
11 housing proposed, the 4,000 units are not able to pay
12 for - absorb the cost of the heavy infrastructure to
13 be built over the platform and that's what this plan
14 solves for today.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: What's the number, the
16 delta there? How short does it fall? Is it like -

17 JEFF BLAU: It's probably over \$3 billion.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: So, there's like a \$3
19 billion shortfall with the platform?

20 JEFF BLAU: Correct.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Can you explain to the
22 public the mechanism that you've come up with in the
23 last few weeks to be able to add housing to this
24 site? You touched on it but can you help the public
25 understand it better? Because a few weeks ago,

1 throughout the process, you were saying that this
2 couldn't happen without a gaming license. The gaming
3 license is what would make this financially viable
4 and now you're proposing this payment in lieu of
5 taxes. This pilot that you say will allow most of
6 the housing to get built on this site. Explain what
7 that pilot is and how it would work.

9 JEFF BLAU: Right and so just to be clear, this
10 zoning change is totally independent of the gaming
11 license and is not dependent upon a gaming license
12 here. So, whether it's a gaming resort or a
13 commercial building on the northern end of the site,
14 it is the taxes from those commercial uses, either
15 one that would be used to essentially offset the
16 infrastructure costs that would be built to build a
17 platform over the railyards. This is a tried and
18 true program that was done with Hudson Yards
19 Development Corporation, HYDC where the future real
20 estate taxes of the Hudson Yards building were bonded
21 and utilized to build the Seven Train and the park
22 above the Seven Train. So, in fact, this is really,
23 this is just further extension of the HYDC district.
24 This is not a new mechanism at all. So, same
25 structure, same process and same utilization, except

1 in this case, it's for infrastructure over the
2 railyards as opposed to the number Seven subway.

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: When the Eastern
5 Railyards, there was a payment in lieu of taxes where
6 the tax revenue from the commercial buildings was
7 used to finance the Seven Train, the decking over the
8 Eastern Railyards and that's what you want to do on
9 the Western Railyards as well.

10 JEFF BLAU: Yes, except on the east it did not
11 pay for the deck. It just was the Seven Train and
12 then the park on top of the Seven Train extension
13 going north from Hudson Yards. But basically, it's
14 the same exact legislation that is currently in
15 place. The district of that legislation is proposed
16 to be extended as part of this.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: It seems so obvious and
18 so clear why was this not part of your original
19 proposal? Why was this just added recently as a
20 financing option?

21 JEFF BLAU: So, we had a commercial use on the
22 Southern end of this site, which because of the use
23 there and the demand for commercial office space,
24 that building could pay its share of the cost of the
25 infrastructure to build a platform. In meeting with

1
2 you and community leaders and the community board, we
3 recognize the real desire by the elected officials
4 and the community to increase the count, the unit
5 count of housing. And so, when we took away that
6 commercial office building, we had to utilize a
7 different mechanism to replace the capital that would
8 have come from that building to pay for the
9 infrastructure that the housing couldn't otherwise
10 pay for. So, it was really in response to the
11 community desires.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: And what it would
13 entail to use this pilot? You'd basically be
14 extending the boundaries of the pilot for the eastern
15 railyards to include the western railyards, is that
16 right?

17 JEFF BLAU: Yes, the current boundary is actually
18 broader than the eastern railyards. It's a whole
19 district. The Hudson Yards district, so that
20 district would be extended. That's correct.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: And that would require
22 City Council legislation? What other requirements
23 would that involve?

24 ELISE WAGNER: Yes, it would require a resolution
25 of the City Council.

1 JEFF BLAU: And it is part of this ULURP, not a
2 separate application.
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Any state action?

5 ELISE WAGNER: No, there would be a negotiation
6 of documents with the city but no state action.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: If extending that pilot
8 district to the Western Railyards, if it would enable
9 this plan to finance housing, why not use that pilot
10 with the 2009 zoning to help that original plan get
11 constructed?

12 JEFF BLAU: So, the 2009 plan does not provide -
13 it has essentially small buildings in the center of
14 the park, breaking up the park and essentially
15 designed for luxury condominiums. As opposed to the
16 larger scale rental building that we're proposing on
17 the southern end of the site. So, you would not be
18 able to create the park. You'd not be able to
19 elevate 33rd street. You couldn't put the gaming
20 application if that were to be successful on the
21 northern end of the site.

22 So, there are a whole host of changes that are
23 significantly better in this plan and respond to the
24 current market demand away from luxury condominiums
25 and towards more rental housing. M

1 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: I want to talk about
2 the open space. The open space in the 2009 plan was
3 designed painstakingly designed with the Community
4 Board and other stakeholders over a long period of
5 time and it involved smaller development sites with
6 green space integrated between the buildings. Why
7 doesn't this plan follow that same general site plan
8 and those public space principles?
9

10 JEFF BLAU: So we believe that this plan is a far
11 superior public open space plan with a 5.6 acre
12 contiguous public park which does have areas
13 separated to create pockets for different uses. Some
14 have playgrounds. Some have lawn area. Some have
15 benches for sitting or meadows. So, it does retain
16 the feel of separate areas but have the benefit of a
17 contiguous 5.6 acre park that's essentially bigger
18 than or similar in size to Bryant Park just to give a
19 sense of the scale here. Something that hasn't been
20 created in New York City for decades.

21 We think this retains the benefits of the old
22 plan but is actually far superior.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Friends in the highline
24 says that the new design creates adverse impact on
25

1 the user experience of the highline and the open
2 space through increased wind and shadow impacts.

3
4 In your view, how does this design interact with
5 the highline differently than the 2009 plans and have
6 you worked with the highline throughout this process?
7 And when did those conversations begin?

8 JEFF BLAU: So, as you know, we've been working
9 with the highline since the very beginning of this
10 process and have met with them over ten times. Until
11 such point is they decided that they no longer wanted
12 to engage with us. This plan interacts with the
13 highline in a very similar way in terms of
14 connectivity to the highline. We actually left it up
15 to them as to the locations that they would like to
16 interconnect to the public open space. The public
17 open space at the highlines edge is similar to what
18 it was before.

19 And now, actually with the change to this housing
20 building on the southern end, that essentially is the
21 building that was previously in that location in the
22 2009 plan. So, really no change from the prior.
23 Yes, do buildings create shadows, yes. We haven't
24 yet figured out the technology to build a building
25 that doesn't create shadows. This plan does not

1
2 create any more shadows than the previous plan on the
3 highline.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Why have you been
5 unable to modify your design in a way that would gain
6 the approval of the highline? They have asks for how
7 the buildings should be configured. You haven't
8 been able to change your design that much to
9 accommodate that. Why were you able to only go so
10 far and why can't you go farther and work with the
11 highline and come up with a design that fits their
12 needs?

13 JEFF BLAU: So, as I mentioned, we did meet with
14 the highline ten times. They had four asks of us at
15 that time. We made all four asks to the building
16 including setting the buildings back further from the
17 highline, notching certain areas, moving locations of
18 certain buildings. And so, we did accommodate all of
19 their asks until they decided to no longer engage
20 with us in any way whatsoever, constructive or
21 otherwise. And then they decided that the main
22 reason that they didn't like what we were doing is
23 that they wanted more housing units. To which we
24 responded by now increasing the units from 1,500 to
25 4,000 housing units. And I find it interesting that

1 the highline still opposes this really showing their
2 true colors that this is really about nimby. They
3 don't want anything built here and that would be of
4 great loss to New York City.
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Well, looking at the
7 numbers, is it true that the open space in this plan
8 is decreased from 63 percent in the 2009 plan to 46
9 percent in this plan?

10 JEFF BLAU: No, there's no change to the size of
11 the public open space here. I'm not sure where those
12 percentages came from.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: The Bryant Park, like
14 space, will only see an average of 2.3 hours of sun
15 per day between May and October. The peak season for
16 growing vegetation. Is that true?

17 ELISE WAGNER: Patrick.

18 PATRICK BLANCHFIELD: The EIS disclosed shadow
19 impacts to the highline. The shadow impacts are
20 primarily from the building in the southwest corner.
21 There are also shadow impacts from the new buildings
22 onto the open space across 11th Avenue in Hudson
23 Yards.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: I'm not talking about
25 shadow impacts on the highline. I'm talking about

1 the shadow impacts on the open space that you
2 described as a Bryant Park like open space within the
3 Western Railyards. Is it true that it will only see
4 an average of 2.3 hours of sun per day from May to
5 October?
6

7 ELISE WAGNER: If you want specifics like that,
8 we certainly can provide an answer in writing but
9 what as I think was said a few moments ago, the
10 shadow impacts are comparable to the impacts from the
11 2009 plan. And as Mr. Blau said, there will always
12 be shadows from buildings but we certainly can
13 provide the detailed answers if that would be
14 helpful.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: One of the major
16 adverse impacts that was described in the EIS was on
17 traffic that on four corners and 40 intersections,
18 traffic that can't be mitigated some intersections
19 would experience seven minute delays. What factors,
20 what measures do you intend on taking to ease traffic
21 on these eight sidewalks and four corners and 40
22 intersections?

23 ELISE WAGNER: We'd be happy to provide that
24 response in writing. You know I think traffic is
25 similar to shadows, you can't build something,

1 housing or otherwise without creating traffic but
2 certainly we've engaged in a very detailed study and
3 can provide you with whatever numbers would be
4 helpful.

5
6 JEFF BLAU: And the switch from commercial to
7 housing will actually decrease that traffic.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: A casino on this site
9 will likely help with the other commercial venture in
10 Hudson Yards, like the retail, the mall etc.. Was
11 that at all a factor in your decision to add this - a
12 gaming license application to the rezoning proposal?

13 JEFF BLAU: Again, this is really not a proposal
14 about the gaming and that will be considered in a
15 separate application. I do think there are ancillary
16 benefits to building a resort in this location but
17 that's not part of this application.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Just going back to the
19 financing for a minute. Just to be clear, if you
20 were awarded a gaming license, would you still seek
21 the pilot, the payment in lieu of taxes, the
22 deferment of taxes in order to finance the platform
23 or would that no longer be needed?

24 JEFF BLAU: Yes, it's needed in both versions but
25 due to the cross subsidy to the housing. both the

2 commercial building, that would be the nongaming
3 alternative for the north and the gaming resort if
4 that were to proceed. Those taxes, the resort and/or
5 the commercial building would be utilized to offset
6 the infrastructure required to build a housing on the
7 south side of the side.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Charter buses; where do
9 you envision the charter buses dropping off and
10 picking up passengers in your plan?

11 ELISE WAGNER: That's another thing that's
12 specifically addressed in the EIS and we'd be happy
13 to provide a response in writing.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: You must know that
15 answer. Like, where are you dropping off and picking
16 up people in buses?

17 JEFF BLAU: We did look at the bus traffic from
18 this site. There wasn't a ton generated based on the
19 EIS assumptions but we did evaluate that and we had a
20 couple of drop off points. One off 11th Avenue and
21 it wasn't a significant impact to the traffic. It's
22 not really the business plan of when to have
23 significant Charter bus traffic as part of their
24 business operations.

1 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: How many parking spaces
2 are included within your latest iteration?
3

4 ELISE WAGNER: 725.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Those 725 parking
6 spaces included and is that - who are those parking
7 spaces for?

8 ELISE WAGNER: They are for primarily for the
9 residential buildings.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: How many parking spaces
11 for the proposed casino?

12 JEFF BLAU: On the north side of the site in the
13 gaming alternative, we have some 500 spaces in that
14 building. In the nongaming alternative, it was 450
15 and there's additional parking on the south side with
16 the residential.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: So, you envision most
18 people coming via the train?

19 ELISE WAGNER: There's people coming by public
20 transportation or perhaps by taxi. I don't know the
21 numbers off the top of my head but that's also in the
22 EIS.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Your latest iteration,
24 that includes the pilot and then adds more housing.
25

2 Have you presented this to community board 4 prior to
3 today?

4 JEFF BLAU: We have a briefing schedule with the
5 Community Board. This just came up but we did
6 explain it to them.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: When will you be
8 meeting with them?

9 JEFF BLAU: We haven't set a time yet.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: And will you be sitting
11 with the highline to discuss this, this plan with
12 them?

13 JEFF BLAU: We are always welcome to meet with
14 the highline if they're willing to meet with us.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: No further questions
16 Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Council Member
18 Bottcher. Council Member Salaam, do you have any
19 questions for this panel? There being no other
20 questions for this panel, this panel is now excused.

21 Counsel, are there any members of the public who
22 wish to testify on this project?

23 JEFF BLAU: Thank you Mr. Chairman.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: So, yes we have many members
3 of the public who want to testify, both in person and
4 online. So, please everybody listen carefully.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I have to make a couple
7 announcements.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Oh, go ahead.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If you have signed up online,
10 could you please make sure that you are logging into
11 the Zoom account with your first and last name?

12 Currently a lot of people are just signed up with a
13 first name, so it's important to specify also your
14 last name.

15 Also, in terms of timing, we will hear from
16 elected officials first, then do in person and then
17 go to online. The in person, we have approximately
18 70 people. So, for the people who are online, it
19 will probably take between two to at least a good two
20 hours before we can get to you. That it Chair.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Counsel. For the
22 members of the public here to testify, please note
23 that witnesses will generally be called in panels of
24 four. If you are a member of the public signed up to
25 testify on the proposal, please stand by when you

1
2 hear your name being called and prepare to speak when
3 indicated by myself you may begin. Please also note
4 that once all panelists in your group have completed
5 their testimony, if remotely, you will be removed
6 from the meeting as a group and the next group of
7 speakers will be introduced. Once removed,
8 participants may continue to view the livestream
9 broadcast of this hearing on the Council's website.
10 Members of the public will be given two minutes to
11 speak and we are stopping at two minutes. When you
12 hear the bell ring, please wrap it up under ten
13 seconds and we will be moving to the next person.

14 We will first begin with elected officials. I
15 know we have Assembly Member Jordan Wright online.
16 So, Assembly Member if you can hear me, please unmute
17 and you may begin.

18 JORDAN WRIGHT: Good morning Chair. Good morning
19 members of the Committee. My name is Assembly Member
20 Jordan Wright and I represent Harlem, a couple miles
21 north of the western railyards. Our city is at a
22 precipice. More and more New Yorkers are having
23 trouble making ends meet. They're having trouble
24 buying groceries, paying for childcare and the face
25 of eviction is increasingly the middle class.

1
2 Turmoil and uncertainty in Washington only further
3 threaten to slash away the federal programming that
4 so many of rely on to make ends meet. As a member of
5 the state legislature working on this year's budget,
6 I know all these challenges all too well. We can't
7 let this stand. What New Yorkers really need is bold
8 action to show that it is still possible for the
9 middle class to build a future here. If we want real
10 change, we need to tap into solutions that harness
11 the power of the private sector to empower the
12 community. Hudson Yards West offers a prime example
13 of this inclusive proof. I'm excited about the
14 prospects for housing, jobs and community funding.
15 Hudson Yards West will provide 40,000 union jobs with
16 funds allocated to workforce development, programming
17 to ensure our local folks can fill these slots.

18 I'm excited about thousands of new homes and the
19 creative funding model that shows what can happen
20 when public, private partnerships come together to
21 create a real way at housing at scale not just at
22 Hudson Yards but other big projects as well.

23 I'm excited about the community benefits whether
24 you're for a casino or not, committing one percent of
25 the gaming revenue to go directly back into the

1 neighborhood will benefit the neighborhood in a truly
2 meaningful way.

3
4 I imagine over \$200 million in the next ten years
5 to fund infrastructure for a new school, childcare
6 center and social services program that's real
7 support for the people who live there. I've
8 appreciated the due diligence and careful
9 consideration given to Hudson Yards West so far
10 during the approval process. The input and scrutiny
11 have strengthened the project, pushing it to be more
12 than just another development. Let's continue to
13 make progress and I ask that you approve this project
14 so we can keep moving forward as a city. Thank you
15 all so much.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Assembly Member.
17 There being no questions, Assembly Member you're
18 excused. Please go vote on that budget. Thank you.

19 JORDAN WRIGHT: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, now we are going to
21 transition to in person hearing, excuse me, in person
22 testimony. We will be hearing first Ambur Nicosia,
23 Paul Devlin, Susan Marshall and Sally Greenspan. And
24 I just want to remind the public we will be given two
25 minutes to testify. Okay, I'm going to read the

1 names one more time - oh that's everyone, okay thank
2 you. Thank you. We'll first begin with Sally
3 Greenspan. Sally, can you just press the button
4 please?

6 SALLY GREENSPAN: Hi, good okay. So, Sally
7 Greenspan, former President of the Council Chelsea
8 Block Associations. I'm going to have to adlib what
9 I've prepared to say a little bit based on what I
10 knew and what I know now. So, bear with me if I'm
11 repetitive. First, I want to thank related for
12 revisiting the plan, figuring out financing and
13 improving the housing numbers and making that effort,
14 especially when they've been saying all along, it
15 would be impossible to do that. Well, the impossible
16 has happened. They have figured out a financing plan
17 and there's a way to move forward. I could not see
18 the plan up there from where I was sitting so, I'm
19 kind of starting in that direction from where I was
20 before this presentation because I don't know what
21 this new plan really looks like. Related keep saying
22 up to 4,000 units of housing and I don't know what
23 that means either. What is the guarantee for related
24 to me the commitment and exactly what will that
25 commitment be?

1 Is it 2,000? Is it 3,500? I don't know what up
2 to 4,000 means and I think that housing needs to be
3 considered first. We don't want a repeat of some
4 other disasters like Barclay Center where housing was
5 promised and not built the way - accordingly it was
6 supposed to be. I'd like to know more about the mix.
7 I know something was mentioned about the number of
8 affordable, but the last number I heard was 324. I
9 think Mr. Blau corrected that but I'm not sure what
10 he said what percentage would be affordable. I now
11 understand that some of it will be rental. I don't
12 know what the mix is with middle income, below income
13 and for luxury, which I realize there will have to be
14 some luxury and with regard to the casino, I know
15 it's not part of this but I know it's still being
16 considered and I don't know how a casino fits in with
17 the residential community.

18
19 As the president of my own block association and
20 CCBA for a long time. I know that nobody wants to
21 live on a block with the greatest restaurant or night
22 club and certainly not a casino.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Sally. Next, we
24 will hear from Susan Marshall.

1
2 SUSAN MARSHALL: Good morning Chair Riley,
3 Council Member Bottcher and other members of the
4 Subcommittee. I am Susan Marshall as you have just
5 been told and I'm the new President of the Council of
6 Chelsea Block Associations. And Sally has already
7 covered some of the concerns that we have as an
8 organization. You know the number is rather
9 ambiguous. In the Press Release, it said 1,500 units
10 up to 4,000 units. What is the number and again what
11 is the ratio of the affordability? That's a major
12 concern.

13 Also, we need housing, housing, housing, housing.
14 So, it's nice that they got rid of an office tower,
15 we love that but we still need more housing. The
16 2009 plan called for 5,207 units. So, let's keep
17 housing at the forefront. I know we're not in theory
18 talking about a casino, but I believe part of this
19 application has a zoning that would allow for a
20 casino. That is what we are here to urge you to not
21 vote on. We don't want that zoning to be realized
22 because then if they do get the license, they will
23 build it. If you build it, they will come. We don't
24 need one arm bandits taking our residents lunch

1 money. What happens in Vegas should stay in Vegas.
2
3 Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Ms. Marshall.
5 Next, we'll hear from Ambur Nicosia.

6 AMBUR NICOSIA: Good morning members of the
7 Council and thank you. My name is Ambur Nicosia; I'm
8 the President of Penn South. We have about 5,000
9 residents that live in this community. Related
10 presented to our Board of Directors recently and
11 after that meeting, our board of directors came out
12 unanimously against this project. The current land
13 form review procedure represents a hard thought
14 compromise, the result of years of collaboration
15 between the community members, city officials and the
16 developer.

17 This agreement is not a formality. It is there
18 to protect the best interest of everybody who is at
19 the table who made this decision. What we have
20 before you today, is a bade and switch. The
21 developer wants to rezone so they can build less
22 housing, potentially build a casino next to an
23 elementary school and they want the taxpayers to have
24 the burden of paying through it - for it through a
25 pilot. The current zoning as it stands today allows

1 for 57 units, 5,700 units of housing. In a city
2 where we are constantly talking about there being a
3 housing crisis, we cannot allow somebody the
4 opportunity to build less than was originally agreed
5 to. To address the union that's here today that I
6 support, no matter where they build this casino,
7 there are going to be jobs and revenue but this
8 location already has a future to fulfill a different
9 promise. One with a residential focus. We ask that
10 you vote no to rezoning to save our new school, our
11 highline, our streets, our bike paths, and to save
12 our housing instead of reducing it. We've already
13 earned the current zoning compromise through years of
14 study and public review. Please stand with us as you
15 did in our original fight.

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Before we go to
18 Paul, the next group that I'm going to call up
19 consists of Keith Forest, Joseph Rocco, Cobi Levy and
20 Winston Majette. You will be the next panel and also
21 if there is an Andrew Rasiej (SP?) in the Chambers,
22 can you fill out a speakers card? We don't have a
23 speakers card for you, so if Andrew is in here, can
24 you please fill out a speakers card. Thank you.

25 Paul, you may begin.

1 PAUL DEVLIN: Good morning Chair Riley and
2
3 Council Member Bottcher, appreciate the opportunity
4 to speak today. I am Paul Devlin, the Co-Chair of
5 Hell's Kitchen Land Use from Community Board 4. We
6 wrote a letter in January 2025, urging a complete
7 denial of this application. Driven by the reduction
8 in housing units of 5,700 units of the 2009 plan, to
9 the 1,500 now 4,000 housing plans but the reason we
10 wanted to deny this and work together to find a
11 solution is because of the unmitigated adverse
12 impacts.

13 As you've heard today, we have problems with
14 shadows and transportation. What we did not talk
15 about today was air quality and construction noise.
16 Those unmitigated adverse impacts can be mitigated if
17 we don't move forward with the current plan.

18 I agree with Council Member Bottcher that this is
19 a prime opportunity and a chance for us to do
20 something that builds this city forward, brings us
21 union jobs, brings us housing, brings us all sorts of
22 benefits. And I agree with Council Member Bottcher
23 that this process of this proposal that was brought
24 forward to us three days ago should have started
25 years ago. We have an opportunity to work together

1
2 to find a solution for this site and to work with the
3 developer but the fact of the matter is that there is
4 a June deadline for casino application and a casino
5 will not fit on the current 2009 site plan. So,
6 they're pushing forward this plan so they can submit
7 the application in June of 2025.

8 If Mr. Blau is correct in saying that this has
9 nothing to do with the casino, then they'd be happy
10 to withdraw this application today and continue to
11 work with the Community Board, the elected officials
12 and the community to build a project on this prime
13 land that would work for us all. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Paul and just to
15 clarify, I think I was asking this before. The
16 original plan had how much housing?

17 PAUL DEVLIN: The existing approved 2009 site
18 plan could accommodate 5,700 units.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, thank you. There being
20 no questions for this panel, this panel - oh, you
21 have one question. Go ahead Council Member Bottcher.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: I won't ask a ton of
23 questions. It's a long day. Paul, Community Board
24 4, do you after all the analysis you've done and the
25 meetings we've had, do you believe that the 2009 plan

1
2 is viable or do you - have you as a board reached the
3 conclusion that it does need to be modified in some
4 way.

5 PAUL DEVLIN: I would say as a board we have not
6 taken a position one way or the other because we have
7 not presented enough data to make that conclusion.
8 We did have a meeting with the development team about
9 the housing cost changes between 2009 and 2025. We
10 did question some of the forecast they had made and
11 whether or not those numbers were conclusionary to
12 say that would not work. But we were not provided
13 further information on that.

14 I would say personally that I recognize the
15 changes between 2009 and 2025 are realistic. Yes,
16 inflation, and the costs of construction have gone up
17 so I would agree with that strategy. But that
18 doesn't preclude us from sitting down and having a
19 conversation about those solutions and that's
20 something that we should have started years ago, not
21 three days ago, not three days ago.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Sure, because one of
23 the you know when I met with the applicants, the
24 first thing I said was you know before we even talk
25 about what changes are made, you've got to sit with

1
2 the Community Board and the elected officials and
3 really go through the 2009 financing and in great
4 detail and help folks understand whether or not that
5 needs to be changed and when we all met, they went
6 through in relatively high detail about why the 2009
7 financing wasn't going to pencil out. The question
8 is, if it does need to change, what are those
9 changes? And so, you personally believe that some
10 changes might be in order but the board hasn't
11 officially taken that position.

12 PAUL DEVLIN: Correct, the Board has not
13 officially taken a position on that but we as a board
14 have always met proponents of new housing and new
15 development. We are not a board to deny applications
16 for new construction, new homes, new projects, so it
17 would work to the benefit of the development team and
18 to the community to work together to find a solution
19 on this site. We are not saying no outright. We're
20 saying no to this current application because we
21 don't have enough information to make a better
22 conclusion. We would be happy to work with the
23 developer to find a solution on this site.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Thank you.
25

1 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. This panel is
2
3 excused. Thank you so much for testifying.

4 The next panel will consist of Winston Majette,
5 Cobi Levy, Joseph Rocco and Keith Forest. If your
6 name is called, please come up to the panel. The
7 following group will consist of Joe Restuccia, Jeff
8 Gardner, Pamela Wolff, and Aletta Lafarge(SP?). That
9 would be the following panel.

10 We will begin first with Keith Forest.

11 KEITH FOREST: Good evening. Hello, good
12 evening. My name is Keith Forest; I'm with the
13 Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce. Great to be
14 before you guys. My name is Keith Forest, I'm
15 honored to speak today on behalf of the Greater
16 Harlem Chamber of Commerce for more than a century,
17 our mission has been to strengthen economic
18 opportunities for Harlem residents and for Manhattan.
19 The strength comes through smart investment both
20 infrastructure and projects that create lasting
21 change.

22 It comes through projects like Hudson Yard West.
23 At times when New York faces a serious housing
24 shortage, rise in cost, and growing pressures on our
25 infrastructure, we need real solutions to move

1 forward. Hudson Yard West would bring up to 4,000
2 new homes, a new public park, a school and billions
3 in private investment to strengthen the MTA. This
4 plan was shaped by feedback from hundreds of
5 community meetings and it reflects a real willingness
6 on the part of the developers to listen and to act.
7 It deserves your thoughtful consideration because
8 this isn't just a development, it's a chance to show
9 that New York is still willing to invest in the
10 peoples future.
11

12 The truth is, what we miss - that when we miss
13 opportunities like this, it's working New Yorkers who
14 pay the highest price. We've seen it before; we
15 can't afford to see it again. Today's vote isn't
16 about a casino; it's about zoning changes needed to
17 unlock these opportunities for New Yorkers. We urge
18 the Council to move this project forward and help
19 build a city where working families can stay, succeed
20 and thrive. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next we'll hear
22 from Winston.

23 WINSTON MAJETTE: Good morning. My name is
24 Winston Majette and I serve as Executive Director of
25 the Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce. Originally

1 chartered in 1896, we are the oldest continual
2 business organization in upper Manhattan. Our
3 mission is to improve the quality of life for all our
4 residents as well as to develop and attract quality
5 businesses and professional services.
6

7 Over the course of our 129 year history, we've
8 co-sponsored some of the most important key
9 development projects in New York City, including the
10 George Washington and Triborough Borough Bridge
11 Construction, New Yorks first subway line and the
12 1939 World's Fair.

13 I'm here to speak in support of another historic
14 and transformational project, Hudson Yards West.
15 This is exactly the kind of development that the
16 Greater Harlem Chamber of Commerce is excited to see
17 come to Manhattan. The plan endures neighborhoods
18 get a stake, workers get a shot through thousands of
19 new jobs, and families get a future. If we want New
20 York to remain a city of opportunity, we have to
21 build like we mean it and we can't afford to let this
22 project pass us by.

23 I intend on seizing this moment. I sincerely
24 hope the Council is equally committed to deliver for
25

1
2 hardworking folks by advancing this development. I
3 thank you very much.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear
5 from Cobi.

6 COBI LEVY: It's still morning, good morning. My
7 name is Cobi Levy. I'm a resident of Hudson Yards
8 and a local business owner. I've been to many of
9 these hearings and one thing is similarly said over
10 and over again and that's we're at a crossroads in
11 our city and if certain voices have their way, we'll
12 have this great celebration for the word no. This is
13 not a city of no, right? We build things here and
14 presumably this is something that we want built.

15 I keep hearing about housing over and over again
16 and then people talk about the 2009 plan but the 2009
17 plan is gone right? In 2009, there was no Instagram.
18 In 2009 a certain orange man was a game show host.
19 So, like the world has changed. So, if the
20 alternative is we can have this project at jobs and
21 housing or we can have nothing, then why aren't we
22 talking about in that scope? Why are we talking
23 about something that is literally in the past that is
24 gone? Tarriff's, inflation, the world has changed,
25 the economic world has changed. We need to be

1
2 realistic. This is an opportunity for jobs and for
3 housing, which is supposedly what we all want. I
4 don't think we should miss this opportunity.

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you and last we'll hear
6 from Joseph.

7 JOSEPH ROCCO: Thank you for having me. I'm a
8 small business owner, Jims Shoe Repair. We've been
9 in business for 93 years, between Park Madison. Had
10 a relationship with the Related Company since the
11 late 80's and they've been really a great company and
12 we pride ourselves on customer service and great
13 quality work and we lasted 93 years. The third
14 factor was developers. When I was here 50 years ago,
15 there was only short little two, three, story
16 buildings and all these developers built around us
17 and kept our business going with more people. And
18 now we are in the Hudson Yards, 50 Hudson Yards and
19 we're hoping for the same thing. If they build more
20 buildings and develop more housing, more people, that
21 will keep our business going, especially when tough
22 times and small businesses are struggling.

23 So, uhm, and I know Related will do the right
24 thing because they've always been right by us and
25 they are top shelf, so.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much.

JOSEPH ROCCO: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: There being no questions for this panel, this panel is excused. Next, we'll hear from Joe Restuccia, Jeff Gardner, Pamela Wolff and Aletta Lafargue. I'm sorry if I mispronounced your last name. It's spelled L- Lafargue. Is that it? Lafargue that's L-A-F-A-R-G-U-E, somebody's last name. She's not here? Oh okay no problem.

Okay we'll begin first with Pamela.

PAMELA WOLFF: Me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, you Pamela. If one of you other guy's name is Pamela, that's fine.

PAMELA WOLFF: Okay, okay nobody else here named Pamela.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: It's Joe's drag name.

PAMELA WOLFF: Now, I'm going to get totally hung up with my glasses. My name is Pamela Wolff. I live on 21st Street, on West 21st Street. I am the President of Save Chelsea. Save Chelsea advocates for the preservation for our communities historic architecture and neighborhood character. We are not anti-development. We very much want to see the

1 Western Railyards developed but in a way that
2 prioritizes what is important to our community.

3
4 Save Chelsea is opposed to the proposed plans for
5 the Western Railyards and stands by the 2009
6 community informed development plan. The highline is
7 not just a terrorist neighborhood park, it is an
8 internationally admired cultural treasure that
9 Chelsea and the City of New York are proud of. A
10 phenomenon that continues to inspire small similar
11 projects the world over. It has become a centerpiece
12 of our Chelsea character. It should not be degraded
13 by a misplaced casino.

14 A few words about Related to last minute press
15 release. The developers are asking the city to
16 absorb the financial risk of their casino project.
17 At this time of economic uncertainty, we the tax
18 payers should not be rolling the dice on this
19 development scheme. As best we understand their
20 press release, taxpayers, us would essentially be
21 fronting billions of dollars for a project with
22 limited public benefit. A casino and 92 percent
23 luxury condos. This could not be more different than
24 the original Hudson Yards financing scheme, which
25 largely paid for public infrastructure with direct

1 public benefit including the expansion of the Number
2 Seven Train. We recommend that Related go back to
3 the drawing board with the community and reshape the
4 development plan so that it meets the public
5 interest. Friday's press conference was a far cry
6 from that. Too little too late. We urge the City
7 Council to vote no on this application. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear
9 from Jeff.

10 JEFF GARDNER: Hi, good morning. My name is Jeff
11 Gardner. I am the Co-President of the West 18th
12 Street Block Association and a longtime resident of
13 Chelsea. At first, I'd like to thank Related for
14 presenting a revised plan. Unfortunately I can't
15 support that plan as that does not live up to the
16 spirit of the original 2009 agreement that was
17 crafted with the community.

18 First and foremost, I think that it is simply
19 premature for the Council to vote in favor of the
20 proposed zoning because there's not been a meaningful
21 opportunity to engage with the community in an effort
22 to develop something that the community supports and
23 unlike the characterizations of nimbies, I am
24 certainly a nimby and would welcome development in my
25

1 neighborhood that's responsible and supports
2 education and affordable housing for our residents
3 and I am very reminded of the fable of the scorpion
4 and the frog and I think that Related has showed us
5 in the past through their use of the EB5 Visa
6 financing program, that they are again looking for
7 the public to finance a profitable venture on their
8 behalf. So, I would welcome an opportunity for
9 Related to come back to the table, get CB4's
10 approval. A proposed project that meets the
11 communities needs, as well as the needs of the
12 entirety of Manhattan. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you and before we hear
15 from Joe, the next panel will consist of Kevin Jones,
16 Frank Clarke, Jacob Dickson, and Dale Burnett. Joe,
17 you may begin.

18 JOE RESTUCCIA: My name is Restuccia. I'm a 46
19 year resident of Hell's Kitchen, Executive Director
20 of Clinton Housing, a not-for-profit housing
21 developer. I've been on Community Board 4 since 1982
22 and I'm a Co-Chair of Housing. I was directly
23 involved in the 2005 negotiations with Hudson Yards
24 and the City Council and the Related 2009 Restoration
25 Railyards negotiation. Our community board embraces

1 density, major density and we need a plan, not a
2 press release three days before a public hearing.

3
4 The lack of housing production here has been
5 stark. The original plan did not limit the
6 production to condos. Related has taken that as a
7 narrative saying you can't build condos and today, in
8 nothing that they want to produce 4,000 units, of
9 which 324 would be affordable. That's seven percent
10 affordability on a major site. It's simply not
11 sufficient. They do simple things like say we're
12 going to elevate West 33rd Street. It's really going
13 to turn into a cul de sac for a casino entrance for
14 black cars for people to get dropped off.

15 Traffic problems will happen in every
16 development. It's a matter of degree. We rarely see
17 environmental impact statements that say, there can
18 be no mitigation whatsoever of traffic. There can be
19 no mitigation whatsoever of noise. And the open
20 space and calling it constantly Bryant Park if Bryant
21 Park were surrounded and put in shadow for the entire
22 summer. That is not Byrant Park. It is the quality
23 of the open space. It is not a cohesive, connected
24 space. Yes, but it will be in the dark and I want to
25 note for the Chair, in all my years in the west side,

1 I have never seen organizations from the entire
2 community board from 14th Street to 57th Street coming
3 together to say no to something. It doesn't happen.
4 We are very fractious. We disagree about everything
5 on the west side and you know in 1986 is the last
6 time our community board voted no on a development
7 proposal. And that was like a crazy little addition
8 on top of a chocolate factory. We are coming to you
9 together with one voice saying no, please help us in
10 this to move on to the next phase of this
11 development.
12

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much. Council
14 Member, do you have any questions for this panel?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: No, thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Thank you
17 everyone. Next, we'll hear from Jacob Dickson, Frank
18 Clarke, Kevin Jones, and Dale Burnett and the
19 following group after this will consists of Robert
20 Hammen, Cynthia Stark, Catherine Laferty and Michael
21 Walsh. We're missing someone. Kevin Jones, Frank,
22 Jacob Dickson, Dale? Jacob Dickson.

23 JACOB DICKSON: That's me.
24
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Frank is here. Kevin, Kevin
3 Jones? Do we have a Kevin Jones? Okay. Okay, we'll
4 begin with Dale.

5 DALE BURNETT: My name is Dale Burnett, Managing
6 Director of Big Equity and affiliate of the Basis
7 Investment Crew. I wanted to express my support for
8 the West Side Railyards proposal and to spotlight my
9 firms groundbreaking role. We are a minority owned
10 women led investment manager and I believe we'll play
11 a transformational wellness development.

12 Our leadership is comprised of men and women,
13 Black, White and Brown people, people who grew up in
14 public housing like our CEO, those that grew up in
15 intercity neighborhoods here in New York like myself,
16 lifelong New Yorkers as well as immigrants that came
17 here to achieve the American dream.

18 We all support this project because it's not just
19 about economic development, it's about community
20 building at scale, with intentionality and providing
21 community benefits that will ripple across the city.
22 It's not all perfect but the creation of 30,000 jobs,
23 5,000 permanent jobs, pathways to long term careers
24 for New York families. The fact that thousands of
25 affordable housing units have been delivered across

1 the city by Related and that continues here. I must
2 say I've been personally impressed to sit alongside
3 Related as they reconstituted the project to up the
4 number of units to 4,000 in response to the
5 community.

6
7 Nobody gets 100 percent of what they want, not
8 the community, not related but this shows you what I
9 know, that they are a partner that actually listens.
10 The proposal includes acres of new green open public
11 space in a part of the city that urgently needs it
12 and lord knows that the MTA needs those upgrades for
13 people like myself and our team that ride the subways
14 every day. And then there is us, do our investment
15 in the project. The door will be open for qualified
16 minorities, women, New Yorkers of all stripes,
17 background and colors to invest in the project
18 through us, given people traditionally excluded from
19 major developments the opportunity to build wealth
20 and invest in their own city. What is more
21 important, this is not new. We've done this with
22 Related in other cities. We did this without fan
23 fair. We did it because it was the best thing to do.

24 The project will create an economic engine that
25 does not leave people behind. It's a blueprint for

1
2 how New York can create economic development, rooted
3 in community that drives opportunity and creates
4 benefits that are not perfect but are shared by all.
5 I urge you to support the proposal.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
7 hear from Jacob Dickson.

8 JACOB DICKSON: My name is Jacob Dickson. I'm
9 the owner and operator of Dickson's Farms and Meats,
10 the butcher shop and restaurant in Chelsea Market.
11 I've been there for 15 years and I've also been a
12 West Chelsea resident for 15 years. The pandemic hit
13 hard and Chelsea is still struggling to come back.
14 Foot traffic is down 30 percent from prepandemic
15 levels, even as the tourism rates have rebounded.
16 Retail storefront vacancies in Chelsea are above
17 average for the city. We need to think big. The
18 Hudson Yards West development would create a singular
19 attraction in New York City stretching from Hudson
20 Yards to the Whitney and Little Island. There will
21 be nothing else like it in the five boroughs. A
22 casino would attract a new and different customer
23 base that will be incremental to our existing foot
24 traffic, even if only a fraction shop the local
25 businesses, these are customers we would not

1
2 otherwise have and I wouldn't want to see them going
3 to other boroughs.

4 With the expansion of the proposal to 4,000
5 residential units, investment in community
6 organization, there's no question this proposal is
7 right for the neighborhood. Big ideas like Chelsea
8 Market, the highline and Little Island have
9 transformed unused and unsightly spaces and to huge
10 assets for our community. This development is the
11 right choice. It will be a huge, missed opportunity
12 to let this project land elsewhere. Especially when
13 the alternative is that this would remain an
14 undeveloped railyard. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you and last we'll hear
16 from Frank.

17 FRANK CLARKE: Good morning. My name is Frank
18 Clarke, Director of Government Relations at the New
19 York Building Congress, which represents over 500
20 organizations and 250,000 skilled trades people and
21 professionals dedicated to the growth and prosperity
22 of New York. We firmly support the Hudson Yards West
23 proposal. When our association was founded in 1921,
24 New York City and its building industry looked very
25 different but our progress has been defined by big,

1 bold ideas that address many citywide challenges.
2 That's how New York has grown over the decades. This
3 project, Hudson Yards West will serve as a blueprint
4 for forward thinking development shaped by public
5 need. It will also help us achieve our combined goal
6 of fostering a more prosperous and resilient future
7 for the building and construction industry and its
8 workers. Hudson Yards West will create thousands of
9 union jobs all while supporting local businesses that
10 have yet to recover fully from the pandemic. Hudson
11 Yards West is a critical proposal that supports the
12 livelihood and future of our workers and we cannot
13 allow huge opportunities like this to pass us by.
14 Locking in those 35,000 union jobs preserves middle
15 class pathways and apprenticeship pipelines. The
16 benefits of the plan are massive and include 35,000
17 union construction jobs during development, a new 5.6
18 acre green public park, a new public K-8 school,
19 daycare center, and a community facility. More than
20 \$2 billion in critical revenue for the MTA and 4,000
21 units of housing in an area that so desperately needs
22 it.
23

24 By bringing together the best contractors,
25 architects, engineers and developers, Hudson Yards

1 West will deliver what the city needs most, more
2 jobs, new housing, better transit and stronger
3 communities. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much. This
5 panel is excused. Thank you.

6 Next, we'll hear from Robert Hammen, Cynthia
7 Stark, Catherine Laferty, thank you Catherine and
8 Michael Walsh.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: We love Dickson's
10 Farmstand Meats by the way and Chelsea market lower
11 level.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Right, the promotion. Uhm,
13 and the following group will consist of Cindy Ruby,
14 Wright Harvey, Matthew Riker and Brian Chen. We'll
15 begin first with Catherine.

16 CATHERINE LAFERTY: Good afternoon Chair Riley
17 and Council Member Bottcher. Thanks so much for
18 allowing the members of the public to be here. I
19 just want to reiterate, I'm a member of the West
20 47th, 48th Street Blocks Association and a Hell's
21 Kitchen resident for 25 years. I remember when there
22 was no bike path, unfortunately, along the Hudson and
23 the community has benefitted so much from all of the
24 work along the Hudson River Park, and I think it
25

1 would be a shame to sabotage both the internationally
2 renowned highline, you know which is like the first
3 thing on everyone's list when they come to New York
4 for the past 15 years in terms of sites to visit.
5 And also the amazing work up along - up and down the
6 Hudson River Park with a slide where adults can slide
7 and an amazing bike path. And I just question,
8 though I appreciate that Related has come to the
9 table with additional housing units. There are still
10 only 324 affordable units and we desperately need
11 more in my opinion. But I also just want to say that
12 I think that the plan is still a thinly veiled
13 attempt to get a casino license and so, I am
14 adamantly opposed to the proposed rezoning of the
15 Western Railyards, and I encourage related to stay in
16 conversation with Community Board 4. It's a shame
17 that you weren't ready in time to have more talks to
18 them because members of the public have been coming
19 for months to hearings like this giving up our time.
20 Okay, so thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Catherine. Cindy,
23 one second. Can I get your name ma'am?

24 CYNTHIA STARKY: Cynthia Starky.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: You're Cindy? So Cindy,
3 you're in the next panel. So, you could move from
4 the table right now, you'll be in the next one.

5 CINDY RUBY: Oh in the next round.

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, I'm sorry. Cynthia,
7 you can go ahead.

8 CYNTHIA STARKY: Yes, I'm Cynthia Starky, I'm the
9 Co-Chair at the 100 block of West 1920 and I'm super
10 bummed to have to be here once again to ask you to
11 vote no on this agreement or this application. I'll
12 keep my comments brief but it was never agreed by us
13 to build a casino or super tall, we don't want and
14 never agreed to a casino. Indeed national data
15 demonstrates that casinos bring little to nothing of
16 value to communities, bring less desirable tourism,
17 provide only low paying jobs and use more resources
18 generating city revenue. We don't want, never agreed
19 to comprising sunlight on the Javits Center roofs
20 sustainable and unique ecosystem. The Javits roof
21 includes a farm, a green roof, a bee colony and the
22 habitat of the New York City Bird Alliance. It's
23 witnessed 65 bird species, 5 bat species and hundreds
24 of arthropod species using the roof.

1 So, please revert Related's proposal to the 2009
2 agreement. Stop the degradation of Manhattan and
3 please vote no on this application. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear
5 from Michael Walsh.

6 MICHAEL WALSH: Hi, I'd like to thank you all for
7 allowing this opportunity to speak. Thank you to the
8 Committee. My name is Michael Walsh and I am a
9 resident, long time resident of Chelsea. I have been
10 an active parent at PS 11 for over a decade and I am
11 the head of the Chelsea Green Park Friends of Chelsea
12 Green Park. Chelsea Green Park is a park that's very
13 active with the toddler and young families in our
14 community and I do mean the whole west side. We draw
15 people from the north, from the south, and so I come
16 here today in speaking on behalf of young families.
17 A group that has really been hard hit in Manhattan
18 and the city at large lately and we have huge
19 concerns about the plan on the table and we ask you
20 to vote no. We are concerned about the light and
21 shadow issues in the site. We are concerned about
22 the ancillary dangers of a casino in our community
23 and the lack of affordable housing. So, I am glad
24 that Council Member Bottcher brought up the 2009 plan
25

1 and I understand that the world has changed but the
2 goals of that plan are still relevant and so, I say
3 to you and to everyone here today, if you are
4 dedicated to the success of the Eastern Railyards to
5 what we have today that is known as Hudson Yards,
6 then you are dedicated to the goals of the
7 compromises that were made in that plan.
8

9 If you are dedicated to the union jobs, jobs and
10 small businesses that are now a part of the current
11 Hudson Yards, then you are dedicated to the goals of
12 the commitments that were made in the 2000 plan. If
13 you are dedicated to the retail, to the commerce and
14 to the shed, which make up the current Hudson Yards,
15 then you are dedicated to the compromises that were
16 made in the 2009 plan.

17 So, I ask you to vote no on this. I think it
18 should go back to the table. We are incrementally
19 moving forward towards a possibility of a plan and I
20 just don't think we are there yet. Thank you for
21 your time.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you for your testimony
23 and lastly, we will hear from Robert.

24 ROBERT HAMMEN: Hi, I'm Robert Hammen. I am a
25 Cofounder of the highline. I was Executive Director

1 for about 23 years of the highline. I love change.
2 I actually like development. I actually like tall
3 buildings but in this case, I would strongly urge you
4 to reject this and I'm actually not going to talk
5 about all the deficiencies of the plan. I think
6 other people can talk about that more eloquently.
7

8 These are depressing times for many of us and
9 someone asked me, what are you optimistic about? And
10 actually, I told them this story about this fight.
11 This is a fight against a developer in an out of town
12 Las Vegas casino operator against people in the
13 neighborhood, the city, community groups, block
14 associations and I think we feel or I feel so
15 overwhelmed with what's happening in government and
16 again this is not going to fix the bigger issues we
17 face but if this is an example where the government
18 actually listens to the people that live in our
19 neighborhood and our city, to me that gives just like
20 the highline on one hand, it's a small community
21 project but it had ripples all over the country. And
22 so, I think this victory of the community and
23 citizens against this project is a great, happy story
24 in these very tough times. So, I urge the Council to
25 vote no.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much. There
3 being no questions for this panel, this panel is
4 excused. Next, we'll have Cindy Ruby, Wright Harvey,
5 Matthew Riker and Brian Chen. The following group
6 after this panel will consist of Luanna Green, Irati
7 Castell, Andrea Adelman and Sharon Brown for the next
8 group.

9 First we'll begin with Cindy.

10 CINDY RUBY ESTRADA: Good morning and thank you
11 so much for allowing me to be here and speak to you
12 guys. My name is Cindy Ruby Estrada; I am the
13 Executive Director of the New York City Hispanic
14 Chamber of Commerce. Our mission is to ensure that
15 Latino owned businesses and working families have a
16 fair shot at success in this city and the Hudson
17 Yards West Project represents exactly the kind of
18 opportunity we need more of.

19 This is not just a development project. It's a
20 catalyst for economic empowerment. The project will
21 create tens of thousands of good paying jobs and
22 offer viable job training for our members spanning
23 construction, hospitality, maintenance, IT
24 operations, and more.
25

1 In other words, this project will open doors for
2 thousands of New Yorkers, many of them from
3 communities of color who have historically been left
4 out this growth before. Just as importantly and I
5 understand that this is not what we are discussing
6 right now. Whether you are against or for the
7 casino, the one billion community benefit package is
8 what we need to provide real resource into workforces
9 development, small business support, and local
10 nonprofits. There are 5,000 jobs in the casino, jobs
11 our city needs.
12

13 At a time when many small businesses are trying
14 to make ends meet and families are struggling to stay
15 in the city they help build, we cannot afford to let
16 this opportunity slip away. The Hispanic Chamber of
17 Commerce stands behind this project and we urge the
18 Council to do the same. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next we'll hear
20 from Wright Harvey.

21 WRIGHT HARVEY: Good morning Chairman Riley,
22 Council Member Bottcher. What an honor it is to be
23 here speaking with you this morning at City Hall. My
24 name is Wright Harvey. I'm here to talk about jobs,
25 however, perhaps not the more visible jobs like the

1 35,000 construction jobs we've heard about. I'm a
2 small business owner and I run a business that
3 connects artists, think painters, sculptors with
4 opportunities in real estate. These real estate
5 opportunities not only put art into the world,
6 they're an important lifeline for the artist
7 community. They help artists support materials, work
8 space, cover living expenses and more importantly
9 allow them to make our lives that much richer. Take
10 a moment to look around this beautiful room and
11 imagine a world without artists. When these real
12 estate opportunities go away, the artist community
13 suffers. The Western Railyards is an important
14 opportunity for New York artists. Think of the
15 public art commissions for the 5.6 acres of public
16 space, the buildings, lobbies and interiors,
17 prominent commercial tenants buying art for their
18 offices, residents collecting art for their homes,
19 potentially gaming operators who are big consumers of
20 art to create unique and exciting experiences for
21 their guests.
22

23 Related companies is one of, if not, the best
24 real estate developer in the world. They have a
25 track record of supporting artists and nonprofits as

1 part of their projects. They support artists not
2 because they have to but because it's one component
3 of building a vibrant successful community. They do
4 it because it's the right thing to do. I personally
5 strongly support related companies and I strongly
6 encourage us to give them the support they need to
7 take on this immense challenge and build a
8 neighborhood we can all be proud of. Thank you.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear
11 from Matthew Riker.

12 MATTHEW RIKER: Good afternoon. I'm Matt Riker;
13 I'm the Community and Business Development Manager at
14 New York Waterway with whom I'm speaking on behalf.
15 We provide ferry service along more than a dozen
16 routes, connecting numerous ferry facilities on the
17 Hudson River, East River and throughout New York
18 Harbor. Our intramodal services link transportation
19 facilities and the associated communities across the
20 region to Manhattan.

21 As someone who spent decades working on the
22 frontlines of regional transportation, I know that
23 for New York City to remain livable, competitive and
24 connected, we need to think seriously about long term
25 infrastructure and sustainable growth. And that's

1 why we support the Hudson Yards West proposal. This
2 project is not just about a new world class casino
3 and frankly that's not what we're deciding on today.
4 This is about investing in the systems that keep New
5 York moving.
6

7 With the MTA facing one of the most serious
8 fiscal challenges in its history, Hudson Yards West
9 offers a reliable stream of revenue that will help
10 stabilize and strengthen our transit network for
11 years to come. It also delivers up to 4,000 much
12 needed homes in a transit rich, job rich corridor.
13 This will expand access to opportunity and keep more
14 New Yorkers connected to the city they love, and it
15 does all this while adding green space, a new public
16 school, and direct community reinvestment. We also
17 believe the project is uniquely designed to benefit
18 from an existing robust waterborne transit system
19 that can and does link Hudson Yards with points
20 throughout New York and New Jersey. The increased
21 services, which we anticipate will be needed as a
22 result of this project is achievable operationally
23 with minimal impact on the surrounding neighborhood.
24 Expanded service will not only benefit visitors to
25 the area, potentially alleviating car traffic. This

1 expansion will be a reminder of all we have to gain
2 by connecting and working together to create economic
3 opportunity while minimizing the environmental impact
4 of improved regional access. This is the kind of big
5 integrated thinking we need to build a stronger, more
6 resilient city. New York Waterway supports this
7 project and I encourage the Council to advance it.
8 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you and last we'll hear
11 from Brian Chen.

12 BRIAN CHEN: Thank you Chair Riley, Council
13 Member Bottcher, Subcommittee members for the
14 opportunity to speak today. My name is Brian Chen
15 and I am the Chief Strategy officer of the Chinese
16 American Planning Council. We are a 60 year old
17 social service organization rooted in community and
18 anchored across 35 sites throughout New York City
19 serving 80,000 individuals and families annually.
20 From early childcare and afterschool programs to
21 English literacy classes and older adult programming,
22 our holistic services ensure community members not
23 only survive but thrive.

24 The Chinese American Planning Council is
25 supportive of the inclusive community integrated

workforce and economic development potential of the Hudson Yards West Project as it aligns with our agencies mission to promote the social and economic empowerment of immigrant and low-income New Yorkers.

Through the projects commitment to support workforce training, job creation, and career advancement, including 35,000 union construction jobs and 5,000 permanent union jobs, Hudson Yards West is positioned to be an opportunity hub inclusive of the small business community and the city's diverse but often marginalized populations, including the multilingual and multigenerational immigrants, individuals with disabilities and unemployed and under employed residents served by community organizations such as the Chinese American Planning Council.

Furthermore, Hudson Yards West has also pledged to partner with our agencies workforce development programs giving our constituents a real stake in the project. CPC, the Chinese American Planning Council is committed to collaborating with the Hudson Yards West team to ensure their efforts remain inclusive and benefit the widest possible range of New Yorkers. Thank you again for your time.

1 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you for your testimony.
2
3 There being no questions, this panel is excused. The
4 next panel will consist of Sharon Brown, Irati
5 Castell, Andrea Adelman, and Luanna Green.

6 The following panel will consist of Pat McCane,
7 Shakar Crawford, Chandra Singh, and Ahbat Depas. I'm
8 sorry if I mispronounce your name. That will be the
9 following. First, we will begin with Luanna Green.

10 LUANNA GREEN: Hello, my name is Luanna Green and
11 I am an active resident at Penn South Community,
12 which is the largest affordable co-op apartment
13 complex on the west side. The Highline is our
14 neighborhood's park, so I have a speech that's
15 written.

16 I have lived in Chelsea for 55 years. I have
17 been to the Highline when it was just a railyard with
18 rail trains running along the track, so now the
19 Highline is a beautiful park. We don't need a new
20 Bryant Park. We have a park, it's called the
21 Highline and we'd like to keep it like that. So, I
22 live in Chelsea. I'm a little nervous but I live in
23 Chelsea and Chelsea is a beautiful community and
24 right now Chelsea is under attack and under attack
25 with Related and all its promises that they can't

1 keep. Every time we turn around, Related has changed
2 their plans. So, now they're changing their plans
3 with this project and their changing their plans with
4 the Chelsea Elliot Houses to demolish them. Related
5 just wants to build a whole town for itself and we're
6 against it. we're against this proposal and we're
7 against Related period.

9 The other thing is, you talk about affordable
10 housing. In Chelsea, the average income is over
11 \$200,000. The median income is over \$115,000. So,
12 when you talk about affordable housing, who are you
13 talking about? Who are you building for? We talk
14 about jobs and everything. There's housing going up
15 all over the city. There's so many jobs all over
16 this city, so I'm just confused as to why we keep
17 going over these plans over and over again. We see
18 that Related cannot be trusted. They cannot keep
19 their word. They go back and they change their plans
20 and we are against them changing the west side
21 highline and changing the west side rail and we are
22 against this proposal and we ask you to also vote no.
23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear
25 from Andrea Adleman.

1 ANDREA ADLEMAN: Hi, my name is Andrea Adleman.
2
3 I am your constituent in Hell's Kitchen, previously
4 in Chelsea. I want you to ask yourself what's truly
5 in the public interest here? Truly the public
6 interest. Whose voices are here today? Whose voices
7 aren't being heard? What is the public interest
8 that's really being served here today? There is so
9 much darkness in the world today and we can do
10 something about that. Let there be open space. Let
11 there be sunlight. Let us glean the proven
12 scientific benefits to the human psyche when looking
13 at a body of water. Let there be light, let there be
14 parks in the public interest.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear
16 from Irati Castell. Sorry if I miss pronounced your
17 name.

18 IRATI CASTELL: Hello, my name Irati Castell. I
19 am a volunteer at La Nacional Spanish Fenevolence
20 Society. An important community institution in
21 Chelsea. I'm here today because I'm concerned that
22 this development plan is going to hurt the local
23 small businesses around it. The design of the
24 casino, the business model, is to bring people into
25 these giant buildings and keep them there at all the

1
2 restaurants in the same building so that they keep
3 gambling. That means nobody needs to explore the
4 great restaurants and night life on 9th Avenue and
5 Chelsea in Hell's Kitchen. And in fact, those
6 business loose traffic as people go the fancy
7 restaurants and the casino. It doesn't have to be
8 that way.

9 I don't support any particular projects but I
10 know the Time Square Casino proposal is to make sure
11 the casino guests explore and dine at the restaurant
12 around Time Square. That's helping small business,
13 not hurting it. I hope the City Council considers
14 dangers of the small businesses as it evaluates these
15 land use applications and votes no. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you and last Sharon
17 Brown.

18 SHARON BROWN: Hello, my name is Sharon Brown.
19 Before I begin, remember Israel. Release the
20 hostages, let Yawas people go. Defend Isreal.

21 Okay, I want to change for it. I checked in
22 opposition; I want to put for. Okay, Hudson Yards
23 West should go forward with the casino. They can
24 include other things besides a casino and other
25 entertainment so that it won't just be a casino.

1 Many of the people have problems with a casino
2 because they think that it's only going to be a
3 casino. Maybe they can go back to the drawing board
4 and put some other things there for entertainment and
5 for the housing there, we need to make sure that it
6 is there for homeless military veterans and homeless
7 people so the priority should be for homeless
8 military veterans and homeless, if they're going to
9 make housing. If you keep making housing and the
10 people that are military and homeless are still out
11 on the streets, then you haven't done anything except
12 shift someone from where they live to a new place to
13 live. So, we need people who actually need the
14 housing to get in there. Oh, and the first people
15 that should be considered for the jobs on these
16 projects to build should be the homeless, the
17 military veterans and things like that. They are
18 very skilled, very qualified. They are just without
19 homes. They have everything that everyone else has
20 that they should have a home. That they should be
21 able to take care of these jobs. If there are 5,000
22 jobs, the majority should be for people who need jobs
23 and are skilled. Homeless military veterans and the
24 homeless.
25

2 The construction jobs also and I'm part Native
3 American and casinos are not seedy. They are not
4 problematic; it's the way people handle them and run
5 them. Just a few seconds. Make sure that they are
6 run properly and that people conduct themselves.
7 There should be some kind of oversight to make sure
8 that we don't fall into the same problems that made
9 casinos go out of business.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Ms. Brown.

11 SHARON BROWN: You're welcome.

12 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: There being no questions for
13 this panel, this panel is excused. The next panel I
14 will be calling up will consist of Pat McCane, Shakar
15 Crawford I believe, Chandra Singh and Ahbat Depas.
16 Please excuse me if I mispronounced your name.

17 The following panel will consist of Inahee
18 Selden, Elaine Capella, Hiba Sigar and Vivek Singh.
19 How do you pronounce your last name?

20 VIVEK SINGH: Singh.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Singh, thank you. First,
22 we'll begin with Ahbat.

23 AHBAT DEPAS: Thank you for having me here. My
24 name is Ahbat Depas, I have been living in New York
25 for 50 years. Starting in high school I got involved

1
2 with community, helped the Fort Green mark to declare
3 for Fort Green mark area. From there, I did an
4 internship for City Planning and become a graphic
5 designer for 25 years.

6 Working on the Mayor Koch through Mayor
7 Bloomberg. I have seen the city change greatly and
8 those changes, City Planning had one consideration in
9 mind, quality of life. The highline has provided a
10 greater quality of life, not just for Chelsea, for
11 the west side. For the whole city, for the whole
12 United States and for the whole world to come and
13 enjoy and relax and to bring a casino in that area
14 where we have children, schools, is not a good thing.
15 I ask Related to voluntarily, in good faith, withdraw
16 their design for a casino development in that area
17 and sit down with the communities, elected officials
18 and give consideration to quality of life. Society
19 is in a crisis right now. If we do not sit the
20 platform for the young people coming up, we are going
21 to be worse and worse and worse. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we will
23 hear from Chandra Singh.

24 CHANDRA SINGH: Good afternoon Council Members.
25 My name is Chandra Singh and I'm a proud member of

1 the Hotel and Gaming Trades Council. I am here with
2 other members on behalf of our union to testify in
3 support of the Western Railyard project. This
4 project will be a huge win, not just only for the
5 community but for all New Yorkers. The hotel and
6 casino will create thousands of much needed good
7 paying jobs with benefit while creating new homes.
8 Our city is in the middle of a housing crisis and the
9 developer recently announced that this project will
10 create 4,000 apartments. This is more than double
11 the amount of units originally planned. I'm sure
12 that Western Railyard is committed to the community
13 needs. This is a once and a lifetime opportunity to
14 help New Yorkers who need jobs and housing. I urge
15 you to vote yes. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Ms. Crawford.

18 SHAKAR CRAWFORD: Good afternoon Council Members.
19 It's an honor being here today. Shout out to HDC,
20 shout out to the Bronx. My name is Shakar Crawford
21 and I'm a proud hospitality worker and a member of
22 the Hotel and Gaming Trades Council.

23 I am here on behalf of my union to testify in
24 support of the Western Railyards project. This
25 project gives our city an opportunity to create

1 thousands, thousands of very high quality jobs,
2 including permanent hospitality jobs like mine.
3 These jobs will lift up New Yorkers and boost
4 economic activity, not just in Chelsea but across the
5 city, which we need now more than ever. So, I urge
6 you. I please urge you to vote yes on this
7 application. Thank you very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear
10 from Pat.

11 PAT MCCANE: Thank you members of the
12 Subcommittee and thank you Chair Riley and Council
13 Member Bottcher. SCIU 32 BJ is the largest union of
14 property service workers in the United States
15 representing over 175,000 property service workers
16 across our jurisdictions including 90,000 in New York
17 City. At least 1,000 of which are employed by
18 Related.

19 32 BJ members form the backbone of New York's
20 property services industry. Our members are the
21 workers who keep the city's commercial and
22 residential buildings, stadiums, airports and other
23 public facilities safe, clean and running. 32 BJ is
24 here today in support of Related companies ULURP
25 application for the Western Railyard modifications.

1 The application proposed a mixed use development
2 inclusive of over 4,000 new units of housing, over
3 five acres of public open space and more on the
4 currently undeveloped Western Railyard in Manhattan's
5 Hudson Yards neighborhood. This increase in housing
6 will benefit the Hudson Yards area and surrounding
7 neighborhoods. I'm pleased to report that 32BJ has
8 secured a credible commitment from related companies
9 for the creation of good jobs for the workers who
10 will permanently staff the residential and commercial
11 office portions of this proposed development. These
12 workers will join the over 1,000 32BJ residential
13 workers, commercial cleaners and security officer who
14 work at related companies properties across the city.

16 In addition to the important job creation that
17 will come from this project, the developer has
18 proposed the construction of 4,000 new units of
19 housing, large scale mixed income residential
20 projects like this one are crucial to chipping away
21 at New Yorks massive housing shortage. 32 BJ is
22 proud to support this ULURP application and looks
23 forward to the approval of this proposal. Thank you
24 to the Zoning Subcommittee for the opportunity to
25 comment on this project.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. There being no
3 questions for this panel, this panel is excused.
4 Thank you for your testimony. Next, we'll hear from
5 Inahee Selden, Elaine Capella, Hiba Sigar and Vivek
6 Singh. The following panel will consist of Ash
7 Wolston, Tosha Miller, Michael Vestoreli(SP?) and
8 Lawrence Lipman. And just wanted to acknowledge for
9 those of you online, we will be about less than an
10 hour before we transition to online testimony. Okay,
11 first we'll begin with Vivek. Just press the button
12 Vivek. Thank you.

13 VIVEK SINGH: Good afternoon. Thank you for
14 lending you audience. First about myself. I was
15 born and raised in Pheonix. I spent 30 years living
16 in the same house. I thought I'd never find another
17 place that would become home. I moved to New York at
18 30, first in Greenage Village then came to where I
19 live today and it has become a home. This place, I
20 first moved for the convenience of the location
21 relative to Penn Station but as things have opened
22 up, it has become a truly special place.

23 We've started to see families, young adults,
24 retirees, all call this place home and when the
25 pandemic hit, we started our own family and it turned

1 out many others, disproportionately a large number of
2 others in our area did as well. The concerns that I
3 have are around some of the impacts. Naturally, a
4 lot of it is around the casino, so I did my research
5 and the most relevant study that I found was the
6 impact of casino proximity on northeast Urban
7 community by nature from February 2022 including New
8 York City. There were increases in jobs, but they're
9 not necessarily local to that area but there's also
10 adverse businesses that we don't want to see in that
11 area, especially with how much family or how
12 attractive the area has become towards families.

14 Further, the enlargement of the buildings and the
15 revisionment of the proposal, we've started to see
16 increases in wind already because of the other large
17 buildings and it's manageable today but I fear that
18 those changes from the revisionment of the proposal. I
19 did enjoy seeing those pictures on the screen but I
20 think that that's in relative to not having that 2009
21 proposal. I also want to call attention to one more
22 thing. Coming from - sorry. Coming from Phoenix, I
23 know a lot of people who have moved to Vegas but the
24 nice thing that they have is, the casinos on the
25 strip, they don't have the challenge of having it in

1
2 their community directly. We don't have that, such a
3 luxury.

4 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we're going
5 to hear from Capelle.

6 ALAN CAPELLE: Hi, I'm Alan Van Capelle, I'm the
7 Executive Director of Friends of the Highline. In
8 our 25 year history we have been partners in our
9 neighborhoods growth. We have never once opposed a
10 single development or rezoning in our vicinity and we
11 know how much growth has taken place along the mile
12 and a half park that is the Highline.

13 From the outset, this proposal was conceived
14 without the vital input of those who live nearby and
15 that is why you're hearing so many voices opposed to
16 this bad plan. The Highline would become windier and
17 darker and the Hallmark sensation of a floating
18 within the city would be lost. View corridors would
19 be blocked by an unprecedented 200 foot high building
20 podium. The space within the development footprint
21 would shrink the renderings of the lush greenery are
22 deceptive. The space would be cast in shadow for all
23 but two and half hours during the day and the Bryant
24 Park comparison, while it's interesting, Bryant Park
25 receives 15 hours of sunlight during an average

1 summer day. Connectivity to the neighborhood would
2 be lost and the public space would be in effect
3 privatized in service to a casino and to a resort.
4 The 2009 plan created a balance between super tall
5 density of the eastern railyards and a vision of a
6 lower rise more sustainable development for the
7 western railyards. The current proposal represents a
8 stark departure from what we bargained for back then.
9 This unvetted public financing scheme brought at the
10 11th hour and 59 minutes with no meaningful community
11 support. They are asking the city to absorb the
12 financial risk of their casino based project and
13 taxpayers should not be rolling the dice on this
14 scheme. This press release of a shabby proposal asks
15 taxpayers to risk billions of dollars for a project
16 with limited public benefit. A casino and 92 percent
17 luxury condominiums. This couldn't be more different
18 from what we all envisioned in 2009. Let's not lose
19 what we have so carefully worked for.
20

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear
22 from Hiba.

23 HIBA SIGAR: Hi, yes, Hiba.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Hiba?
25

1 HIBA SIGAR: Yes, I'm Hiba Sigar, I'm a volunteer
2 at the Highline and I wanted to first talk about the
3 small business impacts. So, the developers talk
4 about how small businesses are going to flourish once
5 this proposal goes through. They use the words both
6 casino and resort. The two things those have in
7 common is everything is in house. What people will
8 do is they'll gamble; they'll eat and drink at the
9 restaurants. They'll go back to their hotel or call
10 an Uber and go home. There is little or no
11 interaction with the community. And in regards to
12 the quality of life, I live about a ten minute walk
13 from a Costco and it takes up two blocks in one full
14 avenue. It's huge and the size of this casino is six
15 of those warehouses on top of each other. So, when
16 we're talking about shadows, we'll lose so much
17 sunlight and just visual interest from the Highline.
18 We're so - it's such a unique situation because it's
19 elevated and Councilman Bottcher said earlier that
20 New Yorkers are proprietary about their space and I
21 couldn't agree more and we are that way for a reason.
22 Green spaces and open spaces are so beneficial to
23 mental health and it doesn't get more New York than
24 the Highline and we started off with the rail roads
25

1 coming in. It gets deserted. It almost was going to
2 be destructed and then the community came together
3 and said, why don't we actually repurpose this and
4 now we have this going on until today. And we're not
5 - I'm not against development and the Highline
6 Commission is not against development, it's that this
7 proposal in particular does not help the community.
8 It's got to be something else. Thank you.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you and lastly, we'll
11 hear from Inahee.

12 INAHEE SELDEN: My name is Inahee Selden. I am a
13 resident of Hell's Kitchen and I'm odocent on the
14 Highline. Let me take you on a little tour of the
15 highline. Most of the points I was going to make
16 have already been made, so I'm going to tear this up
17 and I'll tell you what it's like on the Highline.
18 When you talk to locals who are visiting the
19 Highline, national, international visitors. When you
20 mentioned this project for a casino and a resort that
21 takes up roughly half the space that was originally
22 designed for the common good, they say what? Are you
23 crazy? This is in English. This is in Italian.
24 This is in French and we have a lot of visitors from
25 Korea and they say as others do, we have the same

1
2 problem with development that you do here. Why don't
3 we give the world a different example? Why don't we
4 eliminate or least mitigate the reputation of New
5 York as the world capital of greed? Because that's
6 what this project says to the residents, the local
7 residents, the residents on the upper and west side,
8 upper east side, the Bronx and other places that this
9 is a completely ridiculous proposal. And if you need
10 advice on sunlight as Alan said, the research has
11 already been done. You don't have to spend money to
12 find out how much sunlight will hit your landscaping.
13 Show New York that it listens to its constituency and
14 listens and this Committee listens to the voters of
15 New York. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Council Member
17 Bottcher has a question for this panel. A question
18 for Alan Van Capelle. Hi Alan, are you totally
19 wedded to the 2009 plan?

20 ALAN VAN CAPELLE: Thank you Council Member.
21 Look, I think what's important about the 2009 plan is
22 that it was worked on together. It was a negotiated
23 process that took as I understand many, many months
24 to get to fruition. Not everybody was happy with
25

1 everything in that plan and this seems to be a real
2 departure from what was worked on in 2009.

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Are you opposed to the
5 idea of you know it was characterized earlier that
6 you weren't willing to be really collaborative? Are
7 you opposed to the idea of sitting down and coming up
8 with something that works for the Highline?

9 ALAN VAN CAPELLE: Look, I think we met multiple
10 times. The applicant seems to have counted the
11 amount of times. I didn't take the time to count but
12 fair enough to say we had many conversations. I just
13 don't think they've proven themselves to be good
14 listeners. I do want to say Council Member, they're
15 our neighbors. They're going to continue to be our
16 neighbors. Our staffs work with each other on a host
17 of operational and security issues every single day.
18 This is a rupture. At some point there will be a
19 repair. We very much want to see that site
20 developed. We encourage the applicant to withdraw
21 their application, to sit down with the Community
22 Board and start back at the drawing board. They have
23 a timeline and a deadline at the end of June. I
24 don't believe there's going to be an opportunity for
25 the community to negotiate something between now and

1 when their application for a casino has to get in.
2 And I think if they had started with the community
3 instead of giving us a full formed project at the
4 beginning, we wouldn't be here today. They did make
5 minor adjustments but when they notch back a
6 building, they push the other corner of the building
7 further closer to the highline, so I really don't
8 think those were tweaks and as our professional
9 architects who've reviewed the plans have said, this
10 plan is so bad it's not tweakable. It literally has
11 to be withdrawn and start over from scratch.
12

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Thank you.

14 ALAN VAN CAPELLE: Thank you Council Member.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. This panel is
16 excused. Thank you so much. Our next panel will
17 consist of Ahe Wilson, Tasha Miller, Michael
18 Vestoreli and Lawrence Lipman.

19 The following panel will consist of Patricia
20 Shakey, Reverend Noel Zarek, Cathy Rugros, I believe
21 and Richard Graziano will be the following panel.

22 I will repeat the names again, Lawrence Lipman,
23 Michael Vestoreli, Tasha Miller and Ash Wolston. If
24 you hear your name, please come up to the panel. Can
25 I get both of your names real quick?

1 MICHAEL VESTORELLI: Michael Vestoreli.

2 TASHA MILLER: Tasha Miller.

3 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Is Lawrence Lipman or Ash
4 Wolston here? Okay. Tasha, you may begin.

5 TASHA MILLER: My name is Tasha Miller, the
6 President of the New York City Chamber of Commerce.
7 Our mission is to create opportunities for Black
8 owned businesses and support economic mobility for
9 working families across five boroughs. That's why
10 I'm proud to speak in support of the Hudson Yards
11 West proposal.
12

13 This proposal isn't just about buildings, it's
14 about whether we are still capable of building a city
15 that works for everyone. We know that the stakes -
16 our rent are rising. Middle class is shrinking and
17 still recovering from impact of the pandemic.
18 Elected officials should be looking for big projects
19 that deliver revenue, create more housing, encourage
20 tourism, and create good paying jobs. Hudson Yards
21 West does all of that and more. It will also
22 generate billions in reliable revenue for MTA, create
23 new public rain spaces and invest directly in
24 community based organizations.

1
2 It is an example of what can happen when we think
3 innovatively about our cities needs and growth. New
4 York promises has always been about opportunity but
5 that promise only holds if we keep building for the
6 future. The Black Chamber of Commerce supports the
7 project and we urge the City Council to move forward
8 with it.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear
10 from Michael.

11 MICHAEL VESTORELI: Good afternoon Council
12 Members and members Committee and everybody in
13 attendance today.

14 My name is Michael Vestoreli and I'm proud to
15 serve as a business representative for the New York
16 City District Council of Carpenters representing
17 thousands of hardworking union carpenters across the
18 city. I'm here today to voice strong support for the
19 Western Yards plan proposed by Related companies.
20 Related has a long proven track record of working
21 with the carpenters to deliver major projects that
22 not only transform our skyline but also lift up our
23 communities with good paying jobs and family
24 sustaining jobs.

1 At Hudson Yards, Related kept its word by
2 committing to strong labor standards and building one
3 of the most significant union construction projects
4 in the country. We are proud to say our members had
5 a major hand in building that vision into reality and
6 now the Western Yards represents an opportunity to
7 finish what we started. To transform a still under
8 developed part of the city with world class
9 construction while creating thousands of union jobs
10 along the way. This project will bring years of
11 employment for carpenters, skilled men and women who
12 live in the five boroughs who pay taxes here, raise
13 their families here and reinvest in the strength of
14 our neighborhoods. Simply put related Western Yards
15 plan represents a real investment in New York City's
16 future. An investment built by union hands with
17 union values and union standards.

18
19 On behalf of the New York City district Council
20 of Carpenters and the working families we represent,
21 I urge to approve this plan and help us continue
22 building a better New York. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Michael. There
24 being no questions for this panel, you're excused.
25 Thank you.

1
2 Next, I'm going call Patricia Sharkey, Reverend
3 Noel Zarek, Cathy Rugros (SP?) I'm sorry if I
4 mispronounced your name and Richard Graziano.

5 The following group after that will consist of
6 Kareem Holmes, Amor Ahmed, Wasim Ahmed, and Karen
7 Flaherty, I believe. I will begin with Richard.

8 RICHARD GRAZIANO: Good morning. My name is
9 Richard Graziano and I am a volunteer docent on the
10 Highline and if there's anything I've known or
11 learned about the Highline is that change is a
12 constant. There are buildings going up every day and
13 some change is good. Buildings that allow for light
14 and air, and chump change is bad. The proposed
15 building of this 20 story monolith on the west side
16 of the Western Yards is bad change.

17 As someone who has a 51 year teaching career in
18 this New York City public schools and the City
19 University of New York, one of the things that I
20 learned is that when you make a commitment, if you
21 want a relationship with the people around you, in
22 this case, the community, you live up to your
23 commitment.

24 In 2009, Related committed to a plan of mixed
25 use. Housing, schools, and open space. Now, they're

1 trying to renege on that commitment and we need to
2 make sure that they live up to the commitment that
3 they did.
4

5 Now, the proposed monolith that might include a
6 casino, is inward looking, as mentioned before by
7 someone but people who go to those casinos are inward
8 looking. They eat in, dine in, drink in and they
9 don't go to the local community. And so, all you
10 need to do is look at Atlantic City or Ozone Park
11 where no one goes to the local community. So, I urge
12 the Council to say no to this very bad plan or bad
13 change for the Highline and for the local community.
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear
16 from Patricia.

17 PATRICIA STARKEY: I've been a Chelsea resident
18 for the past 30 years. I live on 19th Street and
19 during this time I've watched the Highline evolve
20 from an idea to a destination that's loved by local
21 residents and international visitors as well.

22 I walk to work on the Highline. I work at 59th
23 and I see parents escorting their children to school.
24 I see folks taking in just a bit of fresh air. I see
25 people enjoying the quality of life that it offers.

1
2 And as I walk to work in the morning, I think about
3 the Hudson River and I look at where I can see it now
4 and I'm a history nerd, so I think about Henry
5 Hudson. I think about George Washington and
6 interactions along the Hudson. I think about
7 Alexander Hamilton rowing to his final tabockle and
8 Weehawken but I've watched - as I've watched and
9 walked over the years, I watched views disappear.
10 What was once open space in sunlight is now a
11 corridor through high rises and it effects quality of
12 life for everyone. Not just for me but for everyone
13 here in New York City. You can't put a price on a
14 view of the Hudson River and I'm really speaking for
15 aesthetic reasons which means quality of life and
16 that effects everyone.

17 Once views of the Hudson River are gone, they are
18 gone forever. I just ask that the people who make
19 the decisions respect this place and its history.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Patricia. Reverend
21 Noel Zarek.

22 REVEREND NOEL VANEK: Vanek, yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Vanek.

24 REVEREND NOEL VANEK: Glad to be here. Thank
25 you. I'm a retired minister. I live in Chelsea. I

1 just want to leave you with two thoughts. One,
2 you've heard a lot of speaking about urgency. A once
3 in a lifetime opportunity. The only thing I've heard
4 that's urgent is the deadline for the casino
5 application. Other than that, the better thing to do
6 would be to go back to the drawing board with the
7 community groups and mimic the process that produced
8 the 1989 ULURP that was agreed on. It needs to be
9 changed but it needs to be done with community input
10 at a steady but careful pace.
11

12 Secondly, don't throw the baby out with the bath
13 water. The Highline is one of the greatest things
14 New York City has done in the last 25 years. Don't
15 endanger its beauty and magnanimity. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Reverend. And
17 last, Cathy. The last name begins with an R. If you
18 are Cathy and beginning with R, your last name.
19 She's not here? Alright thank you. There being no
20 questions, this panel is excused. Thank you so much.
21 Next, we'll hear Kareem Holms, Amor Ahmed, Wasim
22 Ahmed and Karen, last name begins with an F.

23 We'll begin first with Kareem.

24 KAREEM HOLMES: Hello, my name is Kareem Holmes.
25 I am the President, Founder and CEO of Big City

1
2 Tourism, the first Black owned site seeing business
3 and probably the only Black owned site seeing
4 business in the Hudson Yards area. I'm originally
5 from the lower east side of Manhattan, born and
6 raised in the projects of the lower east side Jacob
7 Reese. I recently in the last four years developed
8 my small business and I operate our of Pier 78, which
9 is on the west side in Hudson Yards. It's been a
10 great experience of being able to create my small
11 business and change the lives of many people. What I
12 do understand this whole process because I was on the
13 community side when I was in the lower east side and
14 experienced a lot of the gentrification and big
15 businesses coming into build. Here in this
16 situation, I really am for the win and them building
17 a business because they are bringing lots of
18 opportunity to the area.

19 This proposal will build a great success in the
20 Hudson Yards, which everyone here should acknowledge
21 has been a big boost to our city and brought new
22 visitors to the west side of Manhattan. It will
23 create tens of thousands of union construction jobs,
24 5,000 permanent union jobs spanning hospitality,
25 operation and retail. The same industry that drive

1
2 New York's tourism economy. These are the kinds of
3 jobs that lift up working people and support families
4 for the long hall.

5 Just as important are the long term benefits.
6 Some housing are permanent, a premium gaming
7 destination, more green space, and a community
8 benefit package that will fund local services.
9 Workforce training and a foundation dedicated to
10 supporting the neighborhood directly. That's the
11 kind of investment that helps to keep small business
12 like mine strong. I'm for this opportunity. Thank
13 you.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Wasim.

15 WASIM AHMED: Hello. My name is Wasim Ahmed, a
16 resident in Hell's Kitchen. I like the idea of 4,000
17 housing and more job opportunities. It's a good
18 idea. We had a business in the area since 2010 you
19 know from 2012 in the construction and all that
20 starts. It's a big difference and to now. So, I
21 would like you guys to say yes for this project.
22 Yes, please. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Amor.

24 AMOR AHMED: Good afternoon. How are you? How
25 is everything and thank you so much for this

1 opportunity. Who can say no to schools? Who can say
2 no for thousands of jobs in the neighborhood? Who
3 can say no to this big project? You know that's a
4 4,000, everybody is talking about stuff and all of
5 that. That's a 4,000 housing and apartments in this
6 project. That's a lot. That's 4,000 families will
7 be in this you know and we trust Related company. We
8 already saw what they did you know everywhere.
9 Hudson Yard and all the projects they've been doing.
10 It's not like someone wouldn't know. He's just
11 coming here and saying, I'm going to do that and no,
12 this is a trusted company. You see them you know
13 you've seen their work before. So, I say please,
14 please say yes to this project because it's not just
15 going to change the neighborhood only. The state and
16 the country as well. Thank you so much.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Karen.

19 KAREN FLAHERTY: Yes, my name is Karen Flaherty.
20 I'm a long term, longtime resident since 1978 of East
21 17th Street and well, the last decade, I've worked as
22 a community activist. I cannot support this project
23 based upon the casino being present on the west side
24 of Manhattan. I think it will impact small business
25 that is already surrounding the Highline. It's

1 already difficult to find reasonable restaurants to
2 go to if you wanted to go out for an event. The
3 Highline gives us the opportunity to walk within
4 nature, within the city. This past year when I was
5 diagnosed with cancer, that's the first place I went
6 to was the Highline in order to be able to just be
7 outdoors and appreciate my life on this earth.

9 I'm going to bring some words of Reverend Barber
10 from the Poor Peoples Campaign into this meeting. He
11 is talking of course in Washington DC now about
12 policy but I think we can take his words as well
13 about community planning. He poses that the three
14 key questions to evaluate any policy community impact
15 is how is this policy or this community plan
16 effecting peoples living and dying? How is this
17 community plan going to serve the most vulnerable?
18 And are these planning policies, community building,
19 redevelopment addressing systemic inequalities?
20 Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much to this
22 panel. You are excused. Ms. Karen, I hope you beat
23 your cancer diagnosis, okay.

24 KAREN FLAHERTY: Thank you very much.

25 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: And thank you for testifying.

1 KAREN FLAHERTY: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: The next panel we're going to
3 hear from is Layla Law Gisiko, Tappy Hightower, Ieffy
4 Adelona, and Kenin Porter. Once again that is Layla
5 Law Gisiko, Ieffy Adelona, Tappy Hightower and Kenin
6 Porter.
7

8 Ms. Layla, that's you? You may begin.

9 LAYLA LAW GISIKO: Thank you so much. My name is
10 Layla Law Gisiko, I am here as the President of the
11 City Club of New York, a civic organization here to
12 speak about the proposal. We are told that Related
13 companies has modified the Hudson Yards Western
14 Railyard plan but no meaningful details have been
15 shared with this community.

16 I want to focus on the pilot proposal. We hear
17 that it is going to be creative financing, which is
18 euphonism for thought pilots, which is a euphonism
19 for tax abatement. We are not getting any real
20 numbers. None were shared today and meanwhile the
21 burden of infrastructure will quietly be shifted onto
22 the public. We know exactly where this road led with
23 phase one of Hudson Yards, which cost the City of New
24 York \$2 billion in lost tax revenue and bridge
25 financing for bonds. Taxpayers under road

1 infrastructure while Related reaped the profits.
2 Related has proven itself a reliable partner and it
3 should not be rewarded for ignoring, renegotiating or
4 walking away from past commitments. Today, the
5 commitment to affordable housing remains vague, too
6 vague to be called upon and approving what's before
7 us would be nothing short of signing a blank check.
8 This plan must be sent back to the drawing board.
9 New Yorkers deserve specifics, not sales pitch and
10 anything less is a disservice to the public.

12 I really want to emphasize that it would be
13 unconscionable for the New York City casino to be tax
14 exempt or tax abated. The City Council is not in the
15 business of wealth management for private developers
16 but is in the business of protecting the public
17 interest. Once again, it would be unconscionable
18 that the casino in New York City be tax exempt or tax
19 abated. This plan must be rejected. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much. Before I
21 get to the final two panels, I just want to stay
22 online, we have one more panel left before we
23 transition to online.

24 The last in person panel will consist of Alethia
25 Lafert, Carmen Mattis, Ann Aust, thank you. Joe Keen

1 Alenal, and Luana Green. That will be the final
2 panel. If you did not hear your name and you wanted
3 to testify, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms to
4 submit a speakers card. Next, we'll hear from Tappy.
5

6 TAPPY HIGHTOWER: Hi, my name is Tapawana Shea
7 Hightower. I go by Tappy for most peoples
8 convenience. I'm from the lower east side but I
9 attend university in West Village but I'm a neighbor
10 who often works in and frequents the neighborhood of
11 the Western Railyards.

12 I'm going to keep this very brief but the City
13 Council is not being asked to vote on a casino, that
14 much is true. However, by voting in agreement with
15 the plan that includes a proposal for a casino or an
16 application, excuse my language. The City Council
17 would be enabling the development of a casino. As I
18 stated in my introduction, I am a neighbor and not a
19 resident of this neighborhood. However, as a
20 neighbor it is my responsibility to listen to the
21 concerns of those who are in and of the community.
22 And if New York is in dire need of a casino, there
23 are much more ideal practical locations that will not
24 complicate the lives of our most vulnerable, which
25 doesn't just include the shrinking middle class.

1 That also includes a group that most people failed to
2 mention, that most people fail to acknowledge for
3 whatever reason but it is also the low income members
4 of that household or of those households. It also
5 includes senior citizens and all of those who are
6 vulnerable as previously mentioned by other people
7 who are against this development plan. I urge the
8 City Council to vote no on this.
9

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear
11 from Ieffy.

12 IEFFY ADELONA: Hi, my name is Ieffy
13 Adelona (SP?), I live in Hudson Yards and have lived
14 there for seven years since the inception. I'm also
15 a volunteer of the Highline and I wanted to get to
16 the first two points that were very stark to me.
17 [INAUDIBLE 02:46:59] currently is concentrated in
18 Manhattan and other neighborhoods continue to
19 experience higher unemployment. So, adding jobs
20 within this area will only further hinder other areas
21 of New York from job creation.

22 The many available positions that this proposed
23 development plan is suggesting are mostly lower wage
24 service jobs rather than middle income careers that
25 would support living in an expensive city such as New

1 York. The Highline is a special place for our
2 community and over the last 15 years, it has become
3 one of the city's prized jewels and an increase in
4 dark, windy spaces and loss of connectivity to the
5 surrounding areas would really make it bad for people
6 who live in the community.
7

8 We want to continue to support a vibrant,
9 welcoming, and accessible part of the city and this
10 proposal does the opposite of that. I believe that
11 views of the water, the Hudson River are essential to
12 the experience on the Highline and living in Hudson
13 Yards, a lot of the building that have sense gone up
14 really block these important views. So, adding to
15 this corridor in this proposal would continue to
16 block the city's scape and skyline views that create
17 the magical sensation of floating in the city and
18 ultimately the buildings being built close to the
19 park would ruin the magic of the Highline experience.
20 So, I urge the City Council to vote no on this
21 application.

22 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Kenin Porter, are
23 you here? Kenin Porter. Okay, thank you so much for
24 this panel. You're excused and thank you to the
25 Chambers for disagreeing in peace. I see you guys.

1
2 Next, we're going to have Aletta Laferg, Carmen
3 Mattis, Ana, Ann, Joe Keen and Luana. And following,
4 we're going to have one last in person panel. That
5 consists of Bridgett, Tru Sims and John Collins.
6 Okay, Luana. Joe Keen.

7 JOE KEEN ALENAL: Hello, my name is Joe Keen
8 Alenal. I'm from Chelsea Housing and against the
9 rezoning for Hudson Yards. There's so many things
10 and so many problems with the plan that has been
11 proposed by Related and there are so many known and
12 unknown consequences that we will face through the
13 construction and finishing throughout all of this.
14 I'm not here to be redundant. We've heard and we
15 know the problems. The wind, the shadows, the light,
16 the school being built right next to the casino.
17 What I will say as a member of this community, is I
18 will not have my community be used to subsidize
19 corporate loss and greed. They're using our
20 community to make a profit and the businesses that
21 are in support here as well while the community sees
22 the carpet, these businesses and labor movements
23 don't even see the rug underneath their nose. New
24 York City and in turn District 3 is a very delicate
25 ecosystem and to rezone with little community

1 insight, there will be no telling what this rezoning
2 will bring.
3

4 But what I can tell you is that the proposal has
5 been opposed through almost every phase of this
6 process, so to go against this approval and allow
7 this rezoning is to ignore all levels of community
8 insight. Related can kick, scream, and represent
9 whatever information they have to seem as favorable
10 as they want but this community sees right through
11 them and we're not here to back down.

12 And one thing I will say before my time wraps us
13 is New York does not have a housing crisis. We have
14 an affordability crisis. We can't pay to keep
15 staying here. Related says the plan in 2009 is out
16 of the window and they can't fix it. Well, guess
17 what? Drop that contract and find somebody else who
18 will. Take that loss on the chin and move on. Get
19 somebody who will get it done. Oh yeah, thank you
20 all for your time.

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Next, we'll hear
22 from Ann.

23 ANN AUST: Hi, my name is Ann. Last name is A-
24 u-s-t Aust and I live in Hell's Kitchen and uhm I've
25 heard a lot of arguments for and against and they're

1 all compelling but I have to say I oppose the
2 rezoning of this - of the Highline and uhm I feel the
3 way everybody that's opposing this, I agree with
4 their reasons and it all makes a lot of sense to me
5 and uhm, so I urge the City Council to please oppose
6 the rezoning of the Highline. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thanks. Carmen.

9 CARMEN MATTIS: [INAUDIBLE 02:52:21]. Good
10 afternoon, I'm Carmen Mattis. I have lived for 50
11 years between Hell's Kitchen and I know live at Penn
12 South, Chelsea. I am an avid supporter of the
13 Highline. I go there all the time. I'm a woman of a
14 certain age, so you are talking to a senior when you
15 talk to me. I am against the reevaluating of the 209
16 - what is it?

17 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Proposal.

18 CARMEN MATTIS: Proposal and I am in favor of
19 taking it all back to the drawing board and
20 restarting. We do not need to dwarf the Highline
21 with no sunshine. We do not need more unaffordable
22 housing but we do need people and we do need jobs. I
23 don't necessarily think that it will be the jobs that
24 a casino will give us but I do think that we need
25 more work in this neighborhood. We need more

1 housing. We need more sunlight and we need to
2 support our jewel, the Highline. Thank you very
3 much.
4

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much for your
6 testimony. There being no questions, this panel is
7 excused. Thank you for testifying today. I have one
8 more panel, which consists of Tom Morris, Bridgett
9 Gramling, Tru Sims, and John Collins. If I did not
10 call your name and you want to testify and you're in
11 the Chambers, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms
12 to submit a speakers card.

13 After this, we will be transitioning to online
14 testimony. First, we will begin with John Collins.

15 JOHN COLLINS: Good afternoon. I'm John Collins,
16 I'm a docent on the Highline and I stand firmly
17 opposed to the development plan for the casino and
18 the drastic reduction in promised housing.

19 The plan is not a value add to the residents, the
20 Highline, or the millions of visitors who come here
21 each year. It only benefits Win and Related, not our
22 city. The Highline transformed this neighborhood.
23 Why? Because it balanced the needs of the community.
24 It preserved nature along with urban life and
25 provided a way for people to experience New York from

1 a whole new perspective. 30 feet in the air,
2 surrounded by art, architecture and history.

3
4 This casino complex shades that balance. It
5 does not compliment the Highline. It will degrade
6 one of most beloved spaces in New York City. Now
7 originally the plan called for nearly 5,700
8 residences - I've heard 52. It now provides less
9 than 2,000 but maybe it's 4,000. That's not a
10 compromise. It's greed. Developers say that the
11 plan isn't economically feasible but saving the
12 Highline wasn't feasible in 1999 either. But smart,
13 brave minds in the form of Joshua David, Robert
14 Hammen and others made it possible.

15 Be smart, be brave, and execute a vision that
16 benefits everyone, not just a few corporations. It's
17 not impossible. It's only impossible if you don't
18 try. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you and next we'll hear
20 from Tru.

21 TRU SIMS: Thank you for letting me speak today.
22 I strongly - I'm strongly against the proposed casino
23 at Hudson Yards West. I currently live on 16th
24 Street and 8th Avenue, less than a mile from the
25 proposed casino location. I have lived and worked in

1 and around Chelsea since 1980. The Highline has
2 brought both locals and tourists, including many
3 families from around the city and the world to the
4 far west side of Manhattan, which in the 1980's as
5 many of you may recall was quite bleak. The change
6 has been good and positive. The original 2009 Hudson
7 Yards West plan as you know was envisioned primarily
8 as a residential neighborhood with a focus on green
9 space. There was a commitment for affordable
10 housing, a new public school and other community
11 focus initiatives. It was designed, in my opinion,
12 to be family friendly. There is no way that a casino
13 and family friendly go together. So, now this plan
14 has become something totally different.

15
16 Once you add a casino, you lose the positives.
17 No good will come from building this casino, for all
18 the reasons everybody already knows. New York does
19 not need this casino or any casinos. There are
20 plenty of things to do and ways to be entertained and
21 make lots of money in New York City without the
22 proposed Hudson Yards West casino. We can do better
23 than this plan. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Bridgett.

BRIDGETT GRAMLING: Hi, my name is Bridgett Gramling, I live on the upper west side currently but I lived on 23rd Street and Chelsea for the first eight years that I lived in New York. I still spend a lot of time in Chelsea in the Hudson Yards volunteering for several nonprofits including the Highline. The Highline is one of my favorite places in the city and when I lived in Chelsea it was my sidewalk.

I've thrown out the majority of my comments because you don't need to hear everything over again but I do want to emphasize the wind issues that are a part of this current proposal. I don't think I heard them say today that the impact is going to be felt as far south as 23rd Street. Currently in Hudson Yards, the Highline has to be closed in the railyard section regularly because of the wind issues from the current Hudson Yards project. You can hear the wind whipping through there, especially in the winter time and closing that section of the park eliminates a lot of really wonderful views and really wonderful experience, especially the south seeded landscape that's still currently there. If you extend that all the way down to 23rd Street, it's possible that two-

1 thirds of the park would be closed on any given day,
2 which would significantly limit peoples ability to
3 experience the park and I think that that would be a
4 tragedy and travesty. Thank you.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Tom.

7 TOM MORRIS: Hi, thank you for your time today.
8 My name is Tom Morris, I've lived in the West Village
9 for a little more than 26 years now and as with many
10 of those speakers here today, I am a frequent user of
11 and volunteer with Friends of the Highline. I don't
12 have a lot to add to you know so many of the things
13 that we've been talking today. We've heard many
14 times when we were hearing the Highline as one of the
15 jewels in New York City's crown at least on the west
16 side of Manhattan, hearing it compared to - well the
17 casino and the Hudson Yards rezoning plan compared to
18 the Highline and the Whitney Museum and Hudson River
19 Park and Little Island. I kind of sensed a ripple of
20 desinence about you know what on this list, what does
21 not belong on this list because it is so different.
22 You know the Hudson Yards is mostly inside and in
23 terms of experience, it is very different from the
24 Whitney Museum and the Highline and Hudson River
25 Park, and Little Island. And over the years that

1 I've been here and involved with the Highline, yes,
2 you know we've seen many changes as other people have
3 expressed here. I am not opposed to change. I am
4 not opposed to development. You know these are good
5 things but they need to be worked on carefully and
6 this is not the right plan. This is not the right
7 way. This is the kind of thing that Jane Jacobs for
8 example, who sometimes is dismissed as nostalgic or
9 overly idealistic. I think that dismissiveness isn't
10 correct because she was about working on plans and
11 involving communities. So, I hope you'll all oppose
12 this proposal and thank you for your time today.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you for testifying
15 today. We appreciate it. That will conclude our in
16 person testimony. This panel is excused. Is there
17 anyone else in the Chambers who would like to
18 testify, please see one of the Sergeants for a
19 speakers card?

20 We will now transition to online testimony. The
21 first group I will be calling from is Maria Ortiz,
22 David Slos, and Lydia Andre. That is Maria Ortiz,
23 David Slos, and Lydia Andre. The following group
24 after that group will consists of Chante Bunch,
25 Denise Lugo, Veronica Thaxton and Leslie Sloan. We

1 will begin first with Maria Ortiz. Maria, if you can
2 hear me, please unmute and you may begin. Okay,
3 we'll come back to Maria. David Slos, if you can
4 hear me, please unmute and you may begin. Okay
5 Maria, they're saying you're online but you're not
6 unmuting, Maria Ortiz please unmute. Okay do we have
7 Lydia?

9 LYDIA ANDRE: Yes, can you hear me?

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes Lydia, you can begin.

11 LYDIA ANDRE: I'm Lydia Andre from the Chelsea's
12 Neighbors Coalition and 300 West 20th Block
13 Association. I wanted to add my voice against this
14 proposal because here we are again waiting for the
15 crumbs to fall off the table while developers feast
16 on our city. And let's be honest, developers are
17 casting the kind of shadows most of us in this city
18 don't want to live with. I am always confused by the
19 way this process works. I don't recall that Related
20 is tasked with making the city a better place for
21 creating more affordable housing or creating a more
22 equitable city with better community access to public
23 spaces or protecting our present resources of light
24 and air in the Highline. Yet here they are in the
25 driver's seat deciding how much housing we can have.

1
2 How our tax dollars are spent or whether we have a
3 casino hoisted on us. How does that work? Do we not
4 see what's in front of us? Related stands to reap
5 enormous profits from gaining, yet what is really
6 going on here is a gaming of the system. One speaker
7 claimed that the 2009 plan was no longer realistic.
8 Realism isn't the problem, greed is.

9 One speaker mentioned that no one gets 100
10 percent affordability yet should we be satisfied with
11 seven percent? Related is not the only game in town.
12 This is a historic once in a lifetime development
13 site and development opportunity. They can come back
14 with a better plan just like they tried to do on
15 Friday. They can go back to the 2009 plan, which is
16 a better plan. We absolutely can and must do better.
17 Let's insist on it.

18 City Council members, thank you for this
19 opportunity to speak but please do your job and stand
20 up for us. We must honor our commitments to the
21 community. We must build more affordable housing.
22 We must maintain our public spaces and make sunlight
23 and open air accessible. That is minimal. Thank
24 you.

1 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Maria Ortiz, are
2 you able to unmute? How about David Slos?
3

4 DAVID SLOS: Yup, hello. Yeah, so just very
5 quickly because all the points have been gone over
6 here very eloquently and in a lot of detail. My name
7 is David Slos, I'm speaking on behalf of the 300 West
8 18th and 19th Street Block Association. We and our
9 members have a lot of concerns regarding the
10 proposal. Ultimately, we are not against development
11 in the area obviously and I just want to point out
12 that the proposition by related that it's this
13 version of the development or we continue to live in
14 the Hell's scape that they've very carefully chosen
15 pictures of the current state of the neighborhood and
16 is disingenuous. There's obviously another way to do
17 this, which will be more beneficial to the members of
18 the community here. So, we urge the Council to
19 demand clear commitments on housing, affordability
20 and public subsidies before moving forward and to
21 vote no on this rezoning application. Okay, thank
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Maria Ortiz.
24 Maria Ortiz, if you can hear me, please unmute.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, we don't have Maria so
3 we'll move onto the next group. The next panel will
4 consist of Chante Bunch, Denise Lugo, Veronica
5 Thaxton and Leslie Sloan. Chante, you may begin.
6 Please unmute. Chante Bunch? If you can hear me,
7 please unmute. Denise Lugo? Denise, if you can hear
8 me, please unmute. Okay, Veronica Thaxton? Leslie
9 Sloan?

10 VERONICA THAXTON: Hello?

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, Leslie?

12 VERONICA THAXTON: Can you hear me?

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I'm sorry, who is this?

14 VERONICA THAXTON: This is Veronica Thaxton.

15 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead Veronica.

16 VERONICA THAXTON: Hello, good day to all of you
17 and thank you for this opportunity to virtually
18 testify. My name is Veronica Thaxton and I'm a
19 lifelong New Yorker and a proud resident of Hudson
20 Yards. In fact, I live in a related companies
21 property. I stand before you today not just as a
22 supporter, but as someone who is also deeply
23 connected to Hudson Yards and is invested in its
24 future.

1 SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 150
2 As you are already aware, this project doesn't
3 just bring buildings, it brings several and many
4 opportunities. Besides the already documented
5 benefits, I believe that this will be an incredible
6 engine of support and an ecosystem for small
7 businesses, culture, the arts and the community at
8 whole. All the benefits will be a catalyst for
9 creating thousands of well paying jobs and will have
10 the potential to provide many New Yorkers with a
11 brighter future. Importantly, this new plan reflects
12 the voices of our community by respect that Related
13 revise their proposal after more than 200 community
14 meetings, replacing an office tower with more
15 housing. That all matters. I'd say yes to this
16 vision because I believe that it will make Hudson
17 Yards more vibrant, dynamic and inclusive. I hope
18 that you will also say yes. I am not in any way
19 disrespectful to some of the oppositions but I do
20 trust the things such as those currently underserved,
21 of the affordability, the increased wind and shadow
22 impacts and other important concerns and will be
23 resolved between our city and Related.

24 Paraphrase what Council Member Erik Bottcher
25 likely pointed out at the beginning of this hearing,

1 we as New Yorkers are proprietary yet scored at the
2 same time. I interpret this to mean that while we
3 feel deep prided ownership over our neighborhoods, we
4 also carry this shared responsibility to care for
5 them.

6
7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you for your testimony,
8 your time has expired.

9 VERONICA THAXTON: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Veronica. Next
11 we'll hear from Leslie Sloan. Leslie, if you can
12 hear me, please unmute.

13 LESLIE SLOAN: Hi, I'm here. I'm here, thank
14 you. I moved to New York City in 2002 and worked in
15 a building that is now called Five Manhattan West
16 that sits between 31st and 33rd between 9th and 10th.
17 Back then, it was a harsh brutalist building that
18 straddled railyards to its east and west. The
19 neighborhood was deserted and as a young woman, I was
20 afraid to walk home alone at night. How many jobs
21 were in those railyards? How many restaurants and
22 stores were there for my colleagues and I to go to
23 dinner? The McDonald's on 34th and 10th. What
24 Related has built in the first phase of Hudson Yards
25 is a brand new neighborhood within our city and a

1
2 complete urban downtown where it to be dropped into
3 any other American city. I brought my three kids to
4 the Hudson Yards opening day festivities in March of
5 2019 and told them that they would tell their
6 grandchildren they were present when this exciting
7 new community was born. But I'm really here to speak
8 to you as a Chelsea resident of over 20 years who
9 owns a business. My company plans corporate and not
10 for profit events and Hudson Yards is a place my
11 clients are eager to go and bring their attendees,
12 welcoming people to a part of the city that was
13 previously desolate.

14 With the gorgeous spaces within Hudson Yard
15 campus represent to my clients, is the best of New
16 York opportunity and promise on the literal horizon.
17 That's tangible and doesn't exist in the same way
18 anywhere else in our amazing city. Now we have the
19 opportunity to add more benefits, more housing units,
20 more green space, a school, a childcare center. Is
21 this plan perfect? Probably not but are shovels
22 going into the ground tomorrow? Also no. Related
23 will have to keep coming to these meetings and
24 continuing to integrate the feedback of the
25

1 community, the organizations in our community, as
2 they've done to this point.

3
4 We're not voting on a casino today; we're voting
5 on progress. We are voting for an opportunity to add
6 to and enhance the west side. As a Chelsea resident
7 for decades and someone who only wants progress that
8 benefits our city until my children are old enough to
9 speak at City Council meetings, we need you to please
10 vote yes on the rezoning plan.

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Denise Lugo.
12 Denise Lugo?

13 DENISE LUGO: Hello.

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, go ahead Denise.

15 DENISE LUGO: Hello, my name is Denise, I'm 29
16 years old. I'm the second generation that's born and
17 raised in New York City from both parents. I'm from
18 all boroughs except for Staten Island. Now, I live
19 in Hell's Kitchen. I'm all for the Hudson Yards West
20 Project. As long as it's affordable with at most 30
21 percent of our income for rent. Due to the fact
22 majority of the hardworking and dedicated people
23 within the city have the lowest paying jobs and with
24 prices constantly rising to pay for a living. This
25 project should promote emotional intelligence with

1 human interaction for tourists and residents of the
2 city. This project should also better the mental
3 health crisis within the city by allowing low income
4 workers to have a better living.
5

6 Thank you for allowing me to speak and have a
7 voice of love for New York City.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Denise. Chante
9 Bunch. Chante Bunch? Chante Bunch? Okay, we're
10 going to call Maria Ortiz one more time. Maria
11 Ortiz, if you can hear me, please unmute. Okay, the
12 next group panel we're going to hear from consists of
13 Reverend Dr. Johnny Green, Elizabeth Velez, Renee
14 Keet, Rodney Harrison and Ford Adams. We'll begin
15 first with Reverend Dr. Johnny Green.

16 REVEREND DR. JOHNNY GREEN: Good afternoon. I'm
17 Reverend Dr. Johnny Green, pastor of the Baptist
18 Church and mobilizing preachers and communities
19 impact, a Harlem based civil rights and faith based
20 organization. With hardships on the rise for so many
21 New Yorkers, our city is in desperate need of
22 opportunities to bring new housing, jobs and economic
23 benefits to those who need it the most.

24 Our community needs jobs. 1,000 union jobs that
25 many folk in our community could benefit from. The

1 Hudson Yards West proposal provides the opportunity
2 despite what we've heard today of those who oppose.

3
4 The proposal also contains funds for workforce
5 development training programs ensuring local
6 residents have a pathway to prosperity. I understand
7 that what is before the Council today is only zoning
8 changes, which are needed for any development to
9 happen on this site. Playing with the single, or the
10 playing without but I hope the City Council does not
11 stand in the way of progress. The complete Hudson
12 Yards West proposal with a casino would not only
13 provide an immediate economic boost with investments
14 to directly help the community including \$1 billion
15 in community benefits that will also provide
16 stability for our nonprofits on the front lines
17 helping to alleviate hunger, homelessness, and other
18 issues. This is absolutely critical at a time when
19 so many nonprofits facing uncertain waters and facing
20 unpredictability at the federal level.

21 The plans also call for a new school, childcare
22 facility and much needed housing. As a leader in my
23 community, the choice is simple. Hudson Yards West
24 represents a monument of opportunity. We must
25 prioritize the needs of not only the haves but the

1 have nots, especially those in communities like mine.
2 This project is bigger than any one of us. Hudson
3 Yards West is about fostering hope, opportunity, and
4 a stronger more resilient New York, especially in the
5 face of adversity.
6

7 I implore you to support this project. Thank you
8 so much.

9 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Elizabeth Velez.

10 ELIZABETH VELEZ: Good afternoon members of the
11 City Council. My name is Elizabeth Velez and I'm a
12 business owner for a business that's established in
13 Manhattan and does work in and around the area of the
14 Hudson Yards. I am absolutely in support for the
15 rezoning of the City Council rezoning of the Hudson
16 Yards, allowing them to move forward. New York City
17 is the center of the world and is best known for
18 iconic development. The Hudson Yards West is
19 emblematic of this. Not only equity but also the
20 great evolution of an underutilized, underserved area
21 of New York City. New housing, green space, public
22 schools, amenities, funding for the MTA and great
23 jobs both in construction and permanent jobs and
24 opportunities of inclusion for diverse firms to build
25 our great city. We have the opportunity now to

1 continue to transform the skyline of Manhattan.

2 Let's dream big and support the zoning change which
3 will benefit all New Yorkers. I support the City
4 Council to vote yes on this zoning change.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Renee Keet. Renee Keet?

7 RENEE KEET: I'm here, I'm just getting it up.

8 Okay, my name is Renee Keet, I'm the Resident
9 Association President of the Elliot Chelsea Houses.

10 Much has been made about the jobs this proposed
11 casino would supposedly create but when you look
12 closer, that argument falls apart. The developers
13 have already admitted that they plan to build over
14 the railyards with or without this casino.

15 Construction jobs are already coming. We don't have
16 to sell out our community for promises they were
17 going to fill anyway.

18 The reality is the plans they are pushing do not
19 reflect our communities real needs. It is an
20 outrage. Hudson Yards is not inclusive. It is
21 exclusive. It's a new neighborhood but not built
22 with the existing community but for the tourists and
23 the wealthy. And while the luxury towers up went,
24 the residents have been left behind. Meanwhile we
25 have been paying their bills through tax breaks and

1 public subsidies and right now we see how misplaced
2 priorities are. The Manhattan school house plays on
3 our grounds on the Elliot Chelsea Houses, not in
4 Hudson Yards. They benefit from our space while our
5 resident needs continue to be ignored. Developers
6 keep making empty promises. They are willing to
7 throw in 4,000 more units just to sweeten the deal to
8 win a casino license, not because they care about
9 housing but because they care about profit. When are
10 we going to stop begging? When are we finally going
11 to hold developers accountable? We don't need more
12 fake affordable housing that no one here can actually
13 afford. We need real, deeply affordable housing,
14 public housing. We need parks, schools, cultural
15 spaces and investment in our community, not casinos
16 and broken promises.

18 For months developers have been trying to take
19 back consent from our communities. Dangling promises
20 of swimming pools, jobs and schools but their true
21 priority has always been profit. Enough is enough.
22 We urge the City Council to vote no on this
23 application. Stand with the people who live here,
24 not the billionaires and the tourists they cater to.
25 Thank you.

1 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Rodney Harrison. Rodney
2 Harrison, if you can hear me please unmute and you
3 may begin.

4 RODNEY HARRISON: Can you guys hear me?

5 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you.

6 RODNEY HARRISON: Yes, my name is Rodney
7 Harrison. I'm a resident of Manhattan. I'm here
8 today because I want to see progress and growth in
9 New York City. I support the Hudson Yards West
10 project because I believe it will benefit me
11 economically as well as my family and increase
12 quality of life and improve our infrastructure. It
13 will benefit all of us throughout this community and
14 I vote yes on this project, I'm hoping you all are
15 too.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Ford Adams.

17 FORD ADAMS: Uhm, yeah, I support the casino for
18 the jobs.

19 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, thank you Ford.

20 FORD ADAMS: I think this is a very good project
21 and will help the community a lot, providing long
22 term, long lasting good careers for people.
23

24

25

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay, thank you Ford. Maria Ortiz. Maria Ortiz? Chante Bunch? Chante Bunch? Okay, do we have a James Duckett online?

JAMES DUCKETT: Yes, I'm here.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead James.

JAMES DUCKETT: Good afternoon I'm the Reverend James Duckett, Senior Pastor of the Fort Mott Baptist Church in the Bronx New York and also a member of Impact New York Network. Hudson Yards West is a solution and example of the tremendous opportunities for good that can happen when the private, public and nonprofit sectors work together with shared mutual goals. New Yorkers are struggling to pay rent, buy groceries, afford childcare, and overall just build sustainable life.

At the same time, the potential for dramatic funding cuts at the federal level threatens to make the situation much worse for the working class family. I believe that this project will create tens of thousands of permanent union jobs. Jobs that will ensure New Yorkers can not only stay in New York but have a pathway to success and a workforce development training. And the proposal will ensure residents can obtain the critical skills needed to harness this

1 opportunity. I understand we are here today to
2 discuss zoning for this development. The process for
3 the casino is totally separate and should be. The
4 state will evaluate which proposals create the most
5 benefit for New York but from what I've seen, the
6 plan with the wind resort, which create one billion
7 in community benefits over the next ten years is
8 unprecedented. And in a time when nonprofits don't
9 know whether they can keep their doors open, with
10 everything going on in Washington, we need private
11 investment, funding for food banks, after school
12 programs, job training and so much more.

14 And then there's the housing aspect. New housing
15 units will go a long way in stemming the outflow of
16 New Yorkers being forced out due to increased rent -

17 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you for your testimony.
18 Time is expired.

19 JAMES DUCKETT: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you James. I'm going
21 to stand at ease. If there is anybody else online,
22 online, please raise your hand and we will call you.
23 [03:24:33]- [03:24:36]. Can I have Justin Thompson,
24 Kelly, Kevin, LaLa and William Fraser? If you guys
25 are online, please unmute. We'll start with Justin

1 Thompson. Justin Thompson? Kelly, are you there?
2
3 Kevin?

4 KEVIN CARMICHAEL: My name is Kevin Carmichael
5 and I just want to say that I am in support of the
6 project for the housing and the public parks. Thank
7 you.

8 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Lala? Lala?
9 William Fraser? William Fraser?

10 WILLIAM FRASER: Yes, hi, can you hear me?

11 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, go ahead.

12 WILLIAM FRASER: Yes, how are you sir?

13 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I'm alright. How are you?

14 WILLIAM FRASER: Good, thank you. I am for the
15 Hudson Yards West Project for the reasons for
16 thousands of new jobs, economic growth, and the
17 continuance of amazing things happening in the Hudson
18 Yards. I just think this will add more to it and at
19 the end of the day, there's going to be a casino in
20 New York City anyway sooner than later, why not let
21 Win projects do it because they do it right and it
22 will create thousands and thousands of jobs. And at
23 a time what we're going through in New York City
24 right now, this can only be a boost for all of us.
25 And by the way, I'm a small business owner, a Native

1 New Yorker and my business is in Chelsea New York.

2 Thank you sir.

3 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Shamane?

4 Shamane?

5 SHAMANE: Hello, can you guys here me?

6 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, go ahead.

7 SHAMANE: Oh, thank you. Well, first of all
8 thank you. Shamane O'Connell, I approve this
9 project. I feel like it will be great for Chelsea.
10 It will bring plenty of jobs, affordable housing,
11 parks. Again, between the nonprofit, the private,
12 the public sector, and I'm a business owner here in
13 Chelsea myself and a Native New Yorker and it's just
14 the expansion and there's going to be a casino in New
15 York, so why not Hudson Yards? Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you Shamane. David
17 Warren? David Warren? David Warren? Okay, we have
18 a few iPhone users online. If you are online, please
19 unmute. State your name and you may begin.

20 UNIDENTIFIED: Oh hi, can you hear me?

21 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, go ahead.

22 UNIDENTIFIED: Okay thank you so much. I'm always
23 at the end of these meetings. Thank you to the
24 Committee and Council Member Erik Bottcher who
25

1 represents my district. I'm a born and raised New
2 Yorker. I've lived in Chelsea for the past 15 years.

3 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Can you please state your
4 name? Sorry.

5 JULIE HATERER: Oh sorry, Julie Haterer, Dr.
6 Julie Haterer.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. You could begin.

8 JULIE HATERER: Okay, anyway, so thank you for
9 taking - for letting me talk at the end of all of
10 this. But anyway, I've lived in my current location
11 on 23rd and 10th for the past eight years. I'm a
12 retired psychiatrist and recently have been
13 volunteering as a horticulture partner, a volunteer
14 gardener on the Highline, which I've been involved
15 with since it's inception. I love the Highline and
16 you know who else loves the Highline as we've already
17 said everyone. Everyone in the world loves the
18 Highline. I was in London and I was in Washington DC
19 this weekend and when I say work on the Highline,
20 they say "oh, that's so cool. I love the Highline."

21 So, that gets me to the question is why you would
22 vote on a zoning proposal that will take away the
23 beauty and character of the Highline. This is the
24 third or fourth meeting I've been at and I've spoken
25

1 at usually at the end. I'm not a zoning expert but I
2 do know about mental health and before I talk about
3 that. I just want to say to all these people, I
4 support unions, I support development but just think
5 if Related had done what they promised to do in 2009,
6 how many businesses would have been created? How
7 much construction work would have been done?

8
9 So, this you know last minute because they
10 finally got the financing - well think they'll get
11 the financing from Win, that's the reason they're
12 doing this now. I mean they've had 16 years to you
13 know make jobs, build you know construction and they
14 haven't done it but now they think they can with a
15 casino. Anyway, I'm a psychiatrist, I can talk about
16 mental health. What's good for mental health, green,
17 light, air, open spaces, community spirit. What's
18 bad for mental health? Darkness, cold buildings,
19 encroaching spaces, wind tunnels and more importantly
20 casinos and gambling near schools, which is crazy.

21 Finally, what's very important to the community
22 is the feeling that we are heard by our Council
23 people. We are fighting throughout this country.
24 Large developments and corporations which are taking
25

1 over the will of the people and you know this is -
2
3 how long are we going to keep doing this?

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you for your testimony.
5 Time is expired.

6 JULIE HATERER: Okay, please vote no.

7 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you for your testimony.

8 Next, we'll hear from is Emily or Lala? Emily or
9 Lala? Emily or Lala, please unmute. Emily or Lala?

10 Okay, if you are an iPhone user, please use the raise
11 hand function or press star 6 to unmute yourself and
12 you could testify. Just please reinstate your name.
13 Do we have anyone else online ready to testify?

14 Okay, we're going to transition to in person
15 testimony. I will call on Christopher Leon Johnson.

16 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Hello Chairs Riley and
17 Bottcher. My name is Christopher Leon Johnson. I'm
18 here to show opposition to the Highline project. I
19 am a former member of 32BJ. I used to work at the
20 MTA Access as a shop steward from 2017 to 2021 and I
21 want to explain my reason why as a 32BJ shop steward,
22 former shop steward is a reason why this is a bad
23 idea for any community.

24 First off the zoning application is really off.
25 You want to take a whole highline, which is a

1
2 prestigious institution and put a little crappy
3 little casino and everybody know the casino is going
4 to attract the worst type of people ever to attract
5 into any institution, which is going to lower the
6 land values in your district Mr. Bottcher. You know
7 it's going lower your land values.

8 I'm and be on the record, I am for the casino BID
9 in Brooklyn for Coney Island because it's going to
10 benefit Brooklyn. Manhattan already has enough land
11 use application to be approved. Queens already have
12 enough. The Bronx, forget the Bronx. Staten Island,
13 nobody cares but I'm calling on the City Council to
14 reject this land use application because this is a
15 bad land use application. This is not going to
16 benefit the community at all. Most of the people
17 that are supporting this stuff are getting paid,
18 especially my union 32 BJ and HDC. They're getting
19 paid by the developers that are related to push this
20 project.

21 This is not going to benefit nobody. Yeah, it's
22 going to create jobs in Manhattan but there's already
23 enough jobs in Manhattan. There's already enough
24 jobs. The members are going to get paid from like
25 what \$17 an hour to about \$35 an hour and that's if

1 they could even see \$35 an hour and that's not even a
2 living wage in New York City and the thing about it;
3 these unions are really corrupt. As a 32 BJ Shop
4 Steward I used to work and do political activity for
5 you Riley, Mr. Riley that help got you elected as a
6 shop steward behind the scenes and Selvena Brooks-
7 Powers, I could tell you right now, these two unions,
8 ACC and 32 BJ are really corrupt. They again, they
9 are getting paid under the table by these developers
10 to push this project and it's not going to benefit
11 the community. It would never benefit the community
12 members.
13

14 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Time expired. Thank you.

15 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: You're excused.

17 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Alright thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: We're going to transition
19 back online. We're going to stand at ease. If there
20 are any members of the public who wish to testify
21 regarding this proposal remotely, please press the
22 raise hand button now.

23 If you are in person, please identify yourselves
24 to one of the Sergeants. Thank you. [03:34:27]. If
25 we have anybody online or in person, please identify

2 yourself. If you're online, please press the raise
3 hand function. If you're in person, please see one
4 of the Sergeants. We will stand at ease for the next
5 30 seconds. [03:34:51]- [03:35:04].

6 Okay, there being no other members of the public
7 who wish to testify on LU's 283 to 286 related to the
8 Westend Railyard Modification Proposal, the public
9 hearing is now closed and the items are laid over.
10 We were also scheduled to vote today on 102-51 Queens
11 Boulevard LU's 269 and 270. These items are being
12 laid over.

13 That concludes today's business. I would like to
14 thank the members of the public, my colleagues,
15 Subcommittee Counsel, Land Use and other Council
16 Staff and the Sergeant at Arms for participating in
17 today's meeting. This meeting is hereby adjourned.
18 Thank you. [GAVEL]

19
20
21
22
23
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date May 31, 2025