

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

JOINT COMMITTEES ON LAND USE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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April 1, 2009  
Start: 01:00 pm  
Recess: 04:37 pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E:  
THOMAS WHITE JR.  
Chairperson

MELINDA R. KATZ  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Thomas White Jr.  
Melinda R. Katz  
Maria del Carmen Arroyo  
Charles Barron  
Domenic M. Recchia, Jr.  
Tony Avella  
Diana Reyna  
Annabel Palma  
John C. Liu  
Rosie Mendez  
Eric N. Gioia  
Inez E. Dickens

## A P P E A R A N C E S

## COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Elizabeth Crowley  
Maria Baez  
Alan J. Gerson  
Joel Rivera  
Albert Vann  
Helen Sears  
Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.  
Simcha Felder  
Miguel Martinez  
Vincent Ignizio  
Daniel R. Garodnick  
Kenneth Mitchell

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

Robert C. Lieber  
Deputy Mayor

Purnima Kapur  
Director  
Brooklyn Office of City Planning

Seth Pinsky  
President  
EDC

Madelyn Wils  
Executive Vice President for  
Development and Planning  
EDC

Hardy Adesko  
Senior Vice President  
EDC

Holly Leicht  
Deputy Commissioner  
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Lynn Kelly  
President  
Coney Island Development Corporation

Ken Jones  
Concerned Voters of  
Coney Island Coalition

Mathylde Frontus  
Executive Director  
Urban Neighborhood Services

Alexis Aries  
Student  
Liberation Academy

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

Tishana Jones  
Student  
Liberation Academy

Mario Cleaver  
Chairman  
Brooklyn Community Board 13

Neno Russo  
Owner  
Gargiulo's Restaurant

Marjorie Perlmeiter  
Land Use Attorney

Richard Miller  
Beyer Blinder Belle Architects

Dennis Vourderis  
Co-owner  
Deno's Wonder Wheel

Ari Shalam  
Director of Acquisitions  
Taconic Investment Partners

Jesse Masyr  
Attorney  
Wachtel & Masyr

Tom Bowen  
Vice President  
Callison Architecture

Chris Durmick  
Creative Director  
Thinkwell Design & Production

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

Richard Thomas  
Lococo Company

Paul Fernandez  
Chief of Staff  
Buildings & Construction Trade Council

John Dohlin  
Director  
New York Aquarium

Patrick Dranin  
Resident  
Brooklyn

Martin Levine  
Chairman  
Coney Island Hospital  
Community Advisory Board

Michael Halpin  
Co-chair  
Coney Island CLEAR

Brian Gotlieb  
Board Member  
Coney Island CLEAR

Eddie Brumfield  
Member  
Community Board 13

Connis Mobley  
Pastor  
United Community Church

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

Rochelle Kelly  
Member  
New York Hotel Trade Council

Diana Carlin  
Owner  
Lola Staar Roller Rink

Dick Zigun  
Spokesman  
Coney Island Amusements

Walter Cooper  
On behalf of:  
Kyle Bragg  
Vice President  
Local 32BJ

Carmen Gonzalez  
Coney Island ACORN

Carol Hill Albert  
Co-owner  
Astroland Amusement Park

Stewart Pertz  
Chairman of Planning Committee  
Municipal Art Society

Queenie Hewling  
Resident  
Coney Island

Anna  
Resident  
Brighton Beach

Ruth Magwood  
Resident  
Coney Island

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

Carolyn McCorey  
Resident

Ronald Roth  
Author

Daryl Lee  
ReBuild

Martin Elhen  
Resident  
Coney Island

COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: Good

afternoon, everyone. As you can obviously tell, I am not Melinda Katz. She is on her way, so in her absence I will be acting as Chair. As you can tell, my colleague Councilwoman Diana Reyna is not Tom White. She will be acting Chair for Tom White until he gets here. We thought it was in the best interest of all concerned to start the hearing because it will be lengthy and there are a number of people that have signed up to speak. I'm going to waive my opening statement because I know Melinda Katz, as Chair of the Land Use Committee, will probably make her statement. This is an important oversight hearing on the future development of Coney Island. We do have the administration here to testify. I know it is a very hotly contested issue within the community and I know that they are also here to testify. This is just an oversight hearing, this is not part of the official ULURP process yet. This will give the administration, the community and everybody who has a stake in this development an opportunity to be heard. With that, I'll turn it over to acting Chair, Council Member Diana Reyna.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: The, Council  
3 Member Avella. I want to wish everyone a good  
4 afternoon on behalf of Tom White, the Chair of  
5 this Economic Development Committee. I am Diana  
6 Reyna, acting Chair, and I am happy to be joined  
7 by the Land Use Committee. I will read this  
8 prepared statement in the absence of Council  
9 Member Tom White so that you will be advised as to  
10 what we're looking forward to in this hearing.  
11 I'd like to thank everyone for coming this  
12 afternoon to hear more about and voice your  
13 opinions about the proposed Coney Island  
14 development. We are eager to hear from Deputy  
15 Mayor Lieber and representatives from the EDC,  
16 along with a number of business and land owners  
17 and community groups who will be directly affected  
18 by the proposed development. Under the proposed  
19 development plan for Coney Island, the  
20 administration anticipates the creation of 6.8  
21 million square feet of new development, a 27-acre  
22 amusement and entertainment district, 4000-5000  
23 new units of housing, approximately 900 units of  
24 affordable housing, 500,000 square feet of retail  
25 and neighborhood services, 6,000 new permanent

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2 jobs and over 25,000 construction jobs, and over  
3 \$14 billion in economic activity. The hearing is  
4 expected to raise a number of important questions  
5 that will need to be addressed going forward  
6 towards the anticipated Public Land Use Action.  
7 Again, I want to thank everyone for their  
8 participation this afternoon. I'd like to just  
9 mention that we've been joined by Council Member  
10 Maria del Carmen Arroyo, who just stepped out, and  
11 Council Member Charles Barron, and Council Member  
12 Domenic Recchia. I will now turn this over to our  
13 Co-chair Tony Avella.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: Thank you.  
15 The first person I'd like to ask to speak is  
16 Council Member Domenic Recchia, whose district  
17 this project is within. Council Member?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Thank you.  
19 Today's a very exciting day because after years of  
20 meetings and planning sessions, we are bringing  
21 Coney Island to the City Council. This brings us  
22 closer than ever to building a community that  
23 thrives every single day of the year. My name is  
24 Councilman Domenic M. Recchia, Jr., and I am the  
25 Council Member for Coney Island. I would like to

1  
2 thank all my Council Members here today, and  
3 especially Tony Avella and Diana Reyna for heading  
4 this important hearing. Since the first day I  
5 took office, one of the biggest goals has been the  
6 revitalization of Coney Island. It's not just one  
7 of the most unique communities in New York City,  
8 it's also where I grew up. So this subject is  
9 very personal to me. Coney Island has much  
10 potential. For years that potential has not been  
11 met. There has been a lot of debate about how the  
12 redevelopment should be handled. That debate is  
13 as passionate as I would expect from my community.  
14 The city has offered a plan that moves us in the  
15 right direction, but will require more work before  
16 it can satisfy everyone involved. I would like to  
17 ask my colleagues to keep a few things in mind  
18 today. Despite the differences in this debate,  
19 there are some things we all agree on. Coney  
20 Island is a world-class amusement that attracts  
21 tourists from around the globe. We need to  
22 protect local businesses like Deno's Wonder Wheel  
23 and Gargiulo's Restaurant who stuck with the  
24 community when many people walked away. Most  
25 importantly, our biggest priority has to be the

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2 50,000 people who live and work in Coney Island.  
3 They need affordable housing, year-round jobs and  
4 responsible development that maintains the spirit  
5 of the community. If we can achieve these goals  
6 and reconcile our difference on the details, we  
7 can create a plan that honors the past while  
8 moving toward a bright future. I want to thank  
9 everyone for coming today. I look forward to  
10 hearing what you have to say. Also, I've just  
11 been told that the administration reached an  
12 agreement with Thor Equities on the purchase of  
13 the amusement area. April Fool's.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: My wife  
15 called me on the phone today to say it's April  
16 Fool's, just be careful. I said nobody does those  
17 jokes anymore. The first panel we will be hearing  
18 from is the administration, and of course we have  
19 the deputy mayor here. I'd like to call up his  
20 panel. And I think on his panel is EDC and City  
21 Planning. Mr. Deputy Mayor?

22 ROBERT C. LIEBER: That was a  
23 pretty good joke, Domenic. I like that. That was  
24 good.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Hope it

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comes true.

ROBERT C. LIEBER: I think we are making progress that way though. Anyway, let me formally begin. Thank you, Council Members, standing Chairs Reyna and Avella, thank you very much for organizing this meeting today and members of the Land Use and Economic Development Committees of City Council, all City Council members and in particular Domenic Recchia for the opportunity to speak with you here today. Joining me are a number of representatives from the Department of City Planning and the Economic Development Corporation. To my left is Purnima Kapur who's in charge of all City Planning initiatives in Brooklyn and who's been working on this project from its inception. To my right is Seth Pinsky, who's the president of the Economic Development Corporation. And to his right is Madelyn Wils, who is the executive vice president for Development and Planning for EDC. We are the front people on this, but the work is in large part being done by the rest of our colleagues, who are in the first couple of rows. We will try and answer your questions here, but we may lean on our

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2 colleagues here as well. It's good for us to be  
3 able to be here in front of the City Council today  
4 and discuss a project that I believe is really one  
5 of the most important efforts that we have ever  
6 worked on, certainly that I have ever worked on,  
7 and that's the redevelopment and the  
8 revitalization of Coney Island. It's my view that  
9 we are at a once in a lifetime juncture in the  
10 long history of the People's Playground and it's  
11 critical that we act now if we're going to  
12 preserve it. In my presentation today I'm going  
13 to highlight the goals and objectives of our plan,  
14 the rationale behind the plan and the feasibility  
15 of the plan. We believe that the plan is the only  
16 way that we can appropriately meet the needs of  
17 the community, which are to create jobs and  
18 enhance one of New York City's truly greatest  
19 treasures, the amusement district of Coney Island.  
20 We feel that we need to move forward with this  
21 plan and we need to do it now. We can no longer  
22 afford to wait. Because without decisive action  
23 now, Coney Island's amusement district will  
24 continue its decline. This situation could not be  
25 more dire and could not be more urgent. Without

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2 the action and then investment in Coney Island  
3 today, the accelerated rate of decline will  
4 continue and the opportunity to enhance the  
5 amusements and lever them to support the community  
6 will permanently lost. Coney Island has held on  
7 for decades through economic downturns, through  
8 population ebbs and flows, generations of  
9 developers, investors and even speculators. Plans  
10 have come and plans have gone. But no plan has  
11 really addressed the totality of the needs in  
12 Coney Island. We believe our plan is a  
13 comprehensive one and balances the community  
14 development with the amusement investment with job  
15 creation, with historic integrity, and addresses  
16 the neighborhood needs with nurturing a tourist  
17 destination. Our plan for Coney Island is the  
18 only proposal that maximizes the benefits to the  
19 local community in the shape of thousands of new  
20 housing units, thousands of permanent and  
21 construction jobs and billions of dollars in  
22 private investment into a community that  
23 unfortunately has missed out on Brooklyn's recent  
24 boom. We believe it also maximizes the benefits  
25 to New Yorkers everywhere because this plan

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2 expands and enhances Coney Island's storied  
3 amusement district and would allow this part of  
4 Brooklyn to again draw millions of visitors from  
5 around the world with their spending dollars to  
6 the People's Playground. Coney Island remains  
7 vibrant in people's memories, but if you were to  
8 travel to Coney Island today you'd see vacant lots  
9 where amusements once stood and you'd find a  
10 neighborhood that's lacking in the most basic of  
11 amenities. The images behind me were taken just  
12 this past weekend. This is just seven days before  
13 the start of the amusement season. Coney Island  
14 itself is a neighborhood that needs no  
15 introduction. The images in the photographs of  
16 its famous amusement parks are etched into our  
17 collective memories. But in Coney Island, the  
18 imagery of the past presents a stark contrast to  
19 where we are today. The People's Playground has  
20 been in decline for decades, with the closures of  
21 Lunar Park, Dreamland, Steeplechase and earlier  
22 this year, Astroland. Unfortunately, the decline  
23 has accelerated over the last several years as  
24 developers have purchased property and amusement  
25 operators have closed their doors. Just three

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2 years ago there were almost eight additional  
3 acres, more than two times as much as is there  
4 today, of activities including putt-putt or mini  
5 golf, batting cages, go-kart tracks, rides and  
6 other arcades. This summer, unfortunately, there  
7 are likely to be only about three acres of active  
8 amusements at Coney Island. Much of the acreage  
9 that's available is city-owned and adjacent to the  
10 landmark Wonder Wheel and landmark Cyclone. Truly  
11 today, Coney Island is a shadow of its former  
12 self. As Council Member Recchia noted, this is  
13 not just an amusement area that is in need of  
14 immediate attention, Coney Island is home to a  
15 diverse neighborhood with many critical needs.  
16 There are about 50,000 residents who call Coney  
17 Island home. One of every six Coney Island  
18 residents lives in NYCHA housing. This is an  
19 aging population with more than one-quarter of all  
20 residents over 60 years of age. This is also a  
21 community that suffers from high unemployment. In  
22 fact, the unemployment rate in Coney Island is  
23 more than twice the city average. For years the  
24 residents of Coney Island have been clamoring for  
25 basic retail amenities in their neighborhood.

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2 There's no shoe stores, no basic clothing stores,  
3 few pharmacies or supermarkets. This is one of  
4 the few communities in the entire city where  
5 residents are forced to travel great distance in  
6 order to be able to access the basic necessities  
7 that most New Yorkers just take for granted.  
8 Despite the daunting challenges in front of us,  
9 the potential for growth in Coney Island is  
10 significant and we believe it's achievable as  
11 well. But we have to act comprehensively and we  
12 have to act today. In order to ensure its  
13 success, future development here must leverage the  
14 area's assets and icons. This area is uniquely  
15 served by both highways and mass transit. For  
16 example, the new Stillwell Avenue Station serves  
17 as the terminus of four major subway lines and  
18 provides a direct link to neighborhoods across  
19 from Brooklyn, Manhattan and beyond. Unlike other  
20 MTA assets, perhaps, the Stillwell station is  
21 currently an under utilized asset; built to  
22 accommodate significantly more riders than it's  
23 seeing now. This key piece of infrastructure is  
24 ready to be tapped by new development and will  
25 bring millions to Coney Island to live and to

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2 play. Additionally, there's remaining amusement  
3 infrastructure that is a critical component of  
4 jumpstarting the economy here. The historic  
5 Parachute Jump, the Wonder Wheel, the Shore  
6 Theater and institutions like Nathan's Famous,  
7 Gargiulo's Restaurant, the New York Aquarium, the  
8 Brooklyn Cyclones are all part of the often  
9 imitated but never duplicated brand name that is  
10 Coney Island and provides an enormous opportunity  
11 we believe if properly protected and woven into a  
12 new program in a unique way. Our proposal does  
13 just that. In recent years, the city has already  
14 begun making important investments in the area.  
15 The construction of KeySpan Stadium brought a new  
16 anchor use to Coney Island. And the Brooklyn  
17 Cyclones continue to break league records for  
18 attendance. We believe with the enhanced  
19 attractions and visitorship there are  
20 opportunities to activate this area further with  
21 concerts and other events. In Western Coney  
22 Island we're in the midst of a separate ULURP  
23 approval for Coney Island Commons, which is a  
24 state of the art YMCA facility that'll include  
25 over 180 units of affordable housing. We expect

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2 to be able to break ground on that project this  
3 summer. We're also planning a second phase of the  
4 lighting of the iconic Parachute Jump to "bling it  
5 up" as our borough president would describe. We  
6 are also designing Steeplechase Plaza which will  
7 house the restored B & B Carousel that the city  
8 rescued just before it was headed for the auction  
9 block recently. As I mentioned, the borough  
10 president is actively involved in working on plans  
11 for the renovation and upgrades to the Asser Levy  
12 Park and its amphitheater. Other city investments  
13 include the launch of a pilot program for a much-  
14 needed Boardwalk repairs. On Monday, Mayor  
15 Bloomberg announced the reconstruction of the  
16 Boardwalk at Coney Island and it would benefit  
17 from the funds that have been made available  
18 because of the federal stimulus package. The  
19 project will go to bid this spring. This  
20 reconstruction will be done using sustainable  
21 materials that have a lower carbon footprint,  
22 lower maintenance costs and will reduce future  
23 deterioration to unsafe conditions. I might note  
24 also the city is reserving a site opposite the  
25 newly built YMCA for a new school to be

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2 headquartered in Western Coney Island. Council  
3 Member Recchia identified the process and the  
4 efforts we've gone through. I'd like to highlight  
5 some of those. To provide a planning process for  
6 us, we set out to develop a consensus based  
7 strategic plan for the overall development. In  
8 fact, in 2003 the Coney Island Development  
9 Corporation was launched by the Mayor, City  
10 Council and Brooklyn Borough President. Two years  
11 later, in 2005, the Mayor unveiled the strategic  
12 plan which set out the guiding principals for the  
13 redevelopment of Coney Island. We have spent over  
14 six years meeting with local residents,  
15 businesses, elected officials, amusement industry  
16 professionals and property owners and with the  
17 Coney Island enthusiasts throughout the region to  
18 refine and improve the plan in order to create new  
19 economy opportunities for the local neighborhood  
20 while protecting and leveraging its history as  
21 America's first amusement park. Throughout this  
22 process we've learned some important things.  
23 First of all, Coney Island, despite recent  
24 neglect, is truly an international icon and is  
25 undisputedly a unique New York institution which

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2 is absolutely worth preserving. Number two that  
3 in order for the neighborhood to grow with mixed  
4 income housing and retail amenities, we need to  
5 have a plan that leverages this brand. So that's  
6 what our plan does. First and foremost it's a  
7 plan based on a balance of a number of important  
8 priorities. As I mentioned, the overall goal of  
9 community development in a neighborhood in need of  
10 new residential and retail opportunities. Second,  
11 the goal of job creation and new economic activity  
12 for the local community and the city. Third is  
13 the goal of enhancing the unique brand and the  
14 heritage of the entertainment area and leveraging  
15 it to support the overall development objectives  
16 of our plan. It's a plan that, as I mentioned, is  
17 a result of over six years of honest debate, a  
18 plan designed to meet the diverse needs of the  
19 local landowners and businesses and a plan that is  
20 appropriately ambitious given the unique moment  
21 and opportunity in Coney Island's long history  
22 that we are at today. Above all, it's a  
23 comprehensive plan and it's actionable. The  
24 development plan centers on a 19-block area that  
25 borders between the New York Aquarium and the

1 residential neighborhoods of Western Coney Island.  
2 Within this area we've created three sub districts  
3 that meet each development objectives and knit  
4 together to comprehensively transform and  
5 reactivate Coney Island. I'd like to start with  
6 the Coney North and Coney West Districts that have  
7 been designated as such based on their  
8 relationship to KepSpan Stadium. These areas in  
9 particular grow the existing residential  
10 communities and link them with the activated  
11 amusement and entertainment district. Here the  
12 city will provide new affordable and market rate  
13 housing, improve the street scapes and the  
14 neighborhood infrastructure, provide new retail  
15 and neighborhood services and importantly create  
16 thousands of new permanent and construction jobs.  
17 Today, most of the area in both Coney North and  
18 Coney West is vacant or it's being used for  
19 parking. Our plan will accommodate approximately  
20 4,500 units of new housing, 20 of which will be  
21 affordable. We will be implementing the city's  
22 inclusionary zoning program for the first time in  
23 South Brooklyn, which paves the way for the  
24 development of some 900 units of affordable  
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1 housing. All these developments will enhance  
2 access and preserve use to both the beach and the  
3 Parachute Jump. The ground floors are envisioned  
4 to include neighborhood retail uses like  
5 supermarkets, bookstores, clothing stores and  
6 neighborhood restaurants. New and existing  
7 residents, along with the visitors who'll be drawn  
8 to the district we believe will create sufficient  
9 density to support approximately 500,000 square  
10 feet of new neighborhood and national retail,  
11 providing the amenities to the neighborhood and  
12 creating thousands of permanent jobs in a  
13 community that needs them desperately. Mermaid  
14 Avenue in Coney North will become a stronger  
15 retail corridor. Surf Avenue, which has for so  
16 long been a barrier between the neighborhood and  
17 the amusement district will become a link with  
18 entertainment commercial space. Along the  
19 Boardwalk, the city will require the inclusion of  
20 beach-related retail, amusements, restaurants and  
21 entertainment uses that will extend the Boardwalk  
22 experience from the new Highland View Park in the  
23 west, past Charlie's Restaurant building leading  
24 to Steeplechase Plaza, the new gateway to the  
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2 amusement district and reactivating vacant lots  
3 and creating an experience not found anywhere else  
4 in New York City. In order to create housing,  
5 enhance retail amenities and create thousands of  
6 jobs, the city proposes reconfiguring two tracts  
7 of land into developable sites. These sites, the  
8 KeySpan parking lot and the Satellite parking lot  
9 are on the books as parkland even though one could  
10 hardly count these as active or recreational uses  
11 of parkland. The city will de-map these parking  
12 lots to pave the way for housing and job-  
13 generating uses. The Abe Stark Ice Rink will be  
14 replaced in the area and new parking spaces will  
15 be developed in addition to the spaces already  
16 located on the sites. Without the proposed  
17 delineation of the parkland, the full development  
18 of Coney West cannot move forward. There'll be no  
19 Highland View Park, no new streets in Coney West.  
20 We'll lose almost 60% of the housing units. We'll  
21 lose thousands of new parking spaces. Most  
22 importantly, without de-mapping the parking lots,  
23 we'll lose 650 new permanent jobs and between  
24 7,000 and 11,000 construction jobs, which could  
25 result in the loss of more than \$5.5 billion in

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2 economic activity. They may be labeled as parks  
3 on the books, but these parking lots and in their  
4 place we will create at least 2,500 housing units  
5 and thousands of jobs. Importantly, we will  
6 replace every single acre with active recreational  
7 space in the district. Coney East has been the  
8 amusement center for that past few decades. Here  
9 we propose to expand the amusement district almost  
10 ten-fold, creating a 21st Century amusement and  
11 entertainment destination. Where today there  
12 exists only three acres of active amusements, the  
13 city's plan calls for a 27-acre amusement district  
14 with both year-round as well as seasonal uses,  
15 both indoor and outdoor uses and a vibrant mix of  
16 restaurants, bars, souvenir stores and specialty  
17 retail. Beach-related shops, tattoo parlors, and  
18 hotels are among other uses that can support the  
19 development of additional entertainment  
20 attractions. Whereas the current zoning has been  
21 applied in such a way as to limit frankly rather  
22 than to spur development, the new zoning controls  
23 in Coney East will grow a modern entertainment  
24 area with a mix of complimentary uses that  
25 leverage the existing assets and the institutions

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2 in the district and makes the area a year-round  
3 attraction and generates many, many more much  
4 needed jobs and economic activity for the entire  
5 area. In addition to expanding the uses allowed  
6 under the zoning in the amusement district, we'll  
7 map the area along the Boardwalk between the  
8 Cyclone and the Parachute Jump as parkland. We  
9 believe this is a critical piece of the plan and  
10 will allow the creation of the largest amusement  
11 property in Coney Island since Steeplechase Park  
12 closed in 1964. by designating this area as  
13 parkland, we are imposing the greatest protection  
14 possible, ensuring that this space is dedicated  
15 for amusement uses. We use this tool to create  
16 and protect parks and recreational spaces  
17 throughout New York City and New York State,  
18 whether it be at Prospect Park, Dreier Offerman  
19 Park, Rye Playland in Westchester and also the  
20 Cyclone right here in Coney Island. In each of  
21 these places, the park has become an important  
22 amenity to the neighborhood as well as to the  
23 surrounding area. For us, parkland designation is  
24 critical. It allows the city to negotiate with  
25 affected landowners to acquire the property and in

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2 Coney Island the mapping of parkland is the right  
3 tool to preserve these amusements. Parkland  
4 designation rather than zoning will stem the tide  
5 of Coney's decline. We've recognized that zoning  
6 is just not enough. Frankly, under existing  
7 zoning, or under the current zoning, the  
8 developers have been able to buy up the district  
9 and allowed it to decay into disuse and vacancy.  
10 Parkland designation is the only tool that will  
11 ensure that we achieve a critical mass of  
12 amusement and entertainment anchors uses within  
13 the district. Without the parkland, in the future  
14 an owner could easily request a variance or a  
15 subsequent administration could look to overturn  
16 this commitment to amusements. But with the  
17 parkland designation, this would not be an option.  
18 Dedicated amusement space would be guaranteed in  
19 Coney Island for generations to come. Only those  
20 willing to gamble with the amusement's future  
21 would be willing to reject this purposeful  
22 parkland designation. Today, the land proposed as  
23 amusement parkland is controlled by a number of  
24 owners within Coney East and some of whom have  
25 been in Coney Island for generations and others

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2 how have only recently purchased property. The  
3 city has been in ongoing discussions with them.  
4 We hope to be able to come to fair and negotiated  
5 deals that reflect the value and the potential of  
6 the land while also being responsible and prudent  
7 with taxpayer funds. Already the city has  
8 successfully negotiated with one of the longest  
9 time family-owned landowners in Coney Island, the  
10 Ward family, to acquire a one-acre site that  
11 currently hosts a kiddie park on the Boardwalk.  
12 With the completion of the ULURP we anticipate  
13 successful negotiations with additional property  
14 owners and the city's assemblage of the property  
15 for the eventual development of new permanent  
16 amusement attractions. Without the parkland  
17 mapping, we'll not be able to assemble the land  
18 nor fully protect it. Without the parkland  
19 designation, soon there will no more amusements to  
20 protect and the Coney Island that we know and  
21 cherish will disappear forever. We have spent a  
22 lot of time studying successful amusement and  
23 entertainment areas and have learned that some  
24 retail uses are critical components of the overall  
25 visitor experience. But this retail is of a very

1  
2 specific kind. It's entertaining, it's unique and  
3 it's amusement related. It's not generic national  
4 retail. We studied the amusement related retail  
5 in other amusement parks like Six Flags, Tivoli,  
6 Cedar Point and Universal and we've learned that  
7 2,500 square foot and smaller retail footprints  
8 strike the right balance. At this size, retail is  
9 attractive to visitor oriented shops, but is less  
10 attractive to the national big box retailers.  
11 That's important because while national retailers  
12 can pay higher rents, they will likely price out  
13 the type of specialty retail that Coney Island's  
14 entertainment and amusement district so  
15 desperately needs. Let me put this in context if  
16 I can. The average size amusement related retail  
17 in amusement parks nationwide is approximately  
18 1,000 to 1,500 square feet each. Specialized  
19 shops such as candy stores and souvenir shops are  
20 typically 300 to 500 square feet each. Even Lola  
21 Staar's souvenir shop that was until recently  
22 located on the Coney Island Boardwalk was 350  
23 square feet. You may hear today and other days  
24 that retail stores in the amusement district  
25 should be larger, perhaps as large as 10,000

1 square feet and that 2,500 square foot limits are  
2 too restrictive and their size is too small. In  
3 truth, that would be true if your intention was to  
4 build a seaside mall that had a Bed, Bath and  
5 Beyond, a Gap, a CVS or an Abercrombie and Fitch  
6 in the historic amusement district. But this is  
7 not our goal. In Coney East we want to build a  
8 dynamic amusement district that takes full  
9 advantage of the visitor potential for this iconic  
10 entertainment destination and not a seaside mall.  
11 National retail clearly has its place in Coney  
12 North, in Coney West and the guidelines that we're  
13 proposing will encourage this investment while  
14 protecting local retail in the district from being  
15 overrun with national retailers. While we are  
16 restricting the size of the retail in the  
17 amusement district in order to encourage its  
18 growth as an entertainment district, we are not  
19 limiting the size of uses like restaurants, cafes,  
20 bars, entertainment uses or amusements. These are  
21 absolutely critical to Coney Island's future and  
22 we want to encourage their growth here. Hotels  
23 are another critical component of a successful  
24 amusement and entertainment destination. In fact,  
25

1 they were a key part of the historic Coney Island.  
2 Across the country, hotels are integral to  
3 amusement and entertainment destinations and given  
4 South Brooklyn's current lack of hotels, as well  
5 as catering facilities, we believe we can capture  
6 this potential in Coney East by creating hotels  
7 that cater to local users as well as to visitors  
8 to the amusement area, both of which will support  
9 a greater density of year-round entertainment uses  
10 and again create critical jobs. Hotels can also  
11 directly support new amusement uses. In fact,  
12 some of the most popular tourist destinations  
13 include water park hotels and the like. That's  
14 exactly the sort of hotel that could work in Coney  
15 Island. That said, we've been very careful about  
16 the size and the placement of hotels in Coney  
17 East. Hotels in the city plan include standard  
18 650-square foot rooms and are limited to the  
19 northern most part of the amusement district along  
20 Surf Avenue and adhere to strict guidelines,  
21 including floor area, frontage length and height  
22 so as to protect the Parachute Jump and preserve  
23 the views throughout the area. Additionally,  
24 anyone that develops a hotel will also be required  
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1  
2 to develop a portion of the amusements within the  
3 district linking economically the hospitality and  
4 the entertainment uses that will work together to  
5 draw additional visitors as well as support new  
6 development. You may hear today that the plan  
7 should allow for larger hotel footprints and  
8 larger hotel rooms, perhaps even as large as 1000  
9 square feet in the amusement district. It's our  
10 opinion that hotels that are as large as I've  
11 described are just a proxy for future residential  
12 units or timeshares and are totally inappropriate  
13 in the amusement area. Residential uses are  
14 incompatible with the noise. They're incompatible  
15 with the bright lights and incompatible with the  
16 energy that comes from an active year-round  
17 amusement area that we are all striving for here  
18 in Coney East. If people were to live in the  
19 amusement district, eventually they would complain  
20 about all the lights and all the noise that are in  
21 fact the very dynamic and exciting elements of the  
22 amusements we are looking to so that we can  
23 preserve and enhance. If we did this, the  
24 district would shut down to accommodate  
25 residential type uses and Coney Island as we know

1  
2 it would be no more. You may also hear there  
3 should be absolutely no hotels in the amusement  
4 district, on the opposite side of the equation.  
5 But again, we believe that hotel uses have the  
6 potential to draw additional visitors and economic  
7 activity to the amusement area and to create  
8 direct synergies with amusement uses throughout  
9 the year. Upon the completion of this ULURP, the  
10 city will continue negotiating for the purchase of  
11 land in the amusement area. Again, it's our goal  
12 to begin the immediate investment in an interim  
13 amusement park that could open as soon as next  
14 summer, even as we craft an RFP for a permanent  
15 amusement park. The interim amusement park would  
16 operate until the permanent amusement park is  
17 developed. The city is prepared to make  
18 significant capital commitment for the creation of  
19 this interim park. In fact, we're already working  
20 with amusement park professionals to develop both  
21 a short-term as well as a long-term plan for the  
22 district. Yesterday we announced the formation of  
23 a panel of national amusement experts, chaired by  
24 Jim Seay, the president of Premier Rides, Inc.,  
25 who will be advising the city, as have many

1 industry professionals since we started this  
2 planning process and will assist in our  
3 implementation of the immediate plans for the  
4 growth of the entertainment district. Other  
5 participants include the presidents and CEOs of  
6 some of the largest and most important  
7 entertainment and amusement companies, like Great  
8 Wolf Resorts, like Ripley's, like Palace  
9 Entertainment, like the Atlantic City Steel Pier,  
10 as well as the Municipal Art Society. The  
11 panelists on our amusement panel are volunteering  
12 their time to help restore as well as to grow  
13 America's first amusement park. Their plans and  
14 their efforts are dependent on the designation of  
15 parkland as proposed within the amusement  
16 district. As I mentioned at the beginning of my  
17 comments, the revitalization of Coney Island is  
18 one of the biggest and most important  
19 redevelopment projects Brooklyn and New York City  
20 has ever seen. Over the next 30 years, this  
21 development will generate over \$10 billion in  
22 economic activity and will create 6,000 permanent  
23 jobs and 25,000 construction jobs. At full build-  
24 out we'll see somewhere between \$300 million and  
25

1  
2 \$600 million in additional annual economic  
3 activity generated from the amusement, the  
4 entertainment, the retail, hospitality and  
5 residential uses that we are bringing to the  
6 entire area. Our plan would attract approximately  
7 \$3.5 billion in private capital investments to a  
8 neighborhood that is in dire need of economic  
9 growth. Our plan not only brings incredible  
10 economic activity to the area, but we believe also  
11 maximizes these benefits by preserving and  
12 enhancing the iconic amusement area and leveraging  
13 this city treasure to support the development of  
14 the surrounding community. As I mentioned, Coney  
15 Island has serious needs and they will neither be  
16 solved by a seaside mall with large hotels, nor by  
17 an amusement district that lacks the appropriate  
18 density and mixed uses to ensure its commercial  
19 viability and sustainability. It's time for a  
20 serious plan for Coney Island and ours is just  
21 that. We believe the time to act, it's critical  
22 that we do it now. The stakes could not be  
23 higher. If we do not approve this plan, the  
24 decline of the amusement area will only  
25 accelerate. And as I mentioned, we stand to lose

1  
2 Coney Island forever. Coney Island is truly at a  
3 crossroads and our chance to capture Coney  
4 Island's full potential is now. Coney Island has  
5 been allowed to fall into decay for too long and  
6 we owe it to all New Yorkers to fix it once and  
7 for all. We owe it to Coney Island as well to  
8 increase ten-fold the size of the amusement park,  
9 to create a 27-acre 21st Century amusement and  
10 entertainment district, to add 6,000 new permanent  
11 jobs, create more than 25,000 construction jobs,  
12 more than 4,500 units of housing, 900 units of  
13 which will be affordable, create up to 500,000  
14 square feet of retail and neighborhood services.  
15 And as I mentioned, catalyze up to \$14 billion in  
16 economic activity over the next three decades.  
17 There is a broad and a growing coalition of  
18 supporters for the city's plan, some of whom you  
19 will hear from today and others that you will hear  
20 from throughout the ULURP process. We are truly  
21 at a fork in the road today. Our path will lead  
22 us to a stronger amusement district and critical  
23 neighborhood investments. The other will lead us  
24 to an uncertain future and Coney Island's eventual  
25 destruction as an amusement mecca. Investing in

1  
2 Coney Island today will set the stage for  
3 increased visitorship, billions in new private  
4 investment across the neighborhood and an enhanced  
5 amusement area. But without decisive action  
6 immediately, the amusement district will not  
7 survive and we will have lost the opportunity  
8 forever to lever an internationally known brand  
9 like Coney Island into jobs, into investment, into  
10 housing and to tourism. Again this, we believe,  
11 is a once in a lifetime opportunity and Coney  
12 Island deserves our full attention. I thank the  
13 City Council and the members with us today for the  
14 opportunity for us to discuss the future of Coney  
15 Island and this neighborhood with you. Thanks  
16 again for your time. I would be happy to answer  
17 any questions that either I or my colleagues can  
18 address.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you,  
20 Deputy Mayor Lieber. I just want to take a moment  
21 to introduce members that have come to join this  
22 Committee hearing. We've been joined by Council  
23 Members Palma, Liu, Mendez, Dickens, Baez, Rivera,  
24 Sears, Felder, Ignizio, Gioia, and Crowley.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Felder.

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COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Yes, I

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mentioned you Council Member Felder.

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COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Well say my

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name one more time please.

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COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Council

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Member Felder, who has been misbehaving. Council

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Member Gerson has joined us as well. We have a

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very interested body of individual members who

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have expressed their concerns and will hopefully

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express and have the opportunity to express their

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questions to you. I just wanted to take the time

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to ask you one specific one concerning the draft

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environmental impact statement for the proposed

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development. It suggests that by 2019 the

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development would not result in significant

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adverse impacts measured by five socioeconomic

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areas of concern prescribed in the CEQR technical

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manual. Direct residential displacement is one.

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Two is indirect residential displacement. Three

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is direct business and institutional displacement.

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Four is indirect business and institutional

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displacement. Five is adverse effects on specific

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industries. Can you just provide some detail as

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to how this assessment was reached and what the

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anticipated effect on these areas will be?

ROBERT LIEBER: I'll start by saying with all the impact that I think we're addressing in this is the byproduct of activity on land which is now currently vacant. But the specific components, Council Member Reyna, of what you've asked about, I'd like to turn to one of my colleges. Hardy, do you want to address this one?

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Please identify yourself before you answer the question.

HARDY ADESKO: My name is Hardy Adesko. I'm a Senior Vice President of EDC. In the displacement area, there are two or three residential properties in the residential area and so they are identified as direct displacement because those buildings would be replaced by others. It is a single-digit number of buildings. Secondary displacement reflects that if Coney Island improves and has new life that there may be opportunities for, or the possibility of existing non-protected people, people who are not in NYCHA housing, people who are not in Mitchell-Lama housing, people who are not in multi-family housing but are in two and three family, up to six

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2 family being priced out, reflecting the change in  
3 the neighborhood. As the neighborhood gets  
4 better, there is the potential for anyone who is  
5 not in rent controlled, rent stabilized publicly  
6 owned housing. On the other hand, we're providing  
7 a very, very substantial amount of new affordable  
8 housing which mitigates it and balances it. The  
9 same issues apply on the commercial displacement  
10 side insofar as existing properties are  
11 redeveloped to this Coney Island vision, some of  
12 the existing businesses would not be there. In  
13 fact, between the time that we wrote the EIS, the  
14 major property owner has decided to not renew  
15 many, many leases and so those displacements have  
16 happened independent of what might happen in the  
17 future. So those are the areas of displacement  
18 that are described in great detail in the EIS.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: But the  
20 indirect institutional displacement that you just  
21 described is concurrent with the CEQR technical  
22 manual?

23 HARDY ADESKO: Yes, I don't  
24 remember institutional displacement being an  
25 issue.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Well, the  
3 business and institutional.

4 HARRY ADESKO: It's businesses and  
5 not institutions.

6 ROBERT LIEBER: Purnima, would you  
7 add in?

8 PURNIMA KAPUR: My name is Purnima  
9 Kapur. I'm the Director of the Brooklyn Office of  
10 City Planning. What Hardy is describing in terms  
11 of businesses in Coney East, in the amusement  
12 district, we have been very careful in creating a  
13 framework that actually encourages small business  
14 activity. The small retail size that the Deputy  
15 Mayor was referring to was really geared more  
16 towards encouraging more mom and pop and local  
17 businesses to have an opportunity in the new and  
18 revitalized amusement district rather than making  
19 it into a national retail center.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Just to be  
21 clear, how many businesses since the results of  
22 the impact as measured in the CEQR have been  
23 displaced because the current owners have not  
24 renewed leases?

25 HARDY ADESKO: I do not have that

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number. We can get it to you.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you very much. You mentioned the affordable housing component. Is inclusionary housing going to be a part of the affordable housing, or is this in addition to the 900 that's equal to 20%? Is it going to be an additional affordable housing percentage?

PURNIMA KAPUR: The 900 number is the result of the inclusionary housing. It's the 20% inclusionary housing provision that would create those units.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: So the 900 affordable housing units is expected to come to fruition through the inclusionary housing program.

PURNIMA KAPUR: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you very much. I'd like to ask my co-chair Tony Avella to continue the line of questioning.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: Thank you, Diana. First of all, one quick comment. Usually it's customary practice that we get a copy of whatever display is shown by the administration. We have not gotten that. Can you make that

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available?

HARDY ADESKO: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: Can you describe where the application is in the current ULURP process?

PURNIMA KAPUR: The application is at the Brooklyn borough president's office. Two days ago the Brooklyn Borough President held a public hearing that was very well attended. The community board held its hearings in March and sent us a recommendation at the end of March.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: When do you anticipate it going before City Planning and what would be some sort of an approximately timetable that we can expect it back at City Council?

PURNIMA KAPUR: I think early May given when we received it. The first public hearing would be around that time.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: As I understand it, and this is for everybody's information, it will be going before my subcommittee, the Zoning and Franchises.

PURNIMA KAPUR: Yes. Since I'm going to be chairing the public hearing when it

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2 goes through the ULURP process I'm going to waive  
3 my questions because I'll be asking them at a  
4 future time. We have a number of Council Members  
5 who have signed up to ask questions. I would  
6 remind my colleagues that we have over 60 people  
7 signed up to speak. So what I'd like to do is  
8 limit Council Members to two questions in a first  
9 round and then we'll see if we can do a second  
10 round. But obviously, we're here also to hear  
11 from the public, so we do want to get to them as  
12 quickly as possible. First line of questioning  
13 goes to Council Member Barron.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you  
15 very much, Chairs. First of all, I just wanted to  
16 say that 900 units out of 4,500 units, that means  
17 3,600 will not be affordable.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: Charles,  
19 one second. I do this usually when I chair my own  
20 hearing. We don't tolerate applause because if we  
21 tolerate applause we have to tolerate booing. If  
22 you want to have something to say, it's your  
23 opportunity to get up at the dais and speak.  
24 Other than that, no applause, no booing. People  
25 are entitled to their opinion one way or the

1  
2 other. So every time this happens I'm going to  
3 rule it out of order. I'm sorry, Councilman.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: That means  
5 3,600 units will not be affordable and then  
6 sometimes even the affordable formula, who is it  
7 affordable to? Jobs for who? These are very  
8 vital questions. Because sometimes we get this  
9 broad sweep. We get this cute presentation on the  
10 screen, but when it comes to reality, oftentimes  
11 eminent domain is being used to displace  
12 businesses sometimes. And if you don't use it,  
13 it's used as a threat. So when you say businesses  
14 are not having their leases renewed or whatever  
15 and many of the development projects, the threat  
16 of the use of eminent domain might cause  
17 businesses to cut deals that they don't really  
18 want to cut. That's one of the questions, are you  
19 using eminent domain as a threat or actual use?  
20 Is it hanging over anybody's head? To me, the  
21 affordable formula doesn't go far enough. It  
22 should be 50/50 at least. Coney Island is an  
23 interesting community. You've got some people  
24 that may be at AMI. The area median income may be  
25 as high as \$70,000 and then you've got other areas

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where the AMI is like East New York, \$26,000 and \$30,000. Those people will not be able to afford the housing. Sometimes even when it's in the affordability formula. So my question is, even in the affordable part, what is the AMI for the affordable part of the housing? And two, are you using the threat of eminent domain or actually prepared to use eminent domain to displace the commercial?

ROBERT LIEBER: Let me start with the affordable housing component. We're working very closely with Council Member Recchia to come up with the right balance for the needs of Coney Island. I think if you look at this overall, we have a lot of public housing in Coney Island now. I think 6,000 units of affordable housing, public housing in the NYCHA facilities on Coney Island. We are looking at what the different income levels of those residents are and AMI in the area to make sure we strike the right balance to meet the needs of the local community.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: That's a very general answer. I wanted to know specifically what is the AMI for the so-called

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affordable housing?

ROBERT LIEBER: We haven't finalized the income bands.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So then you're not sure.

ROBERT LIEBER: Let me get Holly Leicht.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Because if you don't have that, then how can you call it affordable?

HOLLY LEICHT: Good afternoon, I'm Holly Leicht. I'm Deputy Commissioner for Development at HPD. Currently the inclusionary will be the typical inclusionary that's in the zoning resolution that's up to 80% of area median income. As you know, most of the places where we've done inclusionary zoning--

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON:  
[interposing] What is the neighborhood AMI for the area in terms of the public housing and trying to get people out of public housing and into home ownership, what is the AMI for that area? Not the whole Coney Island area because then it skews it.

HOLLY LEICHT: For the actual

1 rezoning area alone, I don't have that  
2 information. We'll have to check that.  
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: This is  
5 important stuff. I don't see how you come before  
6 this Committee and we're talking about a serious  
7 talk about affordability. You don't have the area  
8 median income. So we don't know if it's going to  
9 be affordable. Because dependent upon the AMI  
10 that will determine who is going to have access to  
11 that housing. You know that and I know that.

12 When you go up to 80% of the AMI, the AMI for the  
13 metropolitan area is close to \$79,000. Now if it  
14 was at \$72,000, so you're talking about \$56,000  
15 for a household income of four in an area that  
16 might have a \$30,000 AMI. That is not affordable.

17 I just want to suggest because I have to go and  
18 the others have to ask questions that you bring it  
19 down to the area median income of the people in  
20 public housing that need to get out of public  
21 housing and into home ownership. Because if you  
22 keep it at \$56,000 then there's some people that  
23 will not be able to afford that. If you mix it so  
24 that there is a good number of people because we  
25 don't want to exclude the ones who do make \$50,000

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2 and \$60,000 and \$70,000. But the formula for  
3 affordability should be at least 50/50. 80/20 is  
4 going to gentrify that neighborhood and black and  
5 Latino people and poor working class families  
6 suffer when you come in with those kinds of  
7 numbers. The eminent domain?

8 ROBERT LIEBER: We'll get you those  
9 specific answers. The only thing we're doing with  
10 the parkland that would be any subject of any  
11 potential eminent domain would be for the  
12 parkland. That is not our intent. We have the  
13 ability to do that for the parkland to create  
14 parkland. But our goal here is to negotiate with  
15 the landowners to buy it.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: What about  
17 the retail?

18 ROBERT LIEBER: None of the  
19 businesses I don't believe are a part of this  
20 area.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: You have  
22 the ability to use eminent domain for the retail  
23 as well, correct?

24 ROBERT LIEBER: Just for the  
25 parkland.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you  
3 very much.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER AVELLA: Thank you,  
5 Council Member Barron. You know that you and I  
6 agree on this issue that 80% of AMI is not  
7 affordable to the people who need it. So I'm glad  
8 you brought that issue up. We have been joined by  
9 the Chair of Economic Committee who I'd like to  
10 call on to speak and that is Council Member Tom  
11 White.

12 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
13 much. I won't interrupt the line of questioning  
14 and take up additional time. I was listening to  
15 my colleague, Council Member Barron, and many of  
16 the questions that he has appears to be really to  
17 the issue of affordability and I really think that  
18 we have to take another look at terms of making  
19 sure. I know that Councilman Recchia represents  
20 that area. We're going to be working at this to  
21 make sure that there's fair and equitable  
22 treatment in that area. Councilman Recchia is  
23 going to have some input into this committee as it  
24 relates to the fact that he represents that area.

25 ROBERT LIEBER: We welcome that

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participation.

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CHAIRPERSON WHITE: The next

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individual on the list is Council Member Gerson.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: Thank you,

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Chairs. As we have two questions for this round,

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I'm going to focus on the amusement area. I'd

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just like some clarification because some of the

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language used is very broad. So of a 27-acre

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amusement district, how many acres or square feet

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are going to be dedicated to pure amusement uses?

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When I talk about pure amusement uses I'm talking

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about games, rides, and arcades, exclusive of

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retail, exclusive of hotels, and exclusive of

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shops. When I went as a kid to Coney Island and

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other amusement areas we went for the games and

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the rides. How much will be devoted to that use

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exclusively? Have there been any studies of that

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amusement use as to the effect of the plan on the

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affordability of the amusement activities? In

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other words, you referred in the presentation to

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Coney Island as the People's Playground. Part of

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the People's Playground is that we had amusement

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opportunities and games that were affordable to

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the cross section of New Yorkers. Have we done an

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2 analysis to make sure that we are not transforming  
3 the People's Playground into a playground for the  
4 rich and famous only, or people who are close to  
5 that? That we're creating an amusement area that  
6 will remain affordable. How much of this is going  
7 to be real amusement? How much of the real  
8 amusement will be affordable to real New Yorkers?

9 ROBERT LIEBER: Let me address the  
10 question about the size first. I'll do this to  
11 the best of my ability. We have identified nine  
12 specific acres that will be for the exclusive use  
13 of outdoor amusements and rides. Key to our plan,  
14 Council Member Gerson, is that we want to  
15 reactivate all 27 acres of this area into  
16 entertainment and amusement uses. If you go back  
17 in history, the original Steeplechase Plaza for  
18 example, was an enormous indoor entertainment  
19 complex. We want to recreate that so that when  
20 you visit Coney Island and you go out there on the  
21 27 acres, you will have entertainment throughout  
22 the 27 acres and there will be indoor and outdoor  
23 rides and amusements. The nine acres that we're  
24 talking about for the parkland is exclusively for  
25 the outdoor component of the amusement and

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entertainment activities.

COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: So just for clarification, because here's where I'm concerned the language is not really focused. So I just want to clarify what we're talking about. I asked you about the amount of space that would be devoted to pure amusement use. I did not specify outdoor amusement use. An indoor fun house, an indoor walk through the mirror maze, an indoor pinball alley is an amusement use. An indoor hotel space or a grand ballroom or a white table cloth restaurant, that is not an amusement use. So indoor or outdoor aside, of the 27 acres, how much is pure amusement use? If you don't know, then please get back to us.

ROBERT LIEBER: I want to try and answer it to the best of our ability as we sit here today. If it's not satisfactory, we'll get an answer and sit down with you afterwards, or with the Council to discuss it. You're correct, it is sometime confusing when you look at all the different acreage numbers and what's in and what's out. Particularly when we talk about mapping areas of it as parkland. That's why I have

1  
2 focused on the nine acres of outdoor amusement as  
3 a specific component of the overall 27-acre plan.  
4 I understand what you're saying about what is  
5 amusement. When you get into things like a  
6 waterpark hotel which has indoor and outdoor water  
7 component features to it that extend back and  
8 forth, I can't give you the answer as to how much  
9 of that overall footprint of that hotel we would  
10 deem specifically amusement or entertainment as  
11 opposed to dining room space or some other part of  
12 that. What we've tried to is create an  
13 environment of mix so that you have all 27 acres  
14 there that will provide for this entertainment use  
15 that coexists with the other commercial uses that  
16 are taking place there. Seth, would you add  
17 anything to that?

18                   SETH PINSKY: The only thing that I  
19 would add is that in putting together this plan,  
20 what we've sought to do is create a vibrant  
21 economically feasible entertainment zone. We've  
22 looked around the world at successful urban  
23 entertainment zones and what we've found is that  
24 in order for these zones to be successful, in  
25 order for them to continue to invest in new rides

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2 and continue to attract people, you have to have a  
3 mix of uses. So the nine acres that were  
4 described by the Deputy Mayor are the mapped  
5 parkland, which will be primarily outdoor  
6 amusements. On the other 19 acres, or 18 acres,  
7 you'll have a mix of entertainment, retail, indoor  
8 amusements and with respect to the hotels which  
9 you're referencing, there are limits that are  
10 placed in the zoning proposal on the amount of  
11 floor space that the hotel lobbies can occupy. So  
12 that even where there are properties where there  
13 are hotels above, the ground floor will remain  
14 primarily for the entertainment uses.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: The part of  
16 my question on the affordability?

17 ROBERT LIEBER: What I would say is  
18 what we don't want to do here is create Disneyland  
19 and that this becomes a gated entertainment area.  
20 We want to keep this open and accessible and keep  
21 it affordable. We have done extensive interviews  
22 with different operators at different price points  
23 and different scales to develop the overall  
24 economic model here. The goal is to maintain the  
25 iconic and the kitschy nature of Coney Island as

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an affordable place for everybody to be able to come and play.

COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: Mr. Chair, thank you. I would tentatively reserve the opportunity to come back on the second round. I would just note that I would request follow-up clarification on my point. I am concerned when we have testimony which notes that three years ago we had 11 acres of active amusement and now we're talking about 9 acres and interspersed and surrounded by all these other non-amusement activities; I am concerned that we don't lose an opportunity to keep and expand and enhance this great amusement area that has served New York for generations. When we go from 11 to 9 that to me is a great concern. So we need the clarification. Thank you very much.

ROBERT LIEBER: Your point is an integral part of our plan and we'd be happy to explain that more clearly.

CHAIRPERSON WHITE: I would like to make mention that we've been joined by Council Member Vann, Council Member Comrie, Council Member Martinez and Council Member Garodnick. Just for

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2 my edification, what's the total amount of acreage  
3 that we're talking about?

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ROBERT LIEBER: The area subject to  
5 the rezoning that we're talking about is 27 acres  
6 on the east side. The total acreage is 40 acres  
7 including Coney West. Let me make sure I got that  
8 right. I'm sorry, it's 27 acres of amusement and  
9 60 acres in total.

10

CHAIRPERSON WHITE: It's 60 acres  
11 in total as it relates to what you have behind  
12 you?

13

ROBERT LIEBER: Coney North, Coney  
14 West and Coney East.

15

CHAIRPERSON WHITE: And that's the  
16 total you're talking about \$14 billion in economic  
17 activity over the next 30 years?

18

ROBERT LIEBER: That's correct.

19

CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Let me ask a  
20 question that's not on this but I think should be  
21 part of a lot of negotiations when it has to do  
22 with building. You have jobs up there, 25,000  
23 construction. That is not a permanent but it's  
24 jobs nonetheless. But you have out of that 6,000  
25 permanent jobs. What about health care in the

1  
2 area? You're adding additional people. You're  
3 talking about additional people coming from all  
4 over the world. We all know Coney Island is an  
5 attraction. People need medical care. I see  
6 hospitals closing. So how are we going to provide  
7 medical care for the people in the existing area?  
8 Are any of the health care facilities in the area  
9 impacted in terms of having to move based on this  
10 project? Address the health care issue for me.

11           SETH PINSKY: First of all, many of  
12 the jobs, especially the construction jobs are  
13 likely to be union jobs and are likely to provide  
14 full benefits. With respect to the permanent  
15 jobs, some of those will be working part of the  
16 season or it'll be working in retail and may or  
17 may not. It's obviously very important to the  
18 administration to provide the best paying jobs  
19 possible. But our first priority is to provide  
20 jobs period. I think it's important to remember  
21 that without this plan, none of these incremental  
22 jobs with or without health care benefits will be  
23 created. What we're talking about is a  
24 neighborhood of 50,000 people who are under served  
25 currently who aren't able to find employment and

1  
2 we're giving them employment here. We're creating  
3 hundreds of thousands of square feet of new  
4 retail, new infrastructure, new services for the  
5 benefit of the community.

6 ROBERT LIEBER: Is your question is  
7 about acute care facilities?

8 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Yes.

9 ROBERT LIEBER: I don't have an  
10 inventory in front of me now of what is available  
11 or what the expanded needs would be over the next  
12 10, 20 or 30 years. But we can look at that and  
13 come back to you with that.

14 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: I would like to  
15 know. I know Coney Island Hospital is near there.

16 ROBERT LIEBER: There are hospital  
17 facilities out there. Frankly I don't know what  
18 the appropriate metrics are to access coverage in  
19 the area. We focused on housing, we focused on  
20 schools, we focused on infrastructure and I don't  
21 want to just give you a flip answer without having  
22 some more facts about what the existing facilities  
23 are and what their capacity is and what the  
24 availability for additional use would be. We'll  
25 get that answer for you.

1  
2                   CHAIRPERSON WHITE: I just don't  
3 want anything to close. We just closed Mary  
4 Immaculate Hospital out there where I am and St.  
5 John's.

6                   ROBERT LIEBER: I don't know how to  
7 asses this, but our goal here is to increase the  
8 amount of people who are in the area and living in  
9 the area. That should theoretically at least  
10 place greater demand and availability for those  
11 medical facilities.

12                   SETH PINSKY: Just to be clear, in  
13 the EIS we looked at displacement and there was no  
14 assumption of any sort of displacement of medical  
15 facilities or hospitals. You have Coney Island  
16 Hospital in the area which just built a new  
17 building. We don't think that anything is going  
18 to be in worse shape for this development for any  
19 of those sorts of facilities.

20                   COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Mr.  
21 Chairman, could I just add something to that. In  
22 reference to Coney Island Hospital, which is very  
23 close to the community, on the Coney Island  
24 Development Board we have Marty Levine who is on  
25 the CIDC. He's also the chairman of the board in

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2 Coney Island Hospital. He will be testifying  
3 later on at this hearing and making some  
4 recommendations. We have been in close contact  
5 with Coney Island Hospital. They have let us know  
6 in our public hearings what the needs are. In  
7 addition to that, on Neptune Avenue there is the  
8 Ida Israel Clinic which we have expanded it. We  
9 have given it money and it's doing extremely well.  
10 Coney Island Hospital is working with us and they  
11 do have representation on the Coney Island  
12 Development Corporation Board and I think they're  
13 well represented. They will be testifying and  
14 making some recommendations on how we could help  
15 them in expanding their emergency room.

16 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: I notice in a  
17 lot of the hearings that we have that after the  
18 city agencies have testified, they leave and then  
19 we have a number of people who would like to have  
20 input. So I would like to make a request if it's  
21 at all possible that you leave someone behind to  
22 hear what the people have to say so that they can  
23 bring you feedback after the complete testimony is  
24 given.

25 ROBERT LIEBER: We have worked very

1  
2 hard for this past six years to make sure we have  
3 as open a dialogue as we can to build this plan.  
4 We'd be crazy if we left here and didn't listen to  
5 people after we left, to have somebody to be able  
6 to report back on just exactly what took place.  
7 So we promise we will have someone sitting here  
8 that will take notes and will be able to follow up  
9 with us specifically and you also if you have  
10 other questions.

11 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
12 much. I'm going to call on Council Member  
13 Crowley.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you,  
15 Chairman White. Good afternoon, Deputy Mayor. I  
16 have a question first as it relates to timeline.  
17 If all goes right with land use and you get the  
18 variances and the plan is ready to go, at what  
19 point do you see a timeline from beginning to end  
20 for completion?

21 ROBERT LIEBER: The timeline for  
22 the full build-out of Coney Island is going to  
23 take many, many, many years. The way that we have  
24 contemplated this is that at the end of the ULURP  
25 process we would expect to see interim amusement

1  
2 uses on Coney Island in the summer of 2010. We're  
3 already beginning conversations with different  
4 operators to provide that activity. Then our  
5 schedule of build-out would take place, we'd start  
6 on Coney North and work our way to Coney West and  
7 back towards Coney East as we build out the  
8 overall infrastructure and the ongoing  
9 development. That's going to take ten years  
10 before those uses are in place. That's what the  
11 city is going to do. And then the private market  
12 will respond as the market conditions warrant.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Will the  
14 city set an environment to help stimulate the  
15 growth to move in a quicker pace?

16 ROBERT LIEBER: We're going to do  
17 everything we can, absolutely. We've got money in  
18 the budget to provide for the infrastructure  
19 necessary to get this development underway and  
20 work with the private sector to find out ways that  
21 we can get them engaged as quickly as we can.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I'm just  
23 curious, about how much do you have set aside and  
24 was any of that from the federal stimulus?

25 ROBERT LIEBER: We have money that

1  
2 in excess of \$100 million. We have received, I  
3 think it's \$15 million that's been targeted from  
4 the federal stimulus package for the  
5 reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Coney  
6 Island Boardwalk.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: The Chair would  
9 like to call Council Member Dickens.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you  
11 so much, Chairs. Thank you for your testimony.  
12 I've been relegated to one question that has five  
13 parts.

14 ROBERT LIEBER: I can't wait to  
15 hear your five questions.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: No, it's  
17 one question.

18 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Excuse me,  
19 Council Member, I'm chairing now and you can have  
20 five questions.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you.  
22 With regard to the number of residential units  
23 that will be displaced, what is the plan that  
24 guarantees that those displaced families have  
25 first right of refusal? If there is such a plan

1  
2 in place, will it be at the same rental as  
3 presently being paid? What about the moving  
4 expenses incurred? The same question is for the  
5 commercial. The tax incentives that may be in  
6 place or may be planned to be put in place, can  
7 they be used in exchange for additional affordable  
8 units? Lastly, I haven't heard anything in the  
9 testimony about proposed green building,  
10 particularly if there is an opportunity for  
11 stimulus funding and thereby the creation of jobs.

12 ROBERT LIEBER: I don't know that I  
13 have all five of them.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: That's all  
15 right, I'll repeat them.

16 ROBERT LIEBER: You'll remind me?  
17 Purnima, can you address that issue?

18 PURNIMA KAPUR: Sure. Most of the  
19 blocks that are proposed for rezoning here are  
20 vacant and non-residential in nature. The only  
21 residential buildings that are in the rezoning  
22 area are on Mermaid Avenue. Of those, there is a  
23 handful that's not protected. So the proposal is  
24 for a variety of housing types including  
25 affordable housing that is subject to the city's

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inclusionary zoning program.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Let me just interrupt you. I'm sorry. Maybe this is over my head. I just want to know how many residential units on whatever avenue will be impacted by being displaced?

PURNIMA KAPUR: The direct displacement numbers are very little. I mean it's like under ten units.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: So other than ten units there will be no displacement of any residential units. Does the same apply for commercial?

PURNIMA KAPUR: There are businesses that have been displaced in the last few years. Those are largely concentrated in the amusement area.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: How many is that? How many have been displaced, coupled with how many will be displaced?

SETH PINSKY: Just to be displaced on the direct displacement of commercial businesses, many of the businesses that were studied in the EIS that could have been directly

1  
2 displaced by this rezoning were already displaced  
3 unrelated to this zoning when the current landlord  
4 of those businesses chose not to renew their  
5 leases. So the number of direct displacements is  
6 actually significantly lower now than it was when  
7 we did the EIS. The specific number we'll have to  
8 get back to you with that number, but it's not a  
9 large number at this point.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: So there  
11 are building owners that chose not to renew  
12 leases. Is that what you're saying?

13 SETH PINSKY: That's correct.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: For  
15 whatever reasons they may have, in a time and an  
16 economy when they can't pay the taxes and the  
17 water bills.

18 ROBERT LIEBER: They had an  
19 expectation for an alternative use.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: That's  
21 what I thought.

22 ROBERT LIEBER: That's what we're  
23 trying to protect against.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: That's  
25 what I thought. What about the tax incentives?

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Can they be used in exchange for additional affordable units other than the 900?

SETH PINSKY: Which tax incentives specifically?

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Well let me ask, are there going to be any tax incentives in this plan that you're doing, in this rezoning?

SETH PINSKY: In connection with the inclusionary housing there will be benefits that would come with that that would be normal with an inclusionary housing development. There are no specific commercial tax incentive plans that are planned.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: With inclusionary that's only 20%.

SETH PINSKY: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Because that's very small against the number of units that you're talking about creating.

SETH PINSKY: Again, I think what's important to remember in Coney Island is that first of all there is a very large concentration already of affordable housing. And that most of the additional housing that we're talking about is

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2 being built on vacant land and therefore is almost  
3 entirely purely incremental.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Sir, I  
5 understand that there may be a lot of what you  
6 term as affordable housing. But in New York City  
7 in times such as this I don't think that New York  
8 can provide sufficient affordable units in order  
9 for all of our families to remain. And when you  
10 think about the families that are relocating to  
11 New York City, I beg to differ with you on that  
12 one. The green build, I didn't hear anything  
13 about that.

14 ROBERT LIEBER: Council Member  
15 Dickens, the green model going forward is almost  
16 institutionally baked into our brains already.  
17 Everything that we're doing requires green  
18 components. Even the new Boardwalk is going to be  
19 more green with a reduced carbon footprint. So  
20 everything that we do emphasizes a significant  
21 amount of green. I've made three presentations to  
22 the communities so far this morning and that was  
23 all about how we're leveraging the green  
24 opportunities to build and rehabilitate and rehab  
25 existing structures in New York City.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: As part of  
3 this, will there be an opportunity to get capital  
4 from the stimulus?

5 ROBERT LIEBER: We already have  
6 received some stimulus capital for the project.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Can you  
8 share with us how much?

9 ROBERT LIEBER: \$15 million so far  
10 for the Boardwalk.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Will that  
12 \$15 million also aid in the creation of additional  
13 jobs when we talk about green opportunity?

14 ROBERT LIEBER: We're not going to  
15 stop asking for more stimulus dollars to apply  
16 here. The \$15 million for the Boardwalk is for  
17 the material and the labor to install it.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: That's  
19 only for the Boardwalk.

20 ROBERT LIEBER: That's correct.  
21 We're not done with this.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: What about  
23 buildings? What about the hotels, what about in  
24 the housing, will that be green as well? Roofs?

25 ROBERT LIEBER: It will be green.

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2 The green standards are going to continue to be  
3 clearer and they're going to be more pronounced as  
4 we go forward. I'm confident the work that we're  
5 doing with City Council on green building codes  
6 and other components to this that we'll see more  
7 of that. And as these buildings ultimately get  
8 built out, I think the green standard is going to  
9 become higher and higher as we go.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you.

11 ROBERT LIEBER: The stimulus money  
12 has some restrictions on how it's applied and when  
13 it's applied. So we don't have those dollars  
14 available today to build projects that could be  
15 still several years from fruition.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you  
17 so much.

18 ROBERT LIEBER: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Mr. Deputy  
20 Mayor, I thank you for your time today. I have  
21 just two questions. Just so you know, it was not  
22 out of disrespect that I was not here from the  
23 beginning of the process. I have a resolution  
24 that is actually my resolution on the agenda  
25 across the street in the Education Committee. So

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2 I had the opportunity to ask questions of the  
3 Department of Education early so I could actually  
4 be here. I want to thank my co-chair Tom White  
5 for the hearing and to my two colleagues Council  
6 Member Avella and Vann for chairing in my absence.  
7 We have been working on this project for many  
8 years, you and I and many of the folks that are up  
9 here. I'm happy that it's finally coming to  
10 fruition. As we move to the process we look  
11 forward to further discussions. Some of the  
12 discussions that you and I have had have been  
13 about the infrastructure of the area. My  
14 understanding is this has not come up yet. I'm  
15 wondering as to your understanding because of the  
16 unique geography and topography of Coney Island  
17 and the infrastructure costs or will the city pay,  
18 will the private developers pay? Is it part of  
19 the allocation in your funding? How is that going  
20 to go as we move forward?

21 ROBERT LIEBER: We have capital in  
22 our budget to provide for infrastructure,  
23 particularly the initial phase. We are going to  
24 look to draw upon the private sector wherever we  
25 can, but we don't want to leave that as the

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2       impediment that keeps us from making progress as  
3       we develop the plan. I mentioned earlier, Council  
4       Member Katz, that we had a little over \$100  
5       million that we have allocated for the first phase  
6       in Coney North for providing that infrastructure  
7       and we'll make further commitments as we go for  
8       subsequent phases.

9                   CHAIRPERSON KATZ: So the \$100  
10       million is solely for that. My understanding is  
11       that's for Coney North?

12                   ROBERT LIEBER: Yes.

13                   CHAIRPERSON KATZ: What about East  
14       and West?

15                   ROBERT LIEBER: Those will be  
16       coming in subsequent phases.

17                   SETH PINSKY: But the thing that I  
18       think is important to understand is that in order  
19       to do Coney East and Coney West and upgrade the  
20       infrastructure throughout Coney Island you have to  
21       start with this first phase. So this first phase  
22       directly serves Coney North but is for the benefit  
23       of the entire project.

24                   CHAIRPERSON KATZ: You need that to  
25       build out the rest.

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2           SETH PINSKY: Correct.

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4           ROBERT LIEBER: As you come in from  
5 Surf Avenue that's where you start. So we have to  
6 connect it all there and then we'll connect it  
7 from there.

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8           CHAIRPERSON KATZ: How much are you  
9 allocating in the first phase? How much do you  
10 think the second and third phase will cost? Are  
11 you expecting the city to pay the second and third  
12 phase, or are you expecting that to be part of the  
13 development costs?

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14           ROBERT LIEBER: As I mentioned, the  
15 first phase we have estimated at \$100 million.  
16 Subsequent phases we don't have in our budget yet.  
17 We will put it in our budget and we'll also look  
18 for the private sector to contribute as much as we  
19 can get them to do.

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20           CHAIRPERSON KATZ: I wish you luck  
21 on that.

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22           ROBERT LIEBER: Thank you.

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24           CHAIRPERSON KATZ: I know that  
25 Council Member Dickens was talking about  
26 affordable housing and you know that's always an  
27 important part of the process with the Council and

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1  
2 also the percentage of AMI as we go forward. So  
3 I'm sure that we will be having hours and weeks of  
4 discussion on that as we move forward. The RFP  
5 that's going out for the amusement park,  
6 considering we just finished our discussions on  
7 Willetts Point and Hunters Point, it will not  
8 shock you to know that I'm asking about the RFP.  
9 What type of labor do you envision as we move  
10 forward? Will the RFP talk about that as we move  
11 forward?

12 ROBERT LIEBER: The RFP will talk  
13 about that as we move forward.

14 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: What will it  
15 say?

16 ROBERT LIEBER: When we finish it,  
17 I'll show it to you. We're not quite there yet.  
18 We understand. As we've talked about many times  
19 in the past, we want to make sure we can create  
20 good paying jobs and we want to make sure that  
21 that works. But we also want to make sure that  
22 things get built. So we're working with our  
23 colleagues in organized labor to come up with the  
24 right kind of mix that balances the needs for  
25 people to be able to get good paying jobs and make

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2 sure we get things that are going to get built.  
3 So those conversations continue again even  
4 tomorrow.

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CHAIRPERSON KATZ: You know how  
6 important that issue is for many of us up here  
7 because we've discussed it on so many other  
8 projects as well.

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ROBERT LIEBER: As for us as well.

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CHAIRPERSON KATZ: I appreciate it.  
11 Council Member Felder, you have a question? I'm  
12 sorry, we have a list? I apologize. I thought he  
13 had a question. Council Member Mitchell, a new  
14 member of the New York City Council and we welcome  
15 here to the committee. Council Member Felder, you  
16 are the final questioner.

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COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Thank you  
18 very much. First of all I just want to reiterate  
19 what many of my colleagues have said. Although  
20 Coney Island is in Council Member Recchia's  
21 district, it's been my tradition as well as many  
22 of my colleagues to defer to the wishes of the  
23 Council Member that represents a particular area  
24 on the basis of that person having the most  
25 familiarity with the needs of that community, but

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2 Coney Island certainly is not that far from where  
3 my district is and certainly my feet have been in  
4 the waters at Coney Island many times. Not  
5 recently because I don't want to drive anyone  
6 away. I was there two weeks ago with my 7-year-  
7 old on the rocks. It's truly a gem for the city  
8 and something that's very important. We look  
9 forward to working with Councilman Recchia and you  
10 on the projects that you propose. I just want to  
11 clarify something that you said earlier and sort  
12 of nail it down. On the use of eminent domain,  
13 will you at any point use eminent domain?

14 ROBERT LIEBER: We reserve the  
15 right for eminent domain to create parkland.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: The reason I  
17 ask you that is because on June 24th my dear  
18 colleague Commissioner Kapur testified at the  
19 scoping meeting and said that there will be no  
20 eminent domain. She's an unbelievable public  
21 servant and whatever she says, she means. She  
22 said that there would be no eminent domain used in  
23 the project whatsoever.

24 ROBERT LIEBER: As I mentioned,  
25 Council Member Felder, it is absolutely not our

1  
2 intention at all, but we have that right as a part  
3 of the process. But our intention is to do this  
4 in a negotiated way. And Purnima, do you want to  
5 add anything to that?

6 PURNIMA KAPUR: No, that's exactly  
7 right.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Just to  
9 continue making some trouble because that's what I  
10 like doing, I just want to say that there's a  
11 slippery slope, or could be because we're going  
12 from saying that only for parkland and not for  
13 anything else and now clearly there may be. No  
14 one wants to use it. I'm not in any way trying to  
15 intimate that the city will use it. But there's a  
16 possibility clearly that you're saying you may use  
17 it anywhere. Is that true?

18 ROBERT LIEBER: No. Just on the  
19 parkland.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: So again,  
21 in other words, despite the fact that there was  
22 testimony on June 24th, 2008 that there would be  
23 none whatsoever, you are now saying that there  
24 might be some use for the parkland. Is that  
25 accurate? I'm not an attorney, I'm just asking.

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This is not a trick question.

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ROBERT LIEBER: I understand it's not a trick question. I understand the issues and the sensitivity. What I'm trying to say, and I was not at that meeting, but we have that right to acquire parkland through eminent domain, but it is not our intention to do so. We want to negotiate to acquire that land on fair and reasonable terms from the existing landowners.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Just to conclude because I know you love my questioning. Just to conclude this part of it, would you say that when my friend Commissioner Kapur said that there would be no eminent domain in this project that that meant only for the areas that are not parkland? Is that correct? I mean it's not my role to explain.

ROBERT LIEBER: I'll do a Vulcan mind meld and see if that's what she meant. But I believe that is what her intention was, that it only applies to land that is not parkland. Is that correct? She can speak for herself.

PURNIMA KAPUR: That is correct.  
If we were intending to use eminent domain

1  
2 elsewhere, we would need additional approvals that  
3 are not being sought as part of this process.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: I'm happy  
5 because in the EIS you say you might use it and  
6 there you said you're not going to use it. And  
7 I'm trying to help you. So that's why I'm trying  
8 to clarify the issue.

9 ROBERT LIEBER: Thank you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Now that  
11 you appreciate what I'm doing, I wanted to ask one  
12 more question. You said you intend to map it as a  
13 park. Is that with state legislation or without?

14 ROBERT LIEBER: I think it requires  
15 state. Let me defer this to the president, Mr.  
16 Pinsky to answer your question.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: How are  
18 you, Mr. Pinsky?

19 SETH PINSKY: I'm doing very well.  
20 Thank you. How are you?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: I'm not  
22 doing so well.

23 SETH PINSKY: I'm sorry to hear  
24 that.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: I figured

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that would get a laugh. Do you want to hear the rest of my problems?

SETH PINSKY: I'd love to.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Go ahead, please.

SETH PINSKY: I thought I was going to hear your problems. In order to map parkland, that's done through the ULURP process. To de-map parkland requires state legislation and there is a de-mapping action that's envisioned as part of our plan and that will require action by the state legislature.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: What portion in the percentage of the parkland would require the state legislation?

SETH PINSKY: None of the mapping requires state legislation. It's only the de-mapping. The de-mapping is not in the amusement district. It's not in Coney East, it's in Coney West. However, if that property is not de-mapped, there would be a very serious portion of the housing and the jobs and the retail that would not be created because it's envisioned that that housing, those jobs and that retail would be

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2 created on the de-mapped parkland. So just to be  
3 clear, you're taking parkland in Coney West, which  
4 is currently a parking lot. It's technically  
5 parkland, but it's actually a parking lot. You're  
6 de-mapping that. You're replacing the parking in  
7 a new development. You're developing new housing,  
8 including affordable housing, new jobs, new retail  
9 and then you're replacing that parkland with newly  
10 mapped parkland in Coney East in the amusement  
11 district.

12 ROBERT LIEBER: Just to put a point  
13 on it. You have land on the west that's  
14 approximately the same size as the land in Coney  
15 East. We'll map it as parkland in Coney East. We  
16 want to use the land in Coney West for development  
17 so we can accommodate the housing and parking  
18 requirements. In order to take the land in Coney  
19 West we require state action to alienate the  
20 parkland. The requirement if you alienate  
21 parkland is you have to replace it with parkland.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: I'm sorry.

23 ROBERT LIEBER: You have voices in  
24 both ears. Do you want me to repeat that?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Let me tell

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you, I have many voices.

ROBERT LIEBER: But only two ears.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: It wasn't only two. There were other voices coming to me at the same time. I apologize. Can you repeat what you said?

ROBERT LIEBER: I'm try to do this as simply as I can. You have land that is west of the KeySpan parking, which we call Coney West. That is currently a parkland, but it is technically a park. If we want to use that land for future development we have to remove it as parkland because you can't build anything on parkland. So our proposal would be to get the state to approval the alienation of that parkland. One of the requirements of the state is if you're going to alienate parkland, you have to find a suitable area to replace that parkland. Our goal would be to take that acreage west of KeySpan, the Coney West, and move that parkland to Coney East so that the nine acres that we want to have dedicated exclusively for outdoor amusements would be mapped parkland. If anyone ever wanted to change that in the future it would be difficult to

1  
2 do. They could if they were able to get the state  
3 to alienate that parkland as well. But they'd  
4 have to find another nine acres somewhere else to  
5 replace it. So for us these two kind of go  
6 together.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: The  
8 question I had was what percentage of the area  
9 that's proposed for rezoning will be mapped as  
10 parkland?

11 ROBERT LIEBER: Nine acres. I'm  
12 sorry, it's ten and a half because there's another  
13 piece of parkland in Highland Park West.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: I'm sorry?

15 ROBERT LIEBER: There's another  
16 acre and a half just to the west that's called  
17 Highland Park.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: But it  
19 would seem clear that you really need the state  
20 legislation for safeguard no matter what. Is that  
21 accurate?

22 ROBERT LIEBER: It is not for us to  
23 map as parkland. It's only we need the state if  
24 we're going to de-map the existing parkland.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: I'm sorry.

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2 My final question, like Council Member Dickens,  
3 question 1F, is that it seems clear that you need  
4 state legislation for part of what you're  
5 attempting to do. If that's the case, why is that  
6 not going on right now?

7 ROBERT LIEBER: Is it. We are in  
8 Albany. We are prepared to make an application  
9 for that alienation now. So we're looking at  
10 doing that as a contemporaneous part of this  
11 overall process.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: When you  
13 say now that means when?

14 ROBERT LIEBER: Between now and  
15 June.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Thank you  
17 very much.

18 ROBERT LIEBER: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Thank you,  
20 Deputy Mayor. We hope that you will be leaving  
21 someone behind to listen to the testimony of the  
22 public as we move forward.

23 ROBERT LIEBER: We would be happy  
24 to do that. Any other questions?

25 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Wait. I'm

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sorry.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: I had my round. Just for clarification, could someone address the timetable of what is proposed? If you've already done this, then I'll find out. What timetable does the city have in mind in terms of when you're going to take the next formal steps in the process and submissions? It's right here. That's why I said, I was out at another committee hearing.

ROBERT LIEBER: We're happy we could answer your question.

COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: Thank you very much. You will follow up with the information I requested?

ROBERT LIEBER: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Clearly it was a false alarm before, so I apologize. Council Member Reyna also has a question.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you, Madame Chair. I just wanted to get some clarification. In your testimony, Deputy Mayor, you had mentioned a school in the Coney West. Is that part of the current five year capital plan or

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the next five year capital plan?

ROBERT LIEBER: I don't believe it is a part of the current capital plan. This is a site we have reserved for future school use. You have to be clear, it's not a part of this rezoning and ULURP application either. It's a part of the other one. We have that site reserved for a future school, but it's not in the budget.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: In your PowerPoint, there isn't a reserved site that would clearly indicate that that's the area for a school.

ROBERT LIEBER: That's correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON KATZ: So as I was being a smart-aleck with Council Member Gerson, it turns out what I handed him was not right. This says that the ULURP started in 2008. So when is the new timeframe? This timeframe seems to be out of date. So when is the new timeframe?

COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: See, Madame Chair, this is Coney Island, so we go backwards and forwards in time.

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2 PURNIMA KAPUR: The application was  
3 certified on January 20th, 2009. It has already  
4 been heard at the community board. We have a  
5 recommendation. At this point it is at the  
6 borough president's office. The borough president  
7 just held a public hearing. We anticipate it  
8 coming to the City Planning Commission in early  
9 May.

10 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: So it's to us by  
11 June.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: That's what  
13 I needed to know. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Before you  
16 leave, I would like to recognize some high school  
17 students visiting from Belfast, Ireland who are  
18 sitting up there. Let's give them a nice warm  
19 welcome.

20 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Thank you very  
21 much, Deputy Mayor.

22 ROBERT LIEBER: Thank you very  
23 much.

24 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: We're going to  
25 do this in panels. We're going to have Lynn Kelly

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2 from the Coney Island Development Corporation, Ken  
3 Jones from the Concerned Voters of Coney Island  
4 Coalition, Mathylde Frontus from the Urban  
5 Neighborhood Services and Martin Elhen [phonetic]  
6 from PPE. We're being told we need to vacate this  
7 room by 4:30. If anybody has written testimony  
8 that they would be willing to give in so that you  
9 don't need to wait around to testify, that would  
10 be terrific. It will become part of the record.  
11 It will be read. Please give it to the sergeant-  
12 at-arms. It'll be read into the testimony. Quiet  
13 please. Let's have some order in the room so that  
14 folks that are waiting to be heard can actually be  
15 heard. Ms. Kelly?

16 LYNN KELLY: Hi, how are you?

17 Before I start my testimony I'd actually also like  
18 to recognize some students here in the audience  
19 today from Liberation Diploma High School in Coney  
20 Island, Lincoln High School and also Kingsborough  
21 Community College students. Thank you for coming.  
22 Thank you, Council Member Katz, Council Member  
23 White, and members of the Land Use and Economic  
24 Development Committees and a special thank you to  
25 Council Member Recchia, with whom I've worked for

1  
2 many years. My name is Lynn Kelly. I serve as  
3 President of the Coney Island Development  
4 Corporation. The CIDC was formed in 2003 by the  
5 Mayor, the City Council and the Brooklyn Borough  
6 President to create a comprehensible viable plan  
7 to promote a more diversified business community  
8 and better employment opportunities in Coney  
9 Island. We're comprised of a board of 13 members,  
10 each serving a two-year term. Since it's  
11 inception, the CIDC has met between four and six  
12 times annually and all of our meetings are open to  
13 the public. In 2005, Mayor Bloomberg announced  
14 the strategic plan for Coney Island, which  
15 outlined the proposed redevelopment of the area.  
16 The plan was the produce of extensive community  
17 input with more than 1,500 people participating in  
18 over 300 meetings. The community still is  
19 intimately involved in the City's redevelopment  
20 efforts as we move through the public approval  
21 process. The strategic plan for Coney Island took  
22 into account the needs of a neighborhood which  
23 boasts an unemployment rate twice that of the  
24 Borough of Brooklyn and where one in six residents  
25 lives in public housing. The establishment of

1  
2 year-round activity will spur job creation in  
3 industries from entertainment to hospitality to  
4 retail and will employ tens of thousands of people  
5 as build-out is completed. The CIDC is also  
6 addressing the issues of employment and job  
7 training for area residents through the creation  
8 of workforce development programs. Last year, the  
9 CIDC hosted seven workforce development events,  
10 including career opportunities fair at KeySpan  
11 Park in August that attracted over 400 people and  
12 over 30 local companies. In addition, we had a  
13 job training fair in November featuring 20 program  
14 providers. This spring, along with Kingsborough  
15 Community College, we will host a free hospitality  
16 training session at the New York Aquarium. For  
17 the past four years, the CIDC has also employed  
18 the fund to provide district wide maintenance and  
19 sanitation services to help improve the aesthetics  
20 of the neighborhood. Additionally, the CIDC works  
21 with amusement stakeholders to promote Coney  
22 Island as a destination for locals and tourists  
23 through enhanced signage, co-development of the  
24 2009 messaging campaign, "Coney Island, Really Fun  
25 and Really Open" and production of the Coney

1  
2 Island Fun Guide. We're the sponsor of the annual  
3 Village Voices Siren Festival that draws more than  
4 150,000 people to Coney Island annually. This  
5 year the city and the CIDC will donate over  
6 \$30,000 to help support Friday night fireworks.  
7 The CIDC is actively involved with sponsoring or  
8 participating in community-based events and  
9 programs throughout the year. In 2008, we  
10 participated in more than 20 different community  
11 events, including an annual student writing  
12 competition, Coney Island Generation Gap Save  
13 Summer campaign and Urban Neighborhood Services  
14 Summer Leadership Academy. As you can see, CIDC  
15 maintains a visible presence in this neighborhood.  
16 The city's plan is the best chance to secure the  
17 future for Coney Island. Without the passage of  
18 the zoning, CIDC's role is frankly unclear and  
19 investments CIDC has made in the past will be in  
20 jeopardy going forward. We have a choice to make.  
21 The time to act is now. Please, we don't want to  
22 let this community down. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you. You  
24 went over two minutes.

25 LYNN KELLY: My apologies.

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2 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: I would  
3 appreciate it in the future speakers if we would  
4 stick to that two minutes. If you have  
5 documentation, give it to the sergeant-at-arms.  
6 It will be put into the record. Yes, sir?

7 MATHYLDE FRONTUS: Good afternoon,  
8 Council Member Recchia. How are you today?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: I'm great.  
10 Thank you for coming.

11 MATHYLDE FRONTUS: Thank you very  
12 much for having me. Other members of the New York  
13 City Council, good afternoon. I'll be reading the  
14 testimony that I also shared on Monday evening at  
15 the Borough hall. My name is Mathylde Frontus.  
16 I've lived in Coney Island for almost 25 years. I  
17 also run a nonprofit human service organization  
18 which is very proud to serve the Coney Island  
19 Community, Urban Neighborhood Services. Over the  
20 years as a teenager growing up in Coney Island  
21 I've been stuck and fixated at the contradictions  
22 which could be found in the community. There is a  
23 natural beauty, as you all know, which could be  
24 found in my beloved community. But on the other  
25 hand, I have witnessed the social problems such as

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2 poverty, homelessness, and gun violence, which are  
3 endemic not only in Coney Island, but frankly in  
4 inner city communities throughout our country.

5 One can argue then that there have always been two  
6 Coney Islands. One, an amusement park, which we  
7 are reminded frequently was once the playground of  
8 the world and the other, a neighborhood where  
9 families strive to raise their children and earn  
10 an honest living, often in the face of many  
11 obstacles.

12 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thirty seconds.

13 MATHYLDE FRONTUS: With regards to  
14 the redevelopment plan on which members here will  
15 be voting, my message to you is a simple one. A  
16 massive plan like the one which is on the table  
17 cannot just benefit Coney Island the amusement  
18 area. This plan should not just be about  
19 providing recreation for visitors and tourists as  
20 much as we want them to enjoy their stay in Coney  
21 Island. My main point this afternoon is that the  
22 residents of Coney Island categorically must  
23 benefit from this plan. It's imperative. Is that  
24 my time to stop talking?

25 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Yes. But what

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2 I would like for you to do is I'd like for the  
3 sergeant-at-arms to get your testimony if you  
4 don't mind. We'll duplicate it and make sure the  
5 members of the committee gets a copy.

6 MATHYLDE FRONTUS: Thank you.

7 KEN JONES: I want to thank the  
8 City Council for allowing us to have this  
9 opportunity to speak on behalf of the Concerned  
10 Voters of Coney Island. I want to thank my  
11 Councilman Domenic Recchia and Coney Island  
12 Development Corp. They've been doing great work  
13 regarding this plan. I am for the redevelopment  
14 of Coney Island. I have issues with the west end  
15 that I think needs to be addressed. To me actions  
16 speak louder than words. I'm hear to speak on  
17 behalf of the less fortunate, the poor and the  
18 working class. I know I only have two minutes.  
19 I'm not going to be able to address everything.  
20 I'm going to try to make it as quick as possible.  
21 I learned some new information regarding the  
22 testimony. I wanted to ask a couple of questions  
23 to the people who were here, but I don't think I'm  
24 going to have time to do this. But regarding the  
25 \$15 million stimulus money that's going to the

1 Boardwalk, I brought some pictures regarding this.  
2 I grew up in Coney Island. We moved to Coney  
3 Island in 1965. I've seen different  
4 transformations of Coney Island from then until  
5 now. We've had five mayors, from Mayor Koch to  
6 Giuliani who were supposed to address this  
7 situation with Coney Island. Unfortunately, we  
8 still haven't had any redevelopment. Not to  
9 discourage the plan that's up now because it looks  
10 good. My issue is with the west end. These  
11 pictures that I have from the west end needs to be  
12 addressed as far as infrastructure and flooding  
13 and other issues with parks. It's really rough in  
14 Coney Island. When it rains, the flood goes up.  
15 It used to go up like a foot, and now it goes all  
16 the way up to the steps. When I'm coming home  
17 from work, I can't even get through there. I've  
18 got 12 seconds. Listen, the Concerned Voters of  
19 Coney Island Coalition, they want to make sure  
20 that the west end gets developed first. That's  
21 the issue. The west end needs to be addressed  
22 before the redevelopment plan is put in place.

24 CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Would you like  
25 those pictures as part of the record?

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KEN JONES: Excuse me?

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CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Would you like those pictures as part of the record?

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KEN JONES: Yes, if you want.

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CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Are they ours or do you have copies?

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KEN JONES: You can keep them. I have copies.

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CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Give it to the sergeant-at-arms.

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KEN JONES: These are issues I would like to be addressed. We want redevelopment.

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CHAIRPERSON KATZ: You have copies of those pictures?

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KEN JONES: Yes, you can keep these.

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CHAIRPERSON KATZ: Give it to the sergeant-at-arms and I'll make sure that it becomes part of the record. I appreciate it.

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Thank you.

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KEN JONES: Thank you.

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COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Thank you, Mathylde and Ken Jones for coming down to testify

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today.

CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Alexis Aries  
[phonetic] and Tishana Jones [phonetic].

TISHANA JONES: Thank you for  
having us. My name is Tishana Jones. I've lived  
in Coney Island all of my life. I attend  
Liberation Diploma Plus, which is a second chance  
school in Coney Island. I'm pretty much for the  
rezoning, but my main concern is for the  
affordable housing. I just wanted to make sure  
that where we live isn't really affected. Like  
everybody isn't rushed out or we're not taken care  
of because of the fact that all of this is going  
to take place. So, we just want to make sure that  
we'll still have a place once all of this is done  
and we're just not put to the back burner. Thank  
you.

ALEXIS ARIES: Thank you for having  
me. My name is Alexis. I'm not originally from  
Coney Island, but I have friends that are. I'm  
from Liberation as well. I wanted to know with  
this rezoning, would there be community centers  
for young kids added as well. I also wanted to  
know who it affect Liberation.

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2 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Council Member  
3 Recchia?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: First of  
5 all, I would like to thank you for coming from  
6 Liberation Academy here today. Liberation Academy  
7 is a transfer school located in Coney Island.  
8 It's a fairly new school. I want to thank the  
9 students who are here today. Just to answer your  
10 question is that we are working very closely to  
11 make sure that everybody who wants to stay in  
12 Coney Island remains in Coney Island. No one is  
13 going to be pushed out. We're going to work with  
14 them. We're going to make it a better quality of  
15 living for everyone. There is a community center  
16 that's going to be built. It's something that  
17 this community has asked for. That is going to be  
18 located on 29th Street right next to PS 329. It's  
19 going to be run by the YMCA. In addition to that,  
20 I made sure, along with the CIDC, in the building  
21 of this local community center that there is a  
22 swimming pool. The reason for that is because the  
23 children of Coney Island have nowhere to learn how  
24 to swim. We have a program at Lincoln High School  
25 but the children have nowhere to learn how to

1  
2 swim. That is a big issue in Coney Island that we  
3 have heard and we're addressing it. We will  
4 definitely tell the Y to work with Liberation  
5 Academy. We welcome you to join us in the YMCA  
6 when it's built. We will work that out with your  
7 principal who's doing an excellent job.

8 ALEXIS ARIES: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
10 much. I would like to call on Marion Cleaver with  
11 Brooklyn Board 13.

12 MARION CLEAVER: Good afternoon,  
13 Honorable Members of the Economic Development and  
14 Land Use Committees. My name is Marion Cleaver  
15 and I am the Chairman of Brooklyn Community Board  
16 13. Coney Island's amusement area, its  
17 residential sections and its mercantile streets  
18 remains as important today as it was since the  
19 turn of the century. Through it had earned the  
20 right to call itself the People's Paradise, a  
21 destination for millions seeking escape from the  
22 heat of the city and a fun-filled day of surf,  
23 food, rides, excitement and overall mind-boggling  
24 activities. For the residents it has always been  
25 a warm friendly place, a chance to meet and greet

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2 people from all over and an opportunity for many  
3 jobs in the amusement area. Over the years, the  
4 peninsula has faced difficulties and it was with  
5 great hope that the community welcomed the Coney  
6 Island Development Corporation with its goal of  
7 restoring the once great area to its rightful  
8 place as a tourist and city resident destination.  
9 After dozens and dozens of meetings with  
10 residents, amusement owners, churches, civic  
11 groups, merchants associations and more, the CIDC  
12 came up with a strategic plan for the community.  
13 Community Board 13 supports the land use proposal,  
14 although noting that there have been changes from  
15 the original strategic plan and definitely aware  
16 that there are problems that need to be solved to  
17 keep the amusement, residential and mercantile  
18 areas affordable to the populous who have relied  
19 on the Coney Island area for its close proximity,  
20 its excitement, its atmosphere and its charm.  
21 While supporting the overall ULURP, Community  
22 Board 13 at its March 11, 2009 special board  
23 meeting made 20 stipulations that must be  
24 incorporated into the overall plan to ensure the  
25 future of the community. Due to the time I have

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attached them to the rest of my statement.

CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very much.

COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Thank you, Marion Cleaver for coming down today. I appreciate it.

CHAIRPERSON WHITE: I'm going to call on Nino Russo, Marjorie Perlmeiter [phonetic], Richard Miller, Randy Silverstein and Dennis Vourderis. I'd like to call everyone's attention to the time clock here. That way I won't have to interrupt you.

NINO RUSSO: You won't have a problem with me. Hello, everyone. My name is Nino Russo. I'm one of the owners of Gargiulo's Restaurant in Coney Island. After listening to everybody speak today I wanted just to let you know that I was also born in Coney Island. I went to Our Lady of Solace grammar school and I've been a part of Coney Island ever since, keeping it up to date and keeping employment in the area. We have a restaurant, a catering hall for 400 people and the restaurant holds about 100 people. We also are landlords to about 40 units of mostly

1  
2 low-income families in the area. 40 units that  
3 are part of the zoning plan and they're part of  
4 the area where people are probably going to be  
5 displaced. We've been providing housing for these  
6 people since we've owned the property, since the  
7 1960s. In order to do what we want to do and  
8 include the affordable housing that we want to do,  
9 we were planning on expanding our restaurant. In  
10 order to subsidize the cost of the new facility we  
11 would have to depend on the retail and the  
12 affordable housing and the build of these to  
13 subsidize the building of the restaurant. We're  
14 working with Domenic Recchia. He's been hearing  
15 with us and working diligently with us, even  
16 Purnima from City Planning has been working with  
17 us, but it just seems that we're having a little  
18 difficulty reaching some terms, which Marjorie and  
19 the rest of my team will address. Thank you.

20 MARJORIE PERLMEITER: This is  
21 Marjorie Perlmeiter. I'm a land use lawyer  
22 representing Gargiulo's Restaurant. Just very  
23 simply, the whole point of this is Gargiulo's has  
24 been in the neighborhood for 100 years. It has a  
25 thriving business and its whole goal here is to

1  
2 redevelop its two city blocks that it owns into a  
3 much bigger restaurant. The most important thing  
4 about the development will be the 25,000 square  
5 foot restaurant with 500 seats and 375 parking  
6 spaces that must be provided to provide for the  
7 customers. Without that there's no project. The  
8 housing that's built with that has to be  
9 subsidized by the so-called market rate housing  
10 and also has to subsidize the restaurant. The  
11 market rate housing actually doesn't exist in this  
12 area because in fact median income is \$7,000 to  
13 \$40,000 a year. So a market rate unit would be  
14 about \$1,200 a month. We are trying to control  
15 costs of the project. But the proposed City  
16 Planning massing would require us to have  
17 something called a buffer zone which is causing  
18 the parking areas to be too high, the building to  
19 be too high and the construction to be very  
20 expensive. It's forcing us to keep the housing  
21 very low on the side streets, which also adds to  
22 the expense. It's also forcing tower plates that  
23 are very small with only eight units per floor,  
24 which means that you can only have very tall  
25 towers that are very expensive, which is much more

1  
2 like luxury housing than it is affordable housing.  
3 In the end, without some response from City  
4 Planning on these very specific issues, including  
5 increasing the density on our site to allow a 5.8  
6 FAR instead of a 5 with inclusionary housing, we  
7 won't be able to develop the project. We talk  
8 about a projection of how long it's going to take  
9 to build Coney Island. It's going to take a long  
10 time. We're ready to do it now but only if we get  
11 help building affordable and lower income housing  
12 here.

13                   RICHARD MILLER: Hi. Rick Miller,  
14 Beyer Blinder Belle Architects. I'll briefly  
15 describe some of the site information and give you  
16 an idea of what we're thinking in terms of the  
17 rezoning. First and foremost we have the  
18 restaurant, which is located on the corner of  
19 Stillwell and Mermaid. To the south is a parking  
20 lot and further south along Surf Avenue is  
21 additional rental properties. On the western  
22 block we have a large parking area which  
23 facilitates about 325 cars. In this phasing of  
24 this project, we will lose all of those spaces.  
25 So the Gargiulo's will have to replace parking on

1  
2 the eastern block where the restaurant is  
3 currently and will lose rental properties in the  
4 process. The needs of Gargiulo's specifically  
5 there's a 500-seat restaurant, 25,000 square foot,  
6 375 parking spaces, which are essential to the  
7 project. Also, affordable low-income housing and  
8 retail will support the project. A few of the  
9 issues that we have with the rezoning is the  
10 buffer zone, which runs from east to west and cuts  
11 our property in half. What happens is the parking  
12 gets taller. It also limits the amount of  
13 residential units that are along the interior  
14 courtyard, which is very important to us. It also  
15 raises the towers and of course, as Marjorie was  
16 saying, it's more expensive to build taller  
17 towers. It also ruins the streetwall continuity.  
18 The other issue was the 65-foot maximum base on  
19 the side streets. It forces more units on the  
20 towers. This doesn't make as much sense because  
21 Mermaid Avenue is seen as low housing to begin  
22 with. The other issue is the tower is 8,500  
23 square foot. The plate makes a much taller  
24 building, seven to eight units per floor and it's  
25 too expensive, especially for low income housing.

1  
2 So what we're proposing is eliminate the buffer  
3 zone. This will allow us to have a much more  
4 efficient parking layout. It increases the  
5 exposure to apartments along the garden and to add  
6 additional square footage to the tops of the  
7 building, increasing it to 80 feet and then to  
8 increase the FAR to 5.8, which will make it a much  
9 denser project and it will help support the  
10 development.

11 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Submit it to us  
12 please. Hand it to the sergeant-at-arms.

13 RANDY SILVERSTEIN: Good afternoon.  
14 Thank you for seeing us today. My name is Randy  
15 Silverstein of the Sparrow Group. We're a  
16 developer of affordable housing throughout the  
17 city. We're working with the Russo family and  
18 Gargiulo's in a manner to create a program that  
19 they could use an internal subsidy to build  
20 affordable housing. The problem we seem to be  
21 facing at the moment is that the zoning that's  
22 been proposed, though it purports to help  
23 affordable housing or want affordable housing, it  
24 hasn't provided with the density or the allowances  
25 to build affordable housing. The key element here

1  
2 is that in order for Gargiulo's to be able to  
3 afford the development of their property and the  
4 increase in the restaurant and the parking, they  
5 need more housing units to help subsidize it. The  
6 allowance that's been offered is extremely low.  
7 The thought was that by using inclusionary housing  
8 we would get a greater FAR. The fact of the  
9 matter is that we can't comply with inclusionary  
10 housing because the market area doesn't allow for  
11 it. As was noted earlier, the maximum incomes as  
12 been shown by census are in the \$40,000 area.  
13 That's the market rent. That's actually below  
14 low-income as per the federal guidelines. So  
15 there's no market in there now that if we build  
16 affordable housing at the rates that it would cost  
17 to build it that could afford to subsidize the  
18 growth of the restaurant and the parking that  
19 would benefit the area. So what we've asked for  
20 is an increase in FAR, not money, not subsidy  
21 necessarily, though it certainly would be  
22 appreciated. The key is the FAR. The FAR that's  
23 been offered does not comply with the needs of the  
24 community. In fact, it about maxes out at an R-6,  
25 which is low rise housing, three or four-story

1  
2 buildings. What we've been asking for is an R-8  
3 which is reasonable to the community and the needs  
4 of the community. Yet, they've come back with a  
5 design of approximately at an R-7. The stats are  
6 that with that density R-8 you could build  
7 affordable housing. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
9 much.

10 DENNIS VOORDERIS: Good afternoon.  
11 My name is Dennis Vourderis. I am co-owner of  
12 Deno's Wonder Wheel Amusement Park in Coney  
13 Island, the last open and operating amusement park  
14 left in Coney Island. This year will mark the  
15 89th anniversary of the Wonder Wheel. My family  
16 has three very important issues that need to be  
17 addressed with this plan, which I might add, is a  
18 great leap forward for Coney Island. All three of  
19 our issues have the potential to damage our  
20 business. They are, number one, the designation  
21 of our property into parkland. Number two, the  
22 construction of a one-way vehicular street right  
23 through the middle of our amusement park. And  
24 three, the plan to have a single operator for the  
25 new park created by the city. First, the

1  
2 designation of parkland would mean that the land  
3 on which the Wonder Wheel rests on would not be  
4 privately owned by us anymore. The plan speaks  
5 about the need for the city to acquire the  
6 property by purchase, land transfer or  
7 condemnation for the purpose of preservation of  
8 amusements into perpetuity. Well, let me be very  
9 clear here. My family has been doing exactly that  
10 since we purchased the Wonder Wheel in 1983 from  
11 its original owner. The ride was in desperate  
12 need of an overhaul and upon completion of the  
13 restoration six years later, it was us that asked  
14 Landmarks Preservation Commission to declare the  
15 wheel a New York City landmark. Therefore, we  
16 respectfully ask the city planners to consider  
17 removing the Wonder Wheel property from the  
18 parkland designation. Secondly, the construction  
19 of Wonder Wheel Way, although the name has a nice  
20 ring to it and its intention is good, will pass  
21 right through the center of our park. Deno's  
22 Wonder Wheel Park would no longer be a complete  
23 enclosed amusement park, which is contradictory to  
24 the city's plan to preserve amusements.  
25 Therefore, we ask that the city planners consider

1  
2 re-routing Wonder Wheel Way to go around Deno's  
3 and not through it. Lastly, we are concerned  
4 about the proposal by the city's plan to have the  
5 new Coney Island Amusement Park operated by one  
6 single entity. Coney Island has always been and  
7 can still continue to be made up of several  
8 different parks. Visitors will benefit from the  
9 competition and creativity the individual mom and  
10 pop businesses that are the fabric of Coney  
11 Island. Therefore we ask the city planners  
12 consider adding more amusement operators than one,  
13 giving existing businesses like our the ability to  
14 continue to do what we love where we love to do  
15 it, in Coney Island. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
17 much.

18 DENNIS VOURDERIS: I have copies of  
19 my testimony I'd like to submit please.

20 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Ari Shalam,  
21 Jesse Masyr, Tom Bowen, Chris Durmick, and Richard  
22 Thomas.

23 ARI SHALAM: I am Ari Shalam of  
24 Taconic Investment Partners. We represent one of  
25 the largest property owners in Coney North and

1  
2 Coney West. In general, Taconic owns, develops or  
3 manages several large residential and commercial  
4 properties throughout the city. Taconic strongly  
5 supports the city's rezoning plan for Coney  
6 Island. The Bloomberg administration has crafted  
7 a comprehensive strategy for revitalization that  
8 fosters job growth, economic opportunities,  
9 affordable housing and neighborhood amenities.  
10 Our project is a mixed use development on  
11 approximately 11.5 acres. It will be built on  
12 abandoned lots and cause no displacement of  
13 existing tenants, amusements or historical icons.  
14 Based on the rezoning application, our project  
15 includes 2,400 units, approximately 200,000 feet  
16 of retail space and a 1.5 acre new beachfront  
17 park. The residential development will include  
18 badly needed affordable housing for a range of  
19 incomes as well as market rate units that will  
20 help balance the heavy financial demands on the  
21 project. We plan to participate in the city's  
22 inclusionary program which mandates that 20% of  
23 the units be built as affordable. Any more than  
24 this and the project just won't be economically  
25 viable. Our goal is to create workforce housing

1  
2 that will be affordable for middle income people  
3 which will help strengthen the social fabric of  
4 the community and support the city's eroding tax  
5 base. Our development will create economic  
6 activity that generates both construction jobs and  
7 permanent year-round jobs for local residents.

8 Taconic is committed to job development and  
9 exploring all possible avenues to maximize local  
10 hiring. I'd like to take a moment to address one  
11 of the conditions proposed by Community Board 13  
12 regarding their opposition to relocating the  
13 parkland. This parkland relocation is essential.  
14 Without it there will be no residential  
15 development and the properties will be  
16 inaccessible and there will be no Highland View  
17 Park, no restoration of Childs and without it, due  
18 to certain parkland regulations, it may just be  
19 economically infeasible to build our buildings.  
20 So we hope that the committee will at the right  
21 time carefully consider that recommendation and  
22 oppose it as we do. We believe that this plan  
23 makes sense and will generate a lot of economy  
24 opportunities for the community and we strongly  
25 urge you to support the plan. Thank you.

1  
2 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
3 much.

4 JESSE MASYSR: Good afternoon. My  
5 name is Jesse Masyr. I'm a member of the law firm  
6 of Wachtel and Masyr. We represent Thor Equities,  
7 the largest private property owner in Coney East.  
8 My testimony, which I have given you copies,  
9 details our criticism of many of the aspects of  
10 the application before. I wanted to use my brief  
11 time to hone in on what we think is one of the  
12 most serious flaws in this proposal, namely the  
13 mapping of parkland. The city's plan for an  
14 amusement entertainment area denoted as Coney East  
15 in large part rests on the mapping, acquisition  
16 and development of a nine-acre property into  
17 parkland. History has shown that the sole  
18 reliance on the city's ability to carry out its  
19 plans is not necessarily well placed. The  
20 following briefly summarizes the city's  
21 involvement in the Steeplechase Park site. In  
22 1897, Steeplechase Park was opened, joining  
23 Dreamland, Lunar Park and other entertainment  
24 venues that created the iconic Coney Island,  
25 sought to be recaptured today. Steeplechase Park

1 closed in 1964, a victim of changing demographics  
2 and emerging state of the art competition for  
3 leisure entertainment dollars. The Tilyou family,  
4 which had developed and owned Steeplechase  
5 throughout its life sold it the following year in  
6 1965 to Fred Trump, Donald's father. Trump, an  
7 active builder in the area, proposed 3,000 unit  
8 residential development with a shopping center and  
9 office buildings. The city opposed the plan in  
10 1969, condemned the 12-acre site for open space  
11 park and sought a federal grant to building it.  
12 Rather than leave the site vacant while plans were  
13 being developed, the city continued to lease the  
14 property to an amusement ride operator as a short  
15 term interim use. The city then spent the next  
16 decade trying to shut down the rides and evict its  
17 lessee. In 1976, an RFP seeking development for a  
18 privately financed amusement park was issued.  
19 Nothing came of the RFP and subsequently the Parks  
20 Department sought to abandon the former open space  
21 park concept, determining that commercial  
22 amusement would be more appropriate.  
23 Interestingly, at that time, City Planning opposed  
24 the amusement park idea, desiring to keep it for  
25

1  
2 open space. I'll be brief and be finished in a  
3 moment. In 1984, a second RFP for an amusement  
4 park was issued and a developer was selected.  
5 From 1986 to 1994, the city and the developer  
6 worked to secure approvals from the state  
7 legislature and the then Board of Estimates to  
8 allow the amusement development. However, a new  
9 mayor, a lack of financing for development finally  
10 ended an eight-year odyssey. In 1998, the  
11 Giuliani administration targeted the site for a  
12 minor league baseball stadium. So in summation,  
13 the condemnation saga of a 12-acre Steeplechase  
14 park with two rounds of RFPs never resulted in  
15 open space parkland or amusement park uses and  
16 ultimately after 40 years of city ownership, the  
17 parkland was developed as a private ball field,  
18 which by the way is open only to the public 40  
19 days a year. We think that it is a serious  
20 mistake to give up ownership of the property and  
21 control to the state legislature and would urge  
22 you to reconsider the mapping of parkland.

23 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
24 much.

25 TOM BOWEN: Good afternoon, members

1  
2 of the City Council. My name is Tom Bowen, Vice  
3 President of Callison Architecture. We're a  
4 global retail design and mixed use architecture  
5 firm. All of us here are committed to the long-  
6 term revitalization and success of Coney Island as  
7 a year-round destination development and amusement  
8 park, as opposed to a seasonal proposition. We  
9 need to be clear that this is a long-term effort.  
10 It will take many years, extensive effort and  
11 substantial funding to realize this dream.

12 However, the current plan as envisioned by the  
13 city falls well short of making this dream a  
14 reality. The reality in our new economic  
15 environment will only come from a thoughtfully  
16 prepared master plan infused with significant  
17 economic initiatives. Reality also requires a  
18 careful balance of public and private  
19 participation. It is imperative that this plan  
20 does not stall the development of Coney Island  
21 before it has a chance to get started. Future  
22 amusement operators, developers, retailers and  
23 their lenders will require zoning conditions,  
24 development guidelines and solid revenue streams.  
25 This plan is far too restrictive, regulated and

1  
2 prescriptive to invite a serious look by those  
3 with the motivation and financial means to be  
4 successful. The success of a year-round mixed use  
5 destination development requires a critical mass  
6 of uses. The proper combination of these uses,  
7 including amusement, entertainment, retail, hotel,  
8 restaurants and services is essential to long-term  
9 success, job creation and sustainability. This  
10 plan lacks critical mass due to the arrangement of  
11 streets, small blocks and parcels and the lack of  
12 understanding of pedestrian and vehicular  
13 movement. The city's plan places too many  
14 restrictions on use type zoning FAR to permit  
15 developments of sufficient size and mass. As  
16 proposed, the restrictions imposed by this plan do  
17 not allow for effective development of any one  
18 parcel. We believe that this plan mandates  
19 isolated pockets of suboptimal development. The  
20 city plan fails to take into account the issue of  
21 parking which appears to be an afterthought.  
22 Based upon the restrictions placed upon the  
23 development parcels, parking onsite or even in  
24 close proximity is not possible. It is unclear  
25 how parking and alternative transportation for

1  
2 these concentrated high traffic uses would be  
3 accommodated. With due respect to the city's  
4 comments about retail, the city's plan does not  
5 provide for viable retail uses, which eliminates  
6 the majority of potential revenue generating  
7 tenants. Strong diverse national retailers are  
8 essential to establishing a vibrant sustainable  
9 level of commerce. I would ask the residents of  
10 Coney Island if Gap, Toys R Us, CVS would be so  
11 bad if they provide the currently lacking goods  
12 and services, jobs and an economic base to sustain  
13 the amusement retail advocated by the city. Thank  
14 you.

15 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you.

16 CHRIS DURMICK: Good afternoon and  
17 thank you for letting me speak. I'm Chris  
18 Durmick. I'm a creative director with Thinkwell  
19 Design and Production. We're an themed entertain  
20 company. As such, I share the passion and the  
21 desire to see Coney Island become a world class  
22 year-round destination. That really is my  
23 confusion. You have my testimony. What I see is  
24 a desire for a world class year-round destination,  
25 but I see a plan that only supports currently a

1  
2 seasonal regional park. You sort of have to plan  
3 for January and February. Forgive this bad  
4 analogy but if you think of this or any other  
5 amusement area as farmland, all of the  
6 attractions, the restaurants and stores, and rides  
7 all have to be as crops and they all need water  
8 and nutrients in the form of people and their  
9 money in equal amounts or they will starve off.  
10 Now if this is intended to be an individually  
11 owned and operated sort of thing I don't see how  
12 they're going to maximize revenue to sustain the  
13 quality and the mixture of rides and attractions  
14 to keep it a year-round destination. In this  
15 current zoning plan, Coney is separated into zones  
16 of specific activities that don't draw equal  
17 numbers of guests. If I'm coming to ride rides, I  
18 can do that and I never have to step foot on Surf.  
19 I can go to the beach and never see any of the  
20 other amenities and they're going to starve off  
21 without that revenue base. With the activation of  
22 Surf as a retail district it works I think in  
23 opposition to the natural flow of people. It's  
24 also going to exacerbate the already existing  
25 problem of traffic moving up and down surf. It's

1  
2 going to prohibit people who are trying to travel  
3 back and forth to the beach to seeing all the  
4 other amenities that Coney has to offer. I think  
5 the Boardwalk amusements, the open air nine acres  
6 is going to work great in the summer. You've got  
7 the summer already. You don't need the summer.  
8 You have to design for January. When one of those  
9 rides goes down because of weather, you're going  
10 to have a dead zone that's going to become a  
11 cancer. Eventually, in very short time, in  
12 January, Coney Island Boardwalk is going to be as  
13 lifeless as it is currently in the wintertime. I  
14 think the zoning plan is a great step forward. It  
15 has to be master planned. I want nothing more  
16 than Coney Island to succeed as a world class  
17 year-round amusement destination. I really thank  
18 you for your time.

19 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
20 much.

21 RICHARD THOMAS: Good afternoon.  
22 My name is Richard Thomas. I represent the Lococo  
23 Company. We have over 35 years experience in  
24 theme park, hospitality and indoor water resorts  
25 with companies such as Marriott, Six Flags and

1  
2 Great Wolf Resorts. The most concerning element  
3 of the city's Coney Island comprehensive plan is  
4 on design philosophies. The mistake in the city's  
5 plan in fundamental urban planning. The city has  
6 designed an amusement park using the development  
7 strategies devised to build a modern well laid out  
8 city. This strategy more closely resembles an  
9 urban neighborhood revitalization plan. The  
10 city's plan falls short on delivery of three key  
11 elements to successful amusement zones: synergy,  
12 integration and most of all, year-round  
13 entertainment appeal. Synergy refers to the mix  
14 of use, such as retail, restaurant, entertainment  
15 and amusements. It does not fully value the  
16 natural flow of visitors' traffic north and south,  
17 subway to beach, nor does it utilize Stillwell  
18 Avenue to its full potential as the main street or  
19 central core to the entire 27-acre development  
20 plan. The natural flow of people traffic  
21 essentially year-round will be from Surf Avenue to  
22 the ocean and back. Thus the merit of using  
23 entertainment based principals is essential core  
24 attraction. Some of the basic points to describe  
25 amusement design: sense of entry, traffic flow,

1  
2 theme and guest experience. The next element is  
3 integration. It refers to the physical layout  
4 uses. Although the amusement area in the city's  
5 plan shows continuity and design flow from the  
6 proposed carousel site to the Cyclone, it's appeal  
7 would be strictly of a seasonal basis, or roughly  
8 120 to 140 days a year, isolating most of the  
9 major point of sale and retail locations proposed  
10 along Bowery, Wonder Wheel Way and Surf Avenue.  
11 The end result is creation of isolated areas of  
12 developments subject to hot and cold traffic  
13 areas, less appealing in the rental space. I've  
14 turned in my testimony here. I'm sorry I'm not  
15 going to be able to get through it.

16 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Anything  
18 else you want to just add?

19 RICHARD THOMAS: I'd just like to  
20 add that in consideration of the ROI, the  
21 amusement operators will be impossible in a  
22 seasonal oriented plan. Most of the country's  
23 regional parks like Six Flags and Cedar Fair  
24 Parks, can afford seasonal operation because they  
25 are 60 to 100 acres in size and can accommodate

1  
2 35-50,000 guests in a given day, or 2 million  
3 visitors during 140-day season. So the only way  
4 to make Coney Island amusement portion of the plan  
5 viable is by designing the entire development area  
6 into a multi-level year-round mixed use  
7 destination experience.

8 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
9 much. Thank you, gentleman. I would like to call  
10 on Paul Fernandez, Jon Dohlin, Matt Davie, Patrick  
11 Dranin [phonetic] and Martin Levine.

12 Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and  
13 members of the committees and members of the  
14 Council. My name is Paul Fernandez. I'm the  
15 Chief of Staff of the Building and Construction  
16 Trades Council of Greater New York which is an  
17 organization that consists of local affiliates of  
18 15 national and international unions representing  
19 more than 100,000 working men and women in New  
20 York City. We're pleased to have the opportunity  
21 to testify this afternoon on development which may  
22 be undertaken pursuant to the proposed Coney  
23 Island comprehensive rezoning plan. We regret  
24 that at this time we can't support this plan. As  
25 of today, there is no binding citywide policy or

1  
2 commitment specific to the proposed special Coney  
3 Island district that the processes by which  
4 properties may be made available for development  
5 by the Economic Development Corporation, the New  
6 York City Department of Housing Preservation and  
7 Development and any other public agencies will  
8 assure that the resulting opportunities are shared  
9 by those for whom economic development efforts are  
10 supposed to be pursued, the working men and women  
11 and taxpayers of New York City, Coney Island and  
12 Brooklyn. We must furthermore state that there  
13 are not at this time any agreements between the  
14 Building and Construction Trades Council of  
15 Greater New York and Taconic Investment Partners,  
16 Thor Equities or any entities that they may  
17 utilize to perform construction in the proposed  
18 district. During the past two years we've met  
19 with these potential developers of the properties  
20 within the proposed district. Meetings and  
21 discussions however are not agreements. Given the  
22 time constraints on this process, it is our hope  
23 that they will work expeditiously to reach  
24 agreements with our organization. Mr. Chairman,  
25 during the past seven or eight years in New York

1  
2 City, we've witnessed what many people think is a  
3 great construction boom. I'd just like to share  
4 with you some brief statistics. We've increased  
5 construction investments in New York City by 80%.  
6 So we've actually almost doubled construction  
7 spending in New York City. During the same period  
8 of time, according to the New York State  
9 Department of Labor, construction employment has  
10 increased by 6%. Construction industry wages have  
11 increased by 17%, which is coincidentally the  
12 consumer price index reflection of the cost of  
13 living increase over the same period of time. So  
14 effectively construction workers in New York City  
15 during this period of a boom have actually seen no  
16 increase in the purchasing power of their income.  
17 They've effectively stood still during the period  
18 of the greatest economic investment in  
19 construction in modern history in New York City.  
20 We would like to see that change. We believe that  
21 if the development of Coney Island is pursued  
22 responsibly in a way that reflects some of the  
23 values that are embodied in the recent federal  
24 stimulus package, which I might add, had the full  
25 support of President Obama and the majority of

1  
2 Congress. It has provisions in there for \$130  
3 billion of construction spending in the federal  
4 stimulus. Those construction dollars all have  
5 requirements that the workforce be paid the  
6 prevailing wage and supplements. And furthermore,  
7 as you may know, President Bush had a restriction  
8 on localities that get federal funding using any  
9 of that federal money on what are known as project  
10 labor agreements where developers and their  
11 employers enter in to labor negotiations with  
12 unions to ensure that workers are paid properly  
13 and given things like wages and health insurance  
14 and pensions. Fortunately, President Obama in one  
15 of his first executive orders rescinded all those  
16 Bush executive orders. We need strong wage  
17 requirements. We need the ability of developers  
18 and owners to come to the table and negotiate with  
19 labor so that working men and women share in the  
20 opportunity. Right now this plan doesn't have  
21 that. We urge the Council to join with us to make  
22 sure that it does.

23 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you.

24 JON DOHLIN: Good afternoon. My  
25 name is Jon Dohlin. I'm the Director of the New

1  
2 York Aquarium. Thank you for hearing our  
3 testimony today. I'm going to repeat testimony  
4 that I have read into the record previously but I  
5 think it bears repeating. The aquarium is  
6 delighted with the prospect of long overdue  
7 redevelopment and revitalization of Coney Island.  
8 Bringing state of the art attractions and  
9 amusement to the area is a very positive change  
10 and we support it. However, let's not forget the  
11 existing resources that have provided the cultural  
12 and economic foundation of Coney Island throughout  
13 the years. The New York Aquarium has long been  
14 referred to as the anchor of Coney Island. We  
15 bring over 750,000 guests to Coney Island every  
16 year, yet we notice that all redevelopment plans  
17 begin outside of the aquarium. We've long  
18 believed that what's good for Coney Island is good  
19 for the aquarium and we hope that that continues  
20 to be true. We are currently developing a new  
21 master plan that lays out a schedule of events  
22 that'll transform the aquarium into a world class  
23 destination. We need your help to make this a  
24 reality. Please remember the aquarium as the key  
25 to Coney Island renaissance. We have two main

1  
2 concerns in the current plan. One is that we ask  
3 that you preserve the monies earmarked for a world  
4 class shark exhibit which will provide a year-  
5 round amenity in Coney Island. The second is help  
6 us address the parking capacity issues that limit  
7 the aquarium each summer and Coney Island as a  
8 whole, but don't stop there. If Coney Island is  
9 to be a tourist destination, the MTA must be  
10 brought in as a partner to provide express train,  
11 bus and ferry service if this plan is to be  
12 viable. Thank you very much.

13 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you.

14 MARTIN LEVINE: My name is Martin  
15 Levine. I'm the Chairman of Coney Island Hospital  
16 Community Advisory Board. The public  
17 presentations concerning economic development for  
18 the Coney Island region have been based in part  
19 upon increases in the resident and/or transient  
20 population. This locality has historically shown  
21 the sum of both populations to be in the millions  
22 per year. The New York City Health and Hospitals  
23 Corporation maintains a local facility, which  
24 while servicing the needs of the residents, must  
25 by charter also be available to service the needs

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2 of the general population. Any substantial  
3 development strategy will change the model upon  
4 which all local health care estimates have been  
5 based. The growth in population will over  
6 saturate the physical resources and thus give  
7 cause to both expedite and to upgrade the capital  
8 program upon which Coney Island Hospital has  
9 currently embarked. Members of various agencies  
10 and development corporations have stated publicly  
11 that the Coney Island Hospital modernization plan  
12 is not part of the rezoning process. It was  
13 opined that this ULURP procedure is solely one of  
14 land use and that the subject of funding the  
15 hospital's modernization is not apropos. The  
16 members of the Coney Island Hospital Community  
17 Advisory Board refuse to accept this casual  
18 dismissal of an issue that affects 750,000  
19 residents in Southern Brooklyn and millions of  
20 tourists and visitors attracted to the area by  
21 existing and proposed year-round amenities. The  
22 hospital modernization, including the  
23 rehabilitation of a decrepit and outdated 50-year-  
24 old facility is already approved by the  
25 administration and the Health and Hospitals

1  
2 Corporation. It is as important and pertinent to  
3 the ULURP as is the creation of fire and police  
4 access streets in the development area. Clearly,  
5 health and safety items and their funding are  
6 already incorporated into the project, thus  
7 establishing the legitimacy of the community's  
8 request for Coney Island Hospital. Now, I have  
9 written testimony and what we're also submitting  
10 is the HHC plan for the modernization, which gives  
11 you the complete financial breakdown. It's not  
12 funding that the hospital is looking for, it's  
13 financing. They have the statistics on what the  
14 anticipated growth is. We have the payback which  
15 they feel they can do over a three-year period.  
16 Elmhurst and Coney Island Hospital are two of the  
17 most profitable hospitals in the HHC chain. They  
18 fund a lot of the programs in the other HHC  
19 facilities that lose money. It's very important  
20 that people be attracted to the hospital and this  
21 isn't something that we just brought to the table,  
22 we've been bringing this out and we have some  
23 documentation. We've been bringing this out since  
24 March 3rd, 2005. Thank you for your time.

25 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you.

1  
2 MATT DAVIE: Hello, Domenic, how  
3 are you? We're here for a very different reason.  
4 My name is Matt Davie. I'm President of the  
5 Greater New York City Ice Hockey League. We  
6 operate a youth league out of Abe Stark Arena in  
7 Coney Island, New York. I'm here to represent the  
8 500 plus children that have been playing out of  
9 that facility since 1967. For those of you who  
10 don't know who we are, the Greater New York City  
11 Ice Hockey League was established in August of  
12 1967 by Mr. Lou Vairo. I personally have been  
13 involved in the organization since 1994. We  
14 afford a tremendous opportunity to the community  
15 and the children of the community to house those  
16 500 children each and every year, get them off the  
17 street, teach them the tremendous sport of ice  
18 hockey, and also we afford them tremendous  
19 academic opportunity. Academic opportunity comes  
20 hand in hand with ice hockey through scholarships  
21 and other venues that they would normally not get  
22 to certain establishments. We currently have  
23 students playing in various colleges. We have  
24 students in SUNY Cortland, Iona College,  
25 University of Buffalo, New Paltz, Maritime

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2 College, Lake Forest, New York University, William  
3 Patterson, Dickenson and on and on and on. We've  
4 given these kids tremendous opportunity to move on  
5 and afford a better academic opportunity they  
6 normally wouldn't have. We've been a tenant at  
7 Abe Stark for over 40 years. We've spent millions  
8 of dollars over the last 40 years paying our way  
9 and not going to the city for any funding. Now,  
10 the way we understand it is that our building is  
11 in jeopardy of being lost. We're here today to  
12 get some clarification as to what we can report  
13 back to our board of directors as to whether or  
14 not we are going to lose our facility and put  
15 these 500 children out in the street and not have  
16 a place for them to play.

17 PATRICK DRANIN: My name is Pat  
18 Dranin. I'm a resident of Brooklyn. My son plays  
19 for Greater New York. I'll toot a horn here.  
20 This year my son's team was the first team from  
21 Brooklyn to ever win a state championship at any  
22 youth level. So obviously they're doing something  
23 right from a hockey perspective. Certainly our  
24 concern is the rink and what the future of that  
25 rink is. Certainly we've got Greater New York out

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2 of there, which as Matt alluded to, is 500  
3 children a year. Over 20 years that's a  
4 substantial amount of children. But there's also  
5 public skating. There's also programs that are  
6 being run out of there by the South Brooklyn Youth  
7 Consortium that I also participate in and help  
8 coach. I coach with Greater New York. I can tell  
9 you that certainly that I am at the aquarium. I  
10 am at Lola's roller skating rink. I've been at  
11 Coney Island USA, the sideshows. I'm at Nathan's.  
12 I'm there all the time. But the majority of my  
13 time I spend with my children is at the rink.  
14 Certainly the concern is with us being in the  
15 western section and the rink being slated for  
16 demolition as we heard earlier, the concern is  
17 what happens to the rink. And not only what  
18 happens to the rink but to ensure that there's  
19 continuity. If they tear the rink down and want  
20 to build another one, that's great. But we cannot  
21 afford to lose a season or two waiting for the  
22 next rink to built. We'd like to understand if  
23 that rink is going away in the Western section  
24 what will happen? What is the plan? What do we do  
25 with these children? Can anybody here speak to

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2 that?

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COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: What we'll do is we'll set up a meeting with EDC, with the CIDC, with the administration because that's of great concern. I just want to thank you for the work that you do because on Saturday mornings they teach the children of Coney Island how to ice skate and how to play ice hockey. They even went out and bought children equipment. I want to thank you for all that you're doing. We'll set up a meeting. We have representatives from the administration to talk about exactly what they plan so we do have continuity.

15

PATRICK DRANIN: Thank you.

16

CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you.

17

Michael Halpin, Anthony Williamson, Brian Gotlieb, and Eddie Brumfield.

19

COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Come on up, Pastor Mobley from United Community Church.

21

MICHAEL HALPIN: Good afternoon.

22

My name is Michael Halpin. I'm a Woodside Queens resident. I'm also a member of Coney Island

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CLEAR. For those of you unfamiliar with Coney

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Island CLEAR, we're an organization that formed

1  
2 approximately two years ago, focused on the  
3 redevelopment of Coney Island. We're an  
4 organization that includes community residents,  
5 community organizations and labor unions, both  
6 construction unions and post-construction unions.  
7 We got together in looking at the development of  
8 Coney Island and felt that it needed a strong  
9 labor standard, as Paul Fernandez mentioned  
10 earlier. We need a strong labor standard included  
11 in the plan so that the community can benefit from  
12 it. So that the middle class will advance and  
13 grow. If we do this redevelopment without the  
14 strengthening an the growth of the middle class it  
15 will be a loss. One of the things Coney Island  
16 CLEAR has done is brought pre-apprenticeship  
17 programs into the community. We've brought the  
18 Edward J. Malloy Initiative for Construction  
19 Skills and we've brought nontraditional employment  
20 for women into the community. Construction Skills  
21 alone has placed over 1,100 public high school  
22 graduates and public housing residents from NYCHA  
23 into union apprenticeship programs. Brooklyn  
24 residents represent the largest share of these  
25 placements. So it's a program that's advancing

1  
2 and giving a place to go to city kids and a  
3 career. The plan needs words such as career and  
4 benefits and things that make us middle class. We  
5 need pensions and we need medical insurance  
6 included in the plan. Thank you.

7 ANTHONY WILLIAMSON: Thank you very  
8 much. My name is Anthony Williamson. I'm the co-  
9 chair for Coney Island CLEAR and a proud member of  
10 Laborers Local 79. We have seen a number of  
11 developments take place in this city and labor  
12 hasn't had an integral role at the table. Coney  
13 Island CLEAR, which is Community Labor Empowerment  
14 Alliance for Redevelopment, will not only have  
15 labor playing a major role, but we want to ensure  
16 that community be involved. We have been involved  
17 with construction trades, along with services  
18 unions, clergy and other organizations in the  
19 community. This alliance is to bring everyone  
20 together so we can all share in the redevelopment  
21 of Coney Island. We are proud to be working with  
22 Community Board 13. We are open to work with the  
23 political players in the community to foster  
24 redevelopment because we feel that economic  
25 development without economic prosperity will never

1  
2 be successful. The community must play a major  
3 role, but also they must ensure that they having  
4 training, career opportunities, which is very  
5 important to sustain the development. Everyone  
6 that lives in Coney Island deserves to benefit  
7 from the redevelopment of Coney Island. Every kid  
8 that comes out of Coney Island deserves a career.  
9 Every person that resides as far as we're  
10 concerned deserves a roof over their heads. This  
11 can only be successful if they have decent jobs  
12 with benefits, with a pension that they can take  
13 care of their families and have a roof over their  
14 heads. We feel that labor is the solution in  
15 Coney Island. So I thank you all for listening.  
16 We hope to work with everyone concerned in the  
17 redevelopment of Coney Island. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you.

19 BRIAN GOTLIEB: Good afternoon. My  
20 name is Brian Gotlieb. I've lived in Coney Island  
21 for the last 24 years. In that time I've had the  
22 honor and privilege of representing my neighbors  
23 in a variety of ways, including as a co-founder  
24 and board member of Coney Island CLEAR and as a  
25 member and former chairman of Community Board 13.

1  
2 I'd like to begin by expressing my thanks and  
3 gratitude for the opportunity to speak at this  
4 afternoon's hearing. As my time is limited, I  
5 would like to get right to the point and address  
6 three specific issues. First, on behalf of myself  
7 and Coney Island CLEAR I'd like to endorse the  
8 vote taken by Community Board 13 on March 11th to  
9 conditionally approve the ULURP for the  
10 redevelopment of Coney Island. Second, do not  
11 forget the people who already live in Coney  
12 Island. Above anyone else, they are the people  
13 who should benefit most from Coney Island's  
14 redevelopment. Existing residents should be given  
15 preferences for both jobs and the housing which  
16 must be affordable. We must initiative job  
17 training programs now to help community residents  
18 qualify for and be ready to work once the first  
19 shovel is ready to go into the ground. We need to  
20 make sure that they are paid prevailing wages with  
21 appropriate benefits so that community residents  
22 have the opportunity to embark on a career rather  
23 than simply a temporary job. The average median  
24 income of Coney Island is roughly half that of the  
25 City of New York. As such, any discussion or

1  
2 formula involving the AMI should be geared to what  
3 is happening in the community. This is necessary  
4 to make sure that the housing is truly affordable  
5 to the people who currently live in Coney Island.  
6 While an average monthly maintenance charge of  
7 \$700 or \$800 might sound and be affordable to  
8 someone making a gross salary of \$40,000 a year,  
9 it is not affordable when it is combined with a  
10 monthly mortgage payment of at least the same  
11 amount. While no one is expecting anything for  
12 free, our objective should and must be to provide  
13 existing community residents with the ability to  
14 remain in the community and partake in the  
15 benefits that have been promised to them. The  
16 third and final element that I would like to  
17 address is infrastructure. As wonderful and grand  
18 as our plans for Coney Island might be, they will  
19 be a disaster if we fail to address this issue,  
20 particularly in terms of education, sewage,  
21 environment and power electricity and the like.  
22 I would just like to conclude by saying it's  
23 undisputed that Coney Island occupies a special  
24 place in the hearts of millions of people  
25 throughout our country. While change is

1  
2 inevitable and necessary for growth, it must be  
3 done correctly. Even though our economy is not as  
4 strong as it had been, it too will change and we  
5 must be ready to move forward. This is a time  
6 that will never come again. We have a blank slate  
7 and opportunity to do the right thing on behalf of  
8 everyone. It is up to all of us to make sure we  
9 are successful because failure is not an option.

10 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
11 much.

12 EDDIE BRUMFIELD: Good afternoon.  
13 My name is Minister Eddie Brumfield, Executive  
14 Director of Youth and Community Awareness. I also  
15 sit on Community Board 13. Thank you for this  
16 opportunity. I'll only take maybe a minute of  
17 your time.

18 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Good afternoon.

19 EDDIE BRUMFIELD: I totally agree  
20 with the stimulus plan and the rezoning for the  
21 Coney Island area. This Economic Development plan  
22 has to include and increase the affordable housing  
23 aspect. There has to be an increase or a look  
24 into the facility at Coney Island Hospital. There  
25 has to be prevailing wages, meaning jobs and job

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2 training and the 10% set aside for women and  
3 minority contractors and suppliers. Thank you for  
4 your time.

5 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you.

6 Let me say good afternoon, Mr.  
7 Chairman and to the entire City Council and to our  
8 Councilman Domenic Recchia. My name is Connis  
9 Mobley and I pastor the United Community Church  
10 right in the heart of Coney Island. I'm here to  
11 represent all of the community whose here today as  
12 their faith leader to let you know that we are  
13 definitely concerned that there is a Coney Island  
14 for all platforms. There's many here who are here  
15 today. I support the CLEAR's agenda, ACORN is  
16 here, Save Coney Island is here. Everybody is  
17 here. Residents are here. You've heard  
18 statements made. Coney Island has been a place  
19 where New Yorkers from all walks of life could  
20 work, play, visit and live. As the city considers  
21 the future of Coney Island it should set a  
22 standard for equitable development and you ought  
23 to really be accountable and responsible to ensure  
24 that the opportunities for careers are  
25 established. That jobs, housing, recreation and

1  
2 all of the amenities that are created through this  
3 plan literally includes the community. I've been  
4 very much concerned about plans that are being  
5 made. We've had many promises made to the  
6 residents of Coney Island over the years. I've  
7 been in Coney Island well over 43 years. Many  
8 promises made but very few kept. The residents of  
9 Coney Island deserve better. So therefore we ask  
10 that you would guarantee that. Designate the  
11 proper percentage for housing as it should be.  
12 Preserve and strengthen the People's Playground  
13 through open an affordable and vibrant amusement  
14 areas and create a much needed public amenity for  
15 the community of Coney Island. I want to share as  
16 I share with all of those who come and speak to me  
17 that as their community leader I will personally  
18 hold you accountable and responsible for the  
19 affect and the effect that you have in our  
20 community because we have elected you to represent  
21 us. So let's not forget what Lincoln says at the  
22 top, "A government of the people, by the people,  
23 for the people." Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
25 much. Camille Rivera, Rochelle Kelly [phonetic],

1  
2 John Woods [phonetic], Diana Carlin, and Dick  
3 Zigun.

4 WALTER COOPER: My name is Walter  
5 Cooper. Camille Rivera got sick, so I'm making  
6 the statement. I am here today testifying on  
7 behalf of Kyle Bragg, Vice President of SEIU 32BJ.  
8 I would like to thank City Council Member Domenic  
9 Recchia for holding this public hearing and giving  
10 us the opportunity to testify. I'm here today  
11 along with a growing community labor coalition,  
12 Coney Island for All Platform. A plan for  
13 equitable development of Coney Island. SEIU 32BJ  
14 represents over 70,000 hard working New Yorkers,  
15 close to 1,000 of whom call Coney Island their  
16 home. Together our coalition understands that all  
17 New Yorkers share something in common. We live in  
18 the city, work in the city, raise our families  
19 here and pay taxes. New York is our city and we  
20 are here today to say enough. Enough development  
21 for developers alone. Enough development that  
22 fails to create benefits for the working people of  
23 New York City. This redevelopment project is  
24 projected to create thousands of new jobs in a  
25 community where unemployment is at 13%. Coney

1  
2 Island residents and hard working New Yorkers  
3 truly need these jobs. But jobs that pay only  
4 minimum wages do not help families raise out of  
5 poverty. Workers who receive no health care  
6 through their jobs rely on public health programs  
7 or skip the doctor when their kids are sick. Our  
8 city tax dollars cannot be spent to create dead  
9 end jobs. Not in Coney Island and not on any  
10 other development in the city. The redevelopment  
11 of Coney Island will also create new housing that  
12 will change the face of Coney Island for decades  
13 to come. In a city where working people face  
14 housing burdens and the entire city is threatened  
15 by a crisis of affordability, we must work to  
16 create and preserve significant stocks of  
17 affordable housing that ensures communities like  
18 Coney Island will continue to be neighborhoods  
19 where working class New Yorkers can live and raise  
20 families and flourish. Working New Yorkers have  
21 had enough. We need jobs that will allow our  
22 families to thrive and we need housing we can  
23 afford. We will not stand by and watch the city  
24 actions create benefits for developers and leave  
25 working people behind. We cannot afford to let

1  
2 our city tax dollars fund development that only  
3 benefits the wealthy. We need a plan for the  
4 equitable development of Coney Island that creates  
5 good jobs with socially responsible contractors  
6 and employers and with a commitment that local  
7 residents are considered for these jobs in every  
8 phase of the project. Designated at least 50% of  
9 the housing created or preserved as affordable to  
10 low, moderate and middle income New Yorkers with  
11 at least half of the affordable units reserved for  
12 households in Coney Island. Preserve and  
13 strengthen the People's Playground through an open  
14 and affordable vibrant amusement area with spaces  
15 for vendors and small business and investment in  
16 historical resources. Create much needed public  
17 amenities for local residents in the area,  
18 including a school and a supermarket and improve  
19 public transportation. 32BJ has fought for good  
20 jobs and affordable housing at developments across  
21 the city and we're not going to stand by and watch  
22 Coney Island be rebuilt and maintain workers in  
23 dead end minimum wage jobs. Today we call on  
24 Councilman Recchia and his fellow Council Members  
25 to oppose the Coney Island comprehensive plan

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until it addresses these issues. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very much.

COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Could we have a copy of that?

ROCHELLE KELLY: Good afternoon, everyone. I'd like to thank the Council and the public for giving me the opportunity to testify today. My name is Rochelle Kelly. I've lived in Coney Island for quite some time now. I'm also a member of the New York Hotel Trade Council, the union that represents 30,000 of my fellow hotel workers. I'm also here to show my support for the Coney Island for All Platform. As a Coney Island resident and a union member, I'd like to say that Mayor Bloomberg's plan for Coney Island is a good first step, but it doesn't go far enough. The people of Coney Island need guarantees that affordable housing will be built. We need guarantees that the jobs created by new development in Coney Island, including hotel jobs, will be good jobs that pay living wages. We need guarantees that the workers on these jobs will be given a strong voice and will be treated with

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2 dignity and respect in the workplace. If we don't  
3 get those guarantees, we shouldn't support the  
4 mayor's plan. I support the Coney Island for All  
5 Platform because it offers real solutions that  
6 will guarantee good jobs and affordable housing in  
7 Coney Island. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you.

9 DIANA CARLIN: My name is Diana  
10 Carlin. For nine years I've owned a business in  
11 Coney Island's amusement district. I have built  
12 and grown my business in Coney Island. This past  
13 summer I opened up Lola Staar's Dreamland Roller  
14 Rink, which is located inside the historical  
15 landmark Childs Building with the generous support  
16 of Taconic Investment Partners. Until Thor  
17 Equities wrongfully and senselessly kicked me out  
18 of my store this past January, I owned Lola  
19 Staar's Souvenir Boutique on the Boardwalk. This  
20 spring I will be relocating my fabulous shop to  
21 the Stillwell Avenue subway station. I believe it  
22 is crucial to the success of this redevelopment  
23 that entrepreneurs such as myself have the same  
24 opportunities that I had to grow my business in  
25 Coney Island. Coney Island has always been a

1  
2 place where creative businesspeople have come with  
3 tremendous dreams of creating a spectacular  
4 reality and have actualized that dream in Coney  
5 Island. Visionaries, creative, unique  
6 entrepreneurs have built Coney Island into the  
7 world renowned brand that it is today. My friend,  
8 historian Charlie Denson says that Coney Island is  
9 one of the few places in the world where you can  
10 come with four balls and a target and you're in  
11 business. It is vital to this redevelopment that  
12 small businesses such as myself are given the  
13 opportunity to make their spectacular dreams a  
14 reality in Coney Island. While I wholeheartedly  
15 support the Community Board's suggestion to move  
16 high rises north of Surf, I'm greatly concerned by  
17 the Community Board's request that you increase  
18 the square footage of spaces from 2,500 square  
19 feet to 10,000 square feet. To put this square  
20 footage issue into perspective, my shop on the  
21 Boardwalk was 300 square feet. My new store in  
22 the subway station will be 130 square feet.  
23 Compare those numbers with the 10,000 square feet  
24 the Community Board has suggested. Small spaces  
25 allow small businesses and artists such as myself

1  
2 the opportunity to make their dreams into a  
3 reality in Coney Island. I also encourage you to  
4 give creative entrepreneurs who are the lifeblood  
5 of Coney Island today the opportunity to  
6 participate in this redevelopment. It is tragic  
7 that Thor Equities is forcing businesses such as  
8 Astroland and myself out of Coney Island. The  
9 city needs to take action now and buy the land  
10 from Thor Equities. Save Coney Island from Thor  
11 Equities. The decline of Coney Island didn't just  
12 happen. When I first opened my business in Coney  
13 Island nine years, Coney Island was going through  
14 a natural resurgence. New businesses such as mine  
15 were opening in vacant lots. Thor Equities has  
16 driven Coney Island into the ground. Many of the  
17 vacant lots are now vacant not because of the lack  
18 of business in Coney Island, they are vacant  
19 because Thor Equities had needlessly kicked them  
20 out, just as they kicked me out. Thor Equities is  
21 responsible for much of the decline in Coney  
22 Island over the last five years. I believe the  
23 city's plan caters too much to the demands of Thor  
24 Equities. I believe the city has compromised  
25 their goal of creating a world renowned amusement

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2 destination. This plan is a fantastic start, but  
3 the city needs to fix this plan and buy the land  
4 from Thor Equities if you want to create a world  
5 class amusement destination. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
7 much.

8 DICK ZIGUN: Honorable Council  
9 Members, my name is Dick Zigun. For 25 years it  
10 has been my great honor to be a spokesman for the  
11 Coney Island amusements. I would like to point  
12 out to you that currently over 60 acres is zoned  
13 C-7 for amusements. We are talking about reducing  
14 that 27 acres, including hotels and including  
15 retail. We are willingly and with our blessing  
16 turning over more than half of our currently zoned  
17 property for housing, for retail, for the jobs  
18 rightly requested from the Council. I have no  
19 objection to that. But I would expect that if we  
20 are turning over more than half of our acreage  
21 that you would pay attention to the leaders of the  
22 amusement industry in New York City as to the  
23 right way to deal with Coney East, the area to  
24 remain zoned amusements. After all, we are the  
25 pioneers of the neighborhood. We built Surf

1 Avenue. Coney Island began with the amusements.  
2 But instead of paying attention to us, there is  
3 obstructionism going on from Thor Equities. The  
4 question is to whether or not retail should be  
5 10,000 square feet is utterly nonsense and has  
6 nothing to do whatsoever with the interest of the  
7 amusement industry. Councilman Recchia, my  
8 cultural hero, fought hard to get us \$2.4 million  
9 for a Coney Island museum and that money was  
10 flushed down the toilet by Thor Equities which  
11 misrepresented for two years whether they were  
12 willing to sell the building. I ask the Council  
13 Members, if the mayor came to you and said he  
14 wanted to create a new nine-acre park in your  
15 district, would you oppose that? No. As we say  
16 in Brooklyn, you would consider that a mitzvah and  
17 think it was terrific. And yet Thor is lobbying  
18 against this designation. Now, Domenic, if you  
19 can get Thor to negotiate and finally sell the  
20 land, if we could get rid of their wrongful  
21 influence, I agree with you that Deno's should not  
22 be designated parkland. That could save us money  
23 to buy additional acreage. It could give us money  
24 to buy the Shore Theater. There are issues about  
25

1  
2 fixing the plan we want you to be our champion  
3 for, but you have to, I beg you to work with Thor.  
4 Tell them to support the mayor's mitzvah. Sell  
5 the land, get out of our neighborhood and let us  
6 move forward and do the right thing for Coney  
7 Island.

8 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
9 much.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: I just  
11 want to respond. I hear you loud and clear.  
12 Believe me, I am working extremely hard to see how  
13 we could resolve this issue. As far as the Shore  
14 Theater is concerned, believe me, I would love  
15 nothing better to purchase the Shore Theater and  
16 turn it into live entertainment and to have it as  
17 a building for the arts and have rehearsal space  
18 and have a restaurant on top and commercial so we  
19 could offset the funding for that building.  
20 Because I agree with you about the Shore Theater.  
21 That's something that I'm definitely looking into.

22 DICK ZIGUN: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you. I'm  
24 looking at the clock and in the interest of time  
25 what I'm going to ask is your cooperation in terms

1  
2 of I have three people from ACORN. I would wish  
3 that you would select one representative in the  
4 interest of time because I want to make sure that  
5 everybody gets time to speak and we only have 20  
6 minutes. You did that? You are? Ms. Gonzalez,  
7 would you come up please? Then we have Carol  
8 Albert. Are you here? Ronald Stewart, are you  
9 here? He left? Stewart Pertz? Queenie?

10 CARMEN GONZALEZ: Good afternoon.

11 My name is Carmen Gonzalez. I am a Coney Island  
12 resident a leader of Coney Island ACORN. I lived  
13 in Coney Island for part of my childhood. When I  
14 got married, we moved back and we raised our kids  
15 in Coney Island houses. I have been active in the  
16 community for over 37 years. First, the  
17 redevelopment of Coney Island is a great  
18 opportunity to address several issues that have  
19 been problems in our community. As a resident of  
20 Coney Island, we need more places for low and  
21 moderate income families to live. That is the  
22 most important priority from our point of view.  
23 This is why we, Coney Island ACORN, want 50% of  
24 the new housing units in the redevelopment area to  
25 be affordable for low, moderate and middle income

1  
2 residents. People like me and my neighbors  
3 without a significant amount of affordable  
4 housing, hard working New Yorkers with few housing  
5 choices will be left out in the cold and current  
6 residents could be at risk of losing their homes.  
7 Twenty percent affordable housing is not enough  
8 for the Coney Island residents. Friday, Borough  
9 President Markowitz said that we would have built  
10 up to get that much affordable housing because  
11 there was not enough room to build out. I live in  
12 the 14-floor building and the luxury building  
13 across the street is 26 floors. I haven't heard  
14 any complaints about too many tall buildings or  
15 shadows. Second, Coney Island has one of the  
16 highest rates of unemployment in the city. With  
17 this development there will be jobs. We need to  
18 ensure that people within the Coney Island  
19 community have access to those jobs with proper  
20 training programs and placement into those jobs  
21 that pay a living wage. Lastly, we need  
22 infrastructure improvement as well.

23 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Go ahead and  
24 finish.

25 CARMEN GONZALEZ: A little rain

1  
2 creates floods. We get brown outs, black outs and  
3 we lose phone communication for days. We need  
4 more public schools to meet the increased demand  
5 created by the new residential development. Also,  
6 we need a new supermarket. So I urge you,  
7 Councilman Recchia, to support 50% affordable  
8 housing, 30% of the jobs for Coney Island  
9 residents and the entire Coney Island for All  
10 Platforms. Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you.

13 CAROL HILL ALBERT: My name is  
14 Carol Hill Albert. I am co-owner with my husband  
15 Jerry Albert of Astroland Amusement Park, which  
16 was in business in Coney Island for 47 years when  
17 it closed at the end of January. I'm currently  
18 operator of the Cyclone Roller Coaster. I thank  
19 you very much for this opportunity. I think that  
20 the current plan, which of course is admirable in  
21 attempting to redevelop Coney Island, but it has  
22 one serious flaw. As it reads now, there is no  
23 zoning exclusively for what Coney Island is most  
24 famous for, outdoor amusements. The outdoor  
25 amusement area I believe could be the key to the

1  
2 economic engine and develop of Coney Island. It  
3 could be the source of the jobs the community so  
4 very much needs. The 27-acre amusement area, as  
5 it is called, includes now, because of the  
6 language in the zoning, pool halls, movie  
7 theaters, gymnasiums, restaurants and so forth.  
8 Tourists do not go to a tourist destination in  
9 order to bowl, play pool or eat in just any  
10 restaurant. This is something we all know that  
11 you can do anywhere. The city is hopeful that by  
12 creating parkland it can use that parkland  
13 exclusively for amusements. But I am asking you  
14 to consider finding a way to guarantee outdoor  
15 amusements whether or not that parkland  
16 designation occurs. So I am asking the Council to  
17 take on the responsibility of creating a world  
18 class tourism destination in Coney Island by  
19 asking the CIDC to dramatically increase the area  
20 for outdoor amusements in Coney Island. It can be  
21 surrounded by year-round uses, such as  
22 restaurants. But the nature of the outdoor  
23 amusement business in this latitude is seasonal.  
24 It's like the Yankees, it's like ski resorts, it's  
25 like the beach. You can't put a roof over it. I

1  
2 am very hopeful that once Coney Island does become  
3 a world class tourism destination once again,  
4 which believe me, does not take much because  
5 tourists come now in its somewhat frayed and  
6 diminished state. I hope that in the hands of the  
7 CIDC and with your help that we can have a first  
8 class amusement district in Coney Island. Any  
9 economic recovery always has the mantra, jobs and  
10 housing and I fully respect that. But Coney  
11 Island needs more. It is up to you that it stays  
12 glorious and doesn't become Battery Park City.  
13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Carol, I  
16 could tell you something, as the Councilman for  
17 Coney Island, it's not going to become Battery  
18 Park City, even though my colleague Alan Gerson is  
19 here.

20 QUEENIE HEWLING: I want to thank  
21 the Council for having us here our concerns this  
22 afternoon. My name is Queenie Hewling [phonetic].  
23 My family has been a resident of Coney Island for  
24 30 years. I'm the President of Sea Beach  
25 Homeowners Association. The poor and

1  
2 socioeconomic conditions of our immediate area are  
3 horrendous. Therefore, we support the  
4 revitalization of Coney Island. However, the  
5 current plan does not address the immediate needs  
6 of our community. Therefore, we want you to vote  
7 it down unless you make these recommendations.  
8 Address the issue of violence and crime in the  
9 Western portion of Coney Island. Have our filthy  
10 street cleaned so the current resident can stop  
11 living this substandard life. Fix our antiquated  
12 infrastructure prior to the plan unfolding. Our  
13 current sewage system backs up into the streets  
14 and people's homes. Our streets are flooded with  
15 water from the ocean every time there are heavy  
16 rainstorms. There are enormous traffic jams and  
17 delays when motorists are entering or exiting the  
18 way of Surf, Neptune or Cropsey Avenue. We suffer  
19 from a severe shortage of parking space,  
20 especially during the summer when 14 out of 16  
21 million beachgoers come to Coney Island, which  
22 forces local residents to drive around for hours  
23 looking for parking. There are no elevators in  
24 Stillwell Avenue subway station to accommodate our  
25 senior citizens and the handicapped. Special

1  
2 provisions should be made to ensure that medium  
3 income households in the western portion of Coney  
4 Island is used when determining affordable  
5 housing, not the median income of New York City.  
6 According to the last census, the median household  
7 income in Coney Island was \$29,278, while other  
8 portions of Brooklyn had an income of \$41,460.  
9 The median household income for New York City is  
10 \$64,217. Therefore, by the Council taking a look  
11 at the various amount of income and considering  
12 Coney Island resident income would be very helpful  
13 for this community. Preserve the amusement area.  
14 Make it larger with more rides and attractions  
15 where families from all economic backgrounds can  
16 come and enjoy themselves. Provide safeguard for  
17 small business and local entrepreneurs and protect  
18 our historic structures that ties Coney Island to  
19 its rich past. We do not want to be priced out of  
20 our neighborhood or replaced by the development  
21 plans. The needs of the many should be placed  
22 ahead of the greed of a few.

23 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Thank you,  
25 Queenie.

1  
2 STEWART PERTZ: My name is Stewart  
3 Pertz. I'm speaking on behalf of the Municipal  
4 Art Society where I'm Chairman of the Planning  
5 Committee for Coney Island. I'd like to thank the  
6 City Council and Council Member Recchia for the  
7 opportunity to testify today. We at MAS believe  
8 that the effort to ensure Coney Island's future as  
9 an amusement district today stands at a critical  
10 juncture. Recent recommendations for changes to  
11 the proposed rezoning plan, if adopted, would harm  
12 the district, undermining a vision for Coney  
13 Island that is shared with honest differences on  
14 certain elements, by the community, the city,  
15 local businesses and by the Municipal Art Society.  
16 One recently recommended change that we feel is  
17 highly problematic is a proposal to expand the  
18 size of retail units to 10,000 square feet,  
19 transforming the amusement area into a large scale  
20 shopping district rather than one with local  
21 businesses and world class amusements. We urge  
22 the City Council to reject this recommended  
23 change, but we also focus on a larger issue.  
24 After substantial study, we at MAS do not believe  
25 that an appropriate amusement can be developed on

1  
2 privately owned land. We strongly support the  
3 city's effort to acquire private property in the  
4 amusement area. We believe that New York City is  
5 the only entity capable of creating an amusement  
6 park that will stand as an economic engine and an  
7 amenity for Coney Island and all of New York City.  
8 The sale of private land to the city is the only  
9 way to achieve a great Coney Island. Clearly we  
10 cannot ignore the impact of the continuing  
11 financial crisis on the city's ability to purchase  
12 land. So we hope the Council would join with the  
13 city and other stakeholders to explore creative  
14 ways to bring Coney Island amusement area under  
15 public ownership, such as through the involvement  
16 of private nonprofit sectors, land swaps or land  
17 purchase that defers cost. We don't underestimate  
18 the enormous challenge that this represents but we  
19 are confident a solution could be found because  
20 where there's a will, there is a way to restore  
21 Coney Island to its former position as a world  
22 playground. We are committed to working together  
23 with the city toward mutual goals. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
25 much.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: Could we  
3 have copies of your testimony?

4 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Council Member  
5 Gerson has a question.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GERSON: No. I just  
7 have a statement for the record, Mr. Chair. As  
8 the Council Member from Battery Park City, I have  
9 to say that we love Battery Park City, but in a  
10 diverse city we also love visiting. The reason  
11 I'm here is because in addition to my love for  
12 Council Member Recchia is that we love visiting  
13 the amusements and attractions of Coney Island  
14 which we would like to see not only preserved but  
15 expanded and enhanced as you all have testified.  
16 We'd love to see the addition of some kind of high  
17 speed ferry connection between the Battery Park  
18 City area and the Coney Island vicinity. That way  
19 Council Member Recchia and I could go back and  
20 forth together on that trip. So we're all in this  
21 together to preserve the diversity of our city.

22 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: I just would  
23 like everybody to know that at this particular  
24 time that the administration is still here.  
25 Representatives from EDC are still here. They're

1  
2 taking down your constructive criticism. I'm  
3 quite sure that all of them will be taken into  
4 consideration. I want to thank you all for  
5 remaining. We've just got a short way to go.  
6 ReBuild, are you here? There's two people from  
7 ReBuild. Can I have just one? The rest I have  
8 are residents. Frank Goblatt [phonetic]. Anna.  
9 Ruth Magwood [phonetic]. Donelle Canada  
10 [phonetic], but your from ReBuild, right? Thank  
11 you. Carl Rosenstein [phonetic]. Carolyn McC Corey  
12 [phonetic]. Ronald Roth [phonetic]. Is there  
13 anyone else? Did I miss anybody? I called you  
14 earlier. Come on up. Have a seat right there in  
15 the front.

16 DARYL LEE: My name is Daryl Lee  
17 and I'm here to represent ReBuild. There is no  
18 doubt that Coney Island has a great history. But  
19 there is also no doubt that at the present time  
20 Coney Island has a cancer. This cancer is eating  
21 Coney Island alive. We support in part the city's  
22 program because of the fact that it is an honest  
23 effort to revitalize and to rebuild Coney Island.  
24 But there's an integral part that we have to  
25 recognize and that we have to ask our Council

1  
2 Members to strenuously enforce, and that is that  
3 when the construction is done and the buildings  
4 are built that the residents of Coney Island are  
5 not left out. We need the residents of Coney  
6 Island to be an integral part of the construction.  
7 We need the residents of Coney Island to be an  
8 integral part of the businesses. We need the  
9 residents of Coney Island to be an integral part  
10 of the maintenance. We want the history of the  
11 people of Coney Island to grow and rise with the  
12 buildings of Coney Island. This is what we have  
13 to ask of you. That you strenuously enforce this  
14 so that when these problems arise, such as  
15 blackouts that we now have a group of electricians  
16 to handle this problem in that community. So when  
17 the problems arise of sewages that we have already  
18 a group of people living in Coney Island, a part  
19 of Coney Island, living the Coney Island  
20 experience to be able to take care of these  
21 problems. This will alleviate this cancer. It  
22 not only creates money, but it also creates a  
23 sense of pride and ownership within the community.  
24 It also creates a sense of being a part of  
25 something that is great and glorious, which is

1  
2 Coney Island. It also creates a grand future of  
3 Coney Island. This is what we need from you. We  
4 need your strenuous support that the people of  
5 Coney Island will not be left out of this process  
6 and that the vampires won't be allowed to come in  
7 and just suck all the blood that's getting ready  
8 to come in to Coney Island. This is what we want.  
9 This is what we ask for.

10 ANNA: I'm Anna. I've lived in the  
11 area for 31 years. Up until recently I was living  
12 in Brighton Beach, which is a ten minute walk to  
13 Coney Island. I would respectfully ask the  
14 Council here today to devote 75% of the housing to  
15 reflect the demographic of not only Coney Island  
16 but Brighton Beach as well, which has no  
17 protection from over zoning and over building.  
18 Right now if you walk down Brighton Beach Avenue  
19 you can see the condos out flourish the modest one  
20 and two family homes. Not only that, there's a  
21 major demographic that reflects the economic  
22 situation of what's going on with Coney Island and  
23 Brighton Beach right now. Most of the housing  
24 does not reflect the elderly, the disabled and the  
25 working poor who do not make that \$60,000 or

1  
2 \$30,000 minimum to be considered for rent  
3 stabilization. In other words, in plain English,  
4 after a week's worth of wages, someone like me or  
5 someone who works in Coney Island can't even make  
6 the \$1,500 rent to be able to live in Coney Island  
7 per se. They could barely afford a room for \$600  
8 in cramped, overcrowded conditions, chopped up  
9 apartments, illegal boarding houses, so on and so  
10 forth. I'd also ask that the jobs reflect 75% as  
11 well and that the prevailing wage reflect the rent  
12 as it is now, such as \$1,000 for a studio. If  
13 you're making \$7.15, you can't pay that kind of  
14 rent, as least from where I'm coming from. It's  
15 minimum wage all the way with no considerations  
16 whatsoever. And then you have the elderly and the  
17 disabled who barely have that kind of income to  
18 move forward with their lives as well. \$10,000 a  
19 year Social Security income barely breaks even  
20 with any kind of co-called real rent  
21 stabilization. I also ask that Wonder Wheel Park  
22 be left alone. Do not chop it up. Don't give it  
23 a new street. Leave it alone. Don't touch it.  
24 It's fine as it is. Also, there's a vital  
25 neighborhood service building at 3050 West 21st

1  
2 Street that provides a vital service for medical  
3 and for food services, the Human Resources  
4 Administration Building. That's supposedly on  
5 parkland. You can't take a vital service, remove  
6 it and put a park because a lot of area residents  
7 depend on that building as well to match food and  
8 match medical that they might not be able to pay  
9 out of pocket.

10 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you very  
11 much.

12 RUTH MAGWOOD: Good afternoon  
13 Council Member and the rest of the concerned  
14 public that's still here. I've lived in Coney  
15 Island for over 37 years. I've raised my family  
16 in Coney Island. I've worked in Coney Island for  
17 many years. Coney Island has always been known  
18 primarily as an amusement area. If this is  
19 changed I really don't think we're going to get  
20 the attendance that we have gotten in previous  
21 years. We need to keep the area an amusement  
22 area. A major portion of that for outdoor  
23 amusement, which is one of the main reasons people  
24 come down here in the summer. They come down to  
25 enjoy the beach, go to the amusements, enjoy the

1  
2 beautiful air and the ocean breeze. To enclose  
3 everything or to change it other kinds of  
4 businesses is really not what should be done. It  
5 should remain an amusement area. One of my main  
6 concerns is the Cyclone Stadium which does have a  
7 great attendance, to do away with their parking  
8 lot, which is right next door, I don't think their  
9 attendance would be so great anymore. The other  
10 concern is also the Abe Stark Skating Rink, which  
11 is one of your winter attractions in the  
12 neighborhood. To close it would be ridiculous.  
13 My sons have grown up going to that rink. Thor  
14 Equities bought a lot of property. They removed a  
15 lot of the amusements already there. There's a  
16 lot of jobs that have been knocked out. Over the  
17 last three years, I would say 400 summer jobs and  
18 200 permanent jobs are gone right in that area.  
19 Summer jobs are something that's very important  
20 for the neighborhood and for our youth. I really  
21 would like to see the amusement area stay as an  
22 amusement area. As far as all this building,  
23 there's plenty of vacant lots throughout Coney  
24 Island where you could build other high rises or  
25 condos or whatever it is. But also, there's not

1  
2 much of market for that anymore. I really think  
3 you should look at building affordable housing.  
4 That's why my sons don't live in Coney Island  
5 anymore. They have good jobs but they couldn't  
6 afford to live there and raise their families.  
7 They moved out.

8 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you.

9 CAROLYN MCCOREY: Thank you so very  
10 much in letting the rest of us speak, even though  
11 we're past the time.

12 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Could you give  
13 your name please?

14 CAROLYN MCCOREY: Sorry. My name  
15 is Carolyn McCorey. Basically what I want to  
16 advocate for today is to create a structure either  
17 the city or the CIDC where all of these ideas and  
18 concerns can actually be incorporated in the  
19 plans. We have all had a chance over the last  
20 quite a while to say what we think and there's  
21 many great visionary brilliant ideas that  
22 absolutely must be incorporated that for some  
23 reason keep not being picked up by the people that  
24 are making these plans. Something else that no  
25 one has said is about de-mapping the parkland. I

1  
2 could be mistaken, but I think there's a community  
3 garden right now on that piece of land, permanent  
4 parkland. And I cannot say enough of the  
5 importance and the potential of community gardens  
6 to turn around a neighborhood, give residents  
7 fresh food and a safe space. There should be more  
8 community gardens in Coney Island, and not less.  
9 Many have actually been destroyed over the years.  
10 So I would really appreciate the Council listening  
11 to that and saying community gardens and farms  
12 need more thought. Also, we love the off season,  
13 those of us that love Coney Island. Maintain the  
14 sky if possible. The current communities of the  
15 amusement area, the residents and people that love  
16 Coney Island should continue to be included as  
17 these plans go forward. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you. The  
19 gentleman that was called earlier? Excuse me. Is  
20 Christopher Hahn here? We have his drivers  
21 license. We'll hold it. We'll see that he gets  
22 it.

23 MARTIN ELHEN: Thank you, Mr.  
24 Chairman. My name is Martin Elhen. I've lived in  
25 Coney Island since 1956. I watched Coney Island

1  
2 actually crumble and it's still crumbling. Right  
3 now I'm so much in support of the city's plan  
4 because everything is not going to be right in any  
5 plan that you come up with right now. But at  
6 least it's a start. At least people can go to  
7 work and be able to make prevailing wages so that  
8 they can take care of their families. That's one  
9 of the things that saved me was the union. I'm a  
10 Local 79 worker. People don't understand that you  
11 shouldn't let developers come into your  
12 neighborhood like Thor and come in and buy up all  
13 the land. Thor doesn't live in Coney Island.  
14 Yes, you've got money and you've got the right to  
15 buy what you want. But it shouldn't have been  
16 allowed for him to come in and do what he's doing.  
17 He's holding this process up. People are  
18 starving. People are killing each other every day  
19 because they don't have. We need to make room for  
20 people to get training and jobs. Small  
21 contractors in Coney Island are dying. They can't  
22 compete with the developers and the big  
23 contractors that come in here. They can't  
24 compete. I've been working with Domenic for  
25 years. We need to do something to help these

1  
2 people. I got a little help. I'm above water. I  
3 can see which way I'm going. But what about the  
4 ones that can't? What about the children?  
5 That's the ones we need to be concerned about  
6 because the children are the future of Coney  
7 Island. We need to think about this and allow the  
8 city to move this plan forward because we have to  
9 hold somebody accountable. We aren't going to be  
10 able to hold the developer accountable. He's  
11 going to build, get his money and move on. But at  
12 least we can still point our finger at the city if  
13 they mess it up. Thank you for your time.

14 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: Thank you.

15 RONALD ROTH: Thank you very much,  
16 Chairman. I'm Ronald Roth. I'm the author of a  
17 book on the history of traditional amusement parks  
18 and it goes into 134 parks and about 550  
19 attractions. It's really the most in-depth  
20 treatment of that subject to date. I see this  
21 planning process as sort of the cart before the  
22 horse in its lack of emphasis in terms of area on  
23 outdoor amusements. It's nice to hear that  
24 there's an advisory team of amusement  
25 professionals in place to advise the city now, but

1  
2 that wasn't the case when the plan was being put  
3 together. I think it's reflected in the plan.  
4 There was, in the 80s and 90s, as has been  
5 mentioned, a plan for a fuller redevelopment of  
6 Coney Island as a traditional amusement park. It  
7 was the Horace Bullard plan. He was not given an  
8 open arm welcome by the city at that time. He  
9 finally threw up his arms and left the scene. His  
10 plan was fully viable and from my understanding,  
11 the reason it wasn't put forward was that his  
12 fundraising was not of the right political party.  
13 That's the only reason the plan didn't go forward  
14 during the Giuliani administration. I believe the  
15 outdoor amusement area, as Ms. Albert and others  
16 have requested, should be considerable increased.  
17 That's what the Coney Island brand is and that's  
18 easily what it could be. It has been for decades  
19 that that was the case. It would be a squandering  
20 of that brand to overload the program of the  
21 amusement zone with all sorts of non-amusement  
22 requirements when these could be fulfilled  
23 adjacent to the amusement zone. The team as far  
24 as I can tell has been suffering from iconography.  
25 When I first met with the team planning this

1  
2 current effort, one of the things I asked in a  
3 later discussion was why the Parachute Jump  
4 couldn't be reinstated. I was told that they  
5 all agreed that it couldn't be because it's an  
6 icon and a landmark. Why is it an icon? Why is  
7 it a landmark? Because it's a parachute jump. In  
8 my estimation that's been the attitude towards  
9 rides from the very beginning. That it's kind of  
10 an equal part to other elements of the plan. Well  
11 this is a special site, Coney Island. It has a  
12 quarter billion dollar excellent mass transit hub  
13 that's just been opened which could bring people  
14 in here in droves with the right marketing and the  
15 right amusement operators. I think the direction  
16 needs to be rethought in terms of increasing the  
17 acreage. The zoning currently permits 60 acres  
18 and I would advocate that something approaching  
19 that be in the final plan.

20 CHAIRPERSON WHITE: I want to thank  
21 you. I want to thank the legal staff. I want to  
22 thank the administration and EDC. In particular I  
23 want to thank my colleague Domenic Recchia is  
24 pushing for the best possible endeavors and  
25 revitalizing of the area. He's a true

1

2

representative and a champion for his district. I

3

think you have a statement?

4

COUNCIL MEMBER RECCHIA: I just

5

want to thank everyone for staying here,

6

especially the administration for listening to the

7

people who really have an interest in this in the

8

community. But also I want to thank my

9

colleagues, Inez Dickens and Tom White for staying

10

here until the very end. Thank you very much.

11

This is a great day for the people of Coney

12

Island.

13

CHAIRPERSON WHITE: On behalf of

14

myself as Chairman of the Economic Development

15

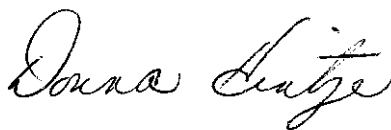
Committee and Melinda Katz, Chairperson of Land

16

Use, the meeting is adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Donna Hintze certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.



Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date April 23, 2009\_\_\_\_\_