

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING
AND FRANCHISES

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July 1, 2025
Start: 10:18 a.m.
Recess: 5:57 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

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

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

Christopher Jewett
Bally's Senior Vice President of Corporate
Development

Jess Corrigan
Bally's Applicant Team

Stanley Schlein
Bally's Applicant Team

Anita Laremont
Fried Franklin Law Firm, Bally's Applicant Team

Nicholas Tortorella
Stonefield Engineering and Design, Bally's
Applicant Team

Max Stember-Young
Langan Engineering, Bally's Applicant Team

Carolina DiFuccia
Bronx Small Business Owner

Charles-Sabashtian Benson II
Bronx Resident

Susan Calamia
Fort Schuyler House Resident

Max Zappone
Resident

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

Jose Acosta
Hotel and Gaming Trade Council

Terrell Martin
NYC District Council of Carpenters

Frances Territo

Dean Ricks
Bronx Resident, Parkchester Little League
President

Martin Dolgow
Bronx Resident

Michalle Cristofaro
Student

Sarah Collado
Student

Vincent Albanese
New York State Laborers Political Action
Committee

Bob Jaen
Executive Director of Throgs Neck Building
Improvement District

Ray West
Bronx Local 3 IBW Electricians

Anthony Mercado
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

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

Jahira Flores
Resident

James Gray
President of Arc of Justice Bronx Chapter

Janida Rosa

Catherine MacKay
Representing Dr. Anderson Tores at Regional Aid
for Interim Needs

Marques Payne
Bronx Business Owner

Lauren Patterson
Travel with Chaz

Donald Brathwaite
Local 3

Judi Durso
Resident

Gilberto Constantinez
Local 3

Jacqueline Torres
Resident

Laura Guerriero
Bronx Times Reporter Publisher

Raul Rivera

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

Alisa Tofa

Carmello Sottile
Resident

Carole DeChiara
Resident

Grace Marrero
Resident

David Abreu
Save the Sound

Natalia Corridori

Hashim Campbell

Michael Kaess

Erik Botsford
Director of Department of City Planning
Manhattan Office

Nabeela Malik
Deputy Director of Department of City Planning
Manhattan Office

Julieanne Herskowitz
Senior Vice President NYC EDC

David Breen
Director of Strategic Initiatives at Department
of Transportation

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

Emilyn Edillon
Council of Fashion Designers of America

Gigi Burris
Founder of Gigi Burris Millinery

Ryan Wilbat
USA 829 Union

Andrea Goldwyn
New York Landmarks Conservancy

Madeline McGrory
Manhattan Borough President Office Mark Levine

James Coakley

Aislinn Klein
Municipal Art Society of New York

Frank Fish
Garment District Alliance

Jean Prabhu

Teresa Sinder-Stein
International Alliance of Theatrical Stage
Employees, Local 829

Johnathan Hayden
New York Fashion Workers Development Coalition

Helen Hwang
Urban Land Institute New York District Council

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

Steve Boxer
Pachyderm Consulting

David West
Hill West Architects

Ali Begazo
Flatiron Nomad Business Improvement District

George Kalajian

Emily White
USA 829

Katie Sue Nicklos
New York Fashion Workforce Development Coalition

Pooja Patel
USA 829 IATSE

Maddie DeCerbo
Real Estate Board of New York

Teddy Drucker

Jessica Ortiz
SEIU Local 32BJ

Audrey Wilson
Vornado Realty Trust

Orli Native
Designer

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

Renee Cafaro
Designer

Brian Weber
Resident

Frampton Tolbert
Executive Director of Historic Districts Council

Frank Clarke
New York Building Congress

Andrew Udis
ABS Partners Real Estate

Brad Giambrone
Kaufman Organization

Solomon Blecher

Tony Johnson
Pintler Costumes and Technologies

Mariana Strikes [sp?]

Barbara Blair
President of Garment District Alliance

George Calderaro
29th Street Neighborhood Association

Brendan Cheney
Director of Policy and Operations at New York
Housing Conference

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

Ray Xie
Citizen's Housing and Planning Council

Michelle Arbulu
Behalf of Joseph Rose, Former Chair of Planning
Commission

Tova Peterson

Carla Bellisio
Designer, Tailor

Kenneth Fishel

Ngozi Okaro
Executive Director and Founder Fashion Nonprofit
Custom Collaborative

Isabel Varela
Founder of Repurpose Your Life

Robert Price
New York Fashion Workforce Development Coalition

Naika Colas
Assistant Professor at Fashion Design, Associate
Director of Parsons

Tessa Maffucci
Pratt Institute of Fashion

Michael Prunty
Empire State Realty Trust

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

Christopher Leon Johnson

Sophie Elrick
Wing and Weft Gloves

Elizabeth Shelton

Logan Phares
Open New York

Sabrina Erhnstein

Juliann Kroboth

Jesse Bodine
Manhattan Community Board Four

Isabel Taube
Co-op Board President 22 West 26th Street

David Sigman
Manhattan Community Board Five

Julie Chou
Manhattan Community Board Five

Alex Spyropoulos
Director of Government Relations at Tech:NYC

August Nastasi

Austin Celestin

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

Maulin Mehta
Regional Plan Association

Asha-Marie Singh

Carisa Kelly
Behalf of Kasia Walilcka Maimone, IATSE Local
289, Rethread Project

Caroline Spitzer

William Schultz

Elizabeth Denys

Leif Allmeroth

Roberta Silva

Jim Wright

Susan Tsu

Peter Wai Chan
Sunrise Studio

Tamas Szarvas
Board of Managers at The Cass Gilbert

Thomas Maguire

Rachel Reichert
Euroco Costumes

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

Meyer Polanco

Bobbi Barnett

Daniel Chandross

Chad Purkey

Association for Better New York

George Scheer

Executive Director Elizabeth Foundation for the
Arts

Daniel Kent

CEO of Lantern Org

Jessica Walker

President of Manhattan Chamber of Commerce

Daniel Cohen

Eddie Siegel

Samir Lavingia

Community Board Five

Grace O'Meara

Rachel Wilkerson

Sarah Doh

Geoffrey Thomas

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

James Power

HSF Kramer

Garrett Armwood

SL Green Realty Corp

JR McKechnie

G Holdings LLC

Tyler Baldwin

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 15

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning. Welcome to today's New York City Council hearing for the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. At this time, we'd like to ask everyone to place all electronic devices to vibrate. If you wish to submit testimony, you could fill out a witness slip with the Sergeant at Arms, and do not approach the dais unless your name has been called. Chair Riley, we're ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [gavel] Good morning, everyone, and welcome to the meeting of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. I'm Council Member Kein Riley, Chair of the Subcommittee, and I'm joined by Council Member Moya, Abreu remotely, and in the Chambers by Council Member Carr and Marmorato. Today, we are scheduled to hold two public hearings. The first one will be about Bally's development proposal up in the Bronx. The second public hearing concerns a neighborhood plan that the administration is undertaking in Midtown Manhattan known as Midtown South Mixed-Use, MX-- excuse me-- MSMX. Before opening the hearing, I will first go over the hearing procedures. This meeting is being held in hybrid format. Members of the public who wish to testify

may testify in person or through Zoom. Members of the public wishing to testify remotely may register by visiting the New York City Council's website at www.council.nyc.gov/landuse to sign up, and for those of you here in person, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms to prepare and submit a Speaker's card.

Members of the public may also view a livestream broadcast of this meeting at the Council's website.

When you're called to testify before the Subcommittee, if joining remotely, you will remain muted until recognized by myself to speak. When you are recognized, your microphone will be unmuted. We will limit public testimony to two minutes per witness. If you have additional testimony you would like the Subcommittee to consider, or if you have written testimony you would like to submit instead of appearing in person, please email it to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Written testimony may be submitted up to three days after the hearing is closed. Please indicate the LU number and/or project name in the subject line of the email. We request that witnesses joining us remotely remain in the meeting until you are excused by myself as Council Members may have questions. Lastly, for

everyone attending today's meeting, this is a government proceeding and decorum must be observed at all times. Members of the public are asked not to speak during the meeting unless you are testifying. The witness table is reserved for people called to testify, and no video recording or photography is allowed from the witness table. Further, members of the public may not present audio or video recordings as testimony, but may submit transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant at Arms for inclusion in the hearing record. I will now open the public hearing on LU321, 322 and 323 related to the Bally's development proposal in Council Member Marmorato's district in the Bronx. As I have stated before, it is important to clarify that the proposal to license up to three gaming facilities in the City is a state initiative, and that the state is leading the process to decide which proposals are awarded a license. This state-led process will consist of three steps. First, is a review by Community Advisory Committee known as the CAC review process, and this review will start this month in July. The second step consists of the review by the Gaming Facility Location Board which is appointed by the state, and the third step

is the final decisions and selection by the State Gaming Commission. The first step, the CAC review process, will give the local community the opportunity to review, provide input and evaluate each casino proposal. This subcommittee is hearing Bally's proposal today, because gaming license applicants are required to obtain any needed local land use approvals before the end of the CAC review process. So, to be very clear, we are not here today to decide whether there should be a casino in the Bronx. We are here today to determine whether the requested land use approvals are appropriate. Applicant is seeking three land use approvals. The proposed development site is where Bally currently operates the Golf Links Cours within Ferry Point Park. Because the proposed location for the casino is park land, it does not have a zoning district. To build a casino, the proposed site must have a zoning district. As a result, applicant is requesting the mapping of a zoning district. The second land use action is to amend the city map to reconfigure some of the nearby street to accommodate the project's traffic and to de-map park land where the proposed building would be located. The third land use action

seeks to create an easement that will provide an access-way between the proposed casino and the portion of the park along the water. This would require the City and applicant to enter into an easement agreement which will require disposition authority that the applicant is now seeking. The changes to the city map will be conditioned on the applicant being awarded a gaming facility license by the state. So, if the applicant is not awarded a gaming facility license, the changes to the city map will not go into effect. Similarly, if applicant is not awarded a license, the proposed development site will remain a park land, and applicant will not be able to use the new underlining zoning district that it is seeking today. Having made the clarifying remarks, for anyone wishing to testify on this item remotely, if you have not already done so, you must register online by visiting the Council's website at council.nyc.gov/landuse. For anyone with us in-person, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms to submit a speaker's card, and if you're filling out a speaker's card, please make sure to indicate whether you are testifying in favor or in opposition. As always, if you prefer to submit written testimony,

you may do so by emailing it to
landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. I would now like
to recognize Council Member Marmorato for any opening
remarks.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Thank you,
Chair. I just want to thank everybody for coming out
today and I look forward to hearing everyone's
testimony. So, thanks.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. I will now
call on the applicant panel for this proposal which
consists of Anita Laremont, Jess Corrigan, and
Katherine MacKay. Counsel, can we please administer
the affirmation once they come to the dais?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If Katherine MacKay
is not part of this panel, please let me know.
[inaudible] Sir, you have to turn it on.

UNIDENTIFIED: There's a much larger
panel of--

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: [interposing] But will
everybody be testifying or--

UNIDENTIFIED: [interposing] They'll be to
answer questions.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, so we'll call
them up afterwards--

UNIDENTIFIED: [interposing] Okay. Okay.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: as we're needed on
[inaudible].

UNIDENTIFIED: And one more. Thank you.
Stanley Schlein will be testifying.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: If they're
testifying, can we just call of them up right now?
If you're testifying can we just call you up so we
can just swear everyone in?

UNIDENTIFIED: They also need to
recognize Christopher Jewett who is remote.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, just got the
note. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Did everybody fill
out witness slips?

UNIDENTIFIED: No.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, we need
everyone to fill out witness slip, okay?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And to confirm for
our online folks, is Chris Jewett available?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Yes. Can you hear
me?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. And now we can see you. Perfect. Okay. So--

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: [interposing]
Excellent.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Could everybody who's at the table and Mr. Jewett, could you please raise your right hand and state your name for the record, each one of you, please?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Christopher Jewett.

JESS CORRIGAN: Jess Corrigan.

STANLEY SCHLEIN: Stanley Schlein.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: One second, one second, one second.

ANITA LAREMONT: Anita Laremont.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Is your microphone on?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Ms. MacKray, are you-- yeah, this is for-- they're presenting the project. Are you testifying? Yeah, this is not your time right now.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I did-- I did call the name up. That was a mistake.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, it was a mistake on our end. I'm so sorry.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Our apologies.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah, I'm sorry.

That's our fault. Okay, let's try this one more time.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. So, let's all raise our right hand and say: Do you swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony today and in response to Council Member questions?

JESS CORRIGAN: Yes.

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Yes.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

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

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Thank you, Chair, good morning. My name is Christopher Jewett. I'm with Bally's. I'm the Senior Vice President of Corporate Development leading this project. Next slide, please. So, just to briefly cover our meeting

agenda, we've got five sections. We'll start with the project background. Next slide. So, a little bit on project background if you go to the next slide, talk a little bit about the timeline and history of the site. The project site which you can see on the bottom right of the screen it sits at the foot of the Whitestone Bridge and what is the site of a former landfill. As you can see by the historical timeline and history of the development site, it sat for decades unused. New York City Parks ultimately took over the site decades after the landfill was shuttered, and worked through various agencies including the New York State DEC to put in place a development agreement to improve the site into a public golf course. The golf course opened in 2015 and Bally's assumed operations of it in September of 2023. Subsequently, we are proposing an integrated resort at the project site on what is currently primarily the parking lot, as well as the clubhouse and approximately an acre of the practice area. We submitted our gaming license application in response to the state's request for applications for gaming license last Friday, June 27th. Next slide. I'll

now hand it to my colleague, Jess Corrigan, to cover the proposed project.

JESS CORRIGAN: Thank you, Chris. I'm Jess Corrigan with HKS Architects. We appreciate this opportunity to show you our project today. Our site is entirely located within the golf concession and the resort construction is concentrated on about 15 acres as Chris mentioned. We wanted to minimize the impact to the golf course and keep as much of those existing facilities operational as possible. The project will be visible from both the Whitestone and Throgs Neck Bridges and places a new building with a prominent location at the face of this major entry to the Bronx. We also wanted to keep it as far away from the residential areas as we could, given the land available to us. Next slide, please. And then the next slide. The design concept for the building is based on a relationship with the Links Golf Course and its landscape. It's unique to that style of course, and to the proximity of the water, and it creates a new destination in the Bronx that brings nature, golf, and entertaining and activity to this part of the City. The planning and design reflect the rolling hills and water with curves and

softness in the forms of the building that are reflected throughout both vertically and horizontally. We also use roof extensions to sort of bring a horizontal emphasis to a building, and we keep the top of the building well below the top of the bridge. We wanted to preserve the bridge's unique identification and landscape effect. The form of the building becomes this new landmark for the Bronx and declares a community with energy, activity, and a sense of community that wasn't visible here before. We think this is a very strong, strong change and desirable one. Next slide, please. A few views of the project. This shows that horizontal nature and the rolling forms that we described. Next slide. And from the river at night, we wanted to see it's still reinforced with horizontal forms, movement reflecting the water and the landscape, and it brings it to-- this shot actually starts to show the relationship with the bridge, again, trying to be respectful of its place in the skyline. Next slide please. The diagram that's before you here shows the major components of the resort that included 2,800-seat event center at the top of the building, and this can be entered without going through the casino

so everybody in the community can enjoy this and the events that happen in it. It also includes a 500-room hotel, about 100 of those rooms are suites, a public rooftop venue that people can get to and enjoy a snack and a beverage and views of the City, the park and the Bronx. It also includes a nightclub, a large spa, conference center and ballrooms for community events, and parking structures to accommodate these crowds. There are currently nine restaurants planned and a separate food hall as well. So, there are a lot of options there for food and beverage that don't exist in the park today. With the license and this project, we will also replace the existing clubhouse with a new design that is forward-looking and respects the landscape and the Link Style Course. Next slide. And with that, I'll turn it back to Chris.

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Next slide, please.

So, talk a little bit about the transportation improvements. So, the project site is accessed by the Hutchison River Parkway, commonly referred to as Ring Road throughout our presentation and in our project materials which is a New York City DOT mapped public street until you reach the orange highlighted

section on the diagram where it's mapped park land, paved throughout the park as a thoroughfare. In 2015, a city planning study identified various shortcomings for this roadway and suggested those improvements be made as well as mapping it as a city street. So, as part of our project, we're planning to do just that, to rebuild and enhance this roadway into a dedicated City DOT mapped street, including connecting new drainage to mitigate existing loading issues, widening the roadway to two full moving lanes throughout. The addition of dedicated street parking where feasible. The addition of two MTA bus stops, one on the project site and one within the park, and enhanced pedestrian access, including bike lanes, sidewalks, light fixtures, fire hydrants and vegetative plantings. Next slide. So, taking you through the park and into the new mapped city street. This rendering view here is looking south at the Whitestone Bridge as if you were traveling just adjacent to the currently existing paved parking lot that is used today for park access and for ferry users. As you can see by the rendering, road improvements will create a much safer pedestrian and biking experience within the park, a better

experience for park users, ferry users, and all Ring Road users to the north of the park as well as visitors to our proposed project. Next slide. This rendering view along the same path as the prior, just going under the bridge. Once you get close to the bridge, the street parking ends. Although there is a mixed-use sidewalk and bike path for safe pedestrian access going from the west side of the park under the bridge to the east side of the park, and then connecting all the way up north to the sidewalk all the way up to Lafayette-- something that doesn't exist today. There's no safe pedestrian access under the bridge. Next slide. So, the second set of transportation improvements which we'll be paying for as part of our project incorporates three components to the north and west of our catchment area. First, there'll be multiple traffic signal timing improvements to better align them with the future transportation patterns in the area. Second, there are two locations, designed areas in orange on the diagram, that we will be restriping and restricting curbside parking to eliminating an existing bottleneck by creating two full moving travel lanes. This is the equivalent of somewhere around 30 parking

spaces overall combined. And lastly, the construction of a new east/west overpass just to the south of the existing Lafayette Avenue Bridge. Next slide. So, this is a fully-rendered view of what that new overpass would look like and some of the improvements on the existing Lafayette Avenue Bridge. A few things to point out here. Number one, current users of Ring Road that are coming north on your right to the top of the screen, want to go back south to use the park ferry or golf course or anything else, they must make two consecutive left turns at signalized intersections on that existing overpass bridge. The new overpass will eliminate these existing users from ever needing to go onto Lafayette Avenue again. The existing overpass will have two left turn lanes in the future as opposed to one today to enhance transportation flow, and it's important to note the new overpass will be signalized to ensure harmonization with those already entering Ring Road. Next slide. So, I'm going to jump in and do some of the community benefits of our project. Next slide. So, our publicly announced Community Benefits Agreement incorporates many components which total in that present value of \$625 million, including a few

of the following as examples. Number one is a Bronx benefit fund which is committed to a minimum of \$10 million annually to be distributed by us to directors that can appoint local elected-- appointed by local elected officials to distribute these funds amongst various organizations, community organizations, local schools, PTA programs, etcetera. Secondly, public safety enhancements including a \$10 million up-front expense that we will cover for multiple New York PD substations, including one within the proposed project, plus an annual ongoing contribution for funding of additional police force in our catchment area. And then the third example, various local support initiatives including youth engagement and supporting nonprofits. Not included in that \$625 million is our commitment for Bronx and New York City residents so they can own up to nine percent of the total project equity of the proposed integrated resort, including giving investors non-recourse loans to enhance their stake. I think it's important to note that we're the first project to announce this in our plans, and now we've seen others doing the same. Next slide. There are significant other local benefits from our project over and above those

outlined prior in the presentation. Number one, this is the largest privately-funded project in the history of the Bronx, estimated at \$4 billion. Number two, upon opening we would become essentially the second-largest private employer in the borough, offering high-paying careers, not just jobs, with advancement opportunity with a nearly fully unionized workforce, and during construction our estimates are approximately the creation of 15,000 union construction jobs, and we've included in our commitments workforce development opportunities in pre-apprenticeship programs. Next slide. So, as part of our project we're required to replace the fair market value of the park land we would be acquiring with either replacement park land or existing park land improvements, and we plan to do a combination of such. We have approximately eight acres of land optioned for purchase on City Island that we would dedicate back to New York City Parks, and additionally you can see illustrative examples, and a vast majority of the remaining funds are anticipated to be spent on Ferry Point Park, including you know, connecting east and west sides of Ferry Point Park under the Whitestone Bridge, adding

a new playground in the western portion of Ferry Point Park and reconstruction soccer fields. Next slide. Jess had mentioned the other improvements. So, today, we are going through the approval process for a new golf clubhouse which will be constructed on the edge of the ninth green where the current Bally Links berm [sic] sign stands today. You can see a few illustrative views. It's a two-story clubhouse with excellent views from that second story. You can see the Manhattan skyline and all the way up the East River. Next slide. I'm going to hand it to Anita Laremont to cover our proposed actions.

ANITA LAREMONT: Thank you. I'm a Anita Laremont. I'm a partner in the law firm of Fried Frank. So, I'm going to present the proposed actions and approvals necessary to effectuate the project. Next slide? There are four actions that I will discuss. The first is a zoning map amendment to designate existing park land as a C84 commercial zoning district where gaming facilities are permitted pursuant to New York City's zoning resolution sections 32-10 and 42-10. This district only permits commercial use and does not permit residential or industrial use. The second action is a city map

amendment to de-map a portion of the development site as park land which will allow for the disposition of an interest in those areas to Bally's. The third is a city map amendment to map the widened Ring Road as a city street. And finally, there's an action for the approval of a disposition of city-owned real property to facilitate the transfer of a non-exclusive access easement from the City to Bally's over the waterfront access roadway. None of these actions will become effective unless and until Bally's is awarded a gaming license. Thank you. Next slide. I'll now turn to Stanley Schlein who'll talk about the alienation.

STANLEY SCHLEIN: As you know, the Council has considered alienation--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Mr. Stan, press the button. Thank you.

STANLEY SCHLEIN: As you know, the Council has considered the alienation home rule message most recently. It was adopted, and the bill was adopted by the state legislature. Both the Assembly and Senate passed onto the Governor for signature and has now become a chapter of the laws of the state of New York. It is effectuated. However,

it requires only the opportunity, not the commitment, to sell us this 15.7 acres of land which is currently the parking area which is all concrete. The clubhouse that exists in the adjoining temporary clubhouse, a little strip of concrete behind the clubhouse, and the pitching and putting area which will be replaced on the park, on the golf course itself. We are currently in negotiations with the Parks Department to create a conveyance agreement for that 15.-- approximately 15.7 acres of property, and none of this will be conveyed if the casino license is not granted to Bally's. Thank you.

ANITA LAREMONT: That represents our full presentation. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much. I'm going to ask a few questions before I turn it over to Council Member Marmorato. Can you briefly describe the process for this application after we have completed our review here at the City Council?

ANITA LAREMONT: Thank you. As you mentioned and in your opening remarks, the next steps will be the establishment of advisory council that will meet on several occasions to determine whether or not it recommends that the application be

considered by the gaming facility-- the gaming commission to-- site selection board for award of a license to have a casino at this location. That board will then meet to determine which projects they will award the licenses to in this downstate region.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Traffic on the near Hutchison Parkway is a nightmare. I take it to get to my house when I'm coming back on the Whitestone. Your proposal would create more traffic. Please describe how you have consulted with the transportation agencies, and more importantly, our communities here in the Bronx to mitigate this additional traffic.

ANITA LAREMONT: We have other members of our team here who can address that. So--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Okay, we're going to have to swear him in, too.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thanks for raising your right hand. Could you please state your name for the record?

SATI MUTASWAMY: Sati Mutaswamy [sp?] I'm with the applicant team.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. And do you swear tell the truth and nothing but the truth in response to Council Member questions?

SATI MUTASWAMY: Yes.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Do you need me to repeat the question?

SATI MUTASWAMY: No, I'm good, sir. So, we have actually as part of the project had extensive coordination with City DOT, State DOT, regarding the transportation aspects of the project. All the assumptions in the IS [sic] have been finalized and approved by City DOT agencies to be [inaudible]. They are concerned. And as you rightfully said, yes, the Hutch is fairly busy. As part of mitigation, Chris went through in full detail all the different improvements including the overpass, and we have actually also committed to a traffic monitoring program which will actually measure the traffic when the site is operational, and the commitment will have participation with the City DOT to come up with additional mitigation measures as needed to help alleviate the impacts.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: And what additional recommendations from the community did you get regarding traffic issues in the area?

SATI MUTASWAMY: Can you repeat that question again?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: What additional recommendations did you receive from the community that you inputted with issues with traffic in the area?

SATI MUTASWAMY: So--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Because I know you said you spoke with DOT from the city and state, but Community Board, Council Member, were there any recommendations that they gave you that you were able to implement in your plan?

SATI MUTASWAMY: Sure. Chris, did you want to respond first, and then I'll go after you?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Sure. So, this is-- Chair, this has been an iterative process, I guess, to start. In terms of what we had originally looked at, we've looked at one having an exit ramp off the Hutch directly into the site to help mitigate that. Obviously, you know, not have been feasible for a myriad of reasons being utilized a much larger

portion of the park, but also the extended time frame for approvals from a state and federal highway standpoint. Number two, we had talked about having a direct entrance from the community, and we heard vehemently that that was opposed. Some of the other examples we've incorporated is, you know, widening the road, adding the-- adding, you know, public transit. The overpass, I think, is the biggest mitigant. Signal re-timing-- you know, adjusting where some of the parking is on some of the nearby roadways including on Lafayette Avenue and Hutchinson River Parkway. One suggestion that we deeply looked into that we are unable to do is the widening of Lafayette Avenue, because it's bound on the east side by a graveyard to the south. So, we have explored some items that are not included that were just were not feasible as well.

SATI MUTASWAMY: Just want to add to what Chris had suggested-- thank you, Chris. In discussions, there was a request to improve Ring Road, because as it stands right now, you know, during the summer how busy the road is? It's over-subscribed. There's lot of cars. There's [inaudible] parking. So that was taken into effect, and the big

facility that Jess and Chris presented, there's a lot of parking on-site and it is free to help. That is in addition of the bike lane which was one of what the community had asked for, because right now there is no connection from the east side to the west side. So, as Chris has presented, under the bridge they're connecting it to an existing city's greenway plan to go from--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] What about other transportation measures? Like, did you guys communicate with MTA?

SATI MUTASWAMY: Yes, we did. I was going to come to that.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay.

SATI MUTASWAMY: We are in discussions with the MTA and they had said that they would consider adding bus stops and provide access to the park which is not there today, and as was presented earlier, there's discussion of having two stops, one on the property and one in the park to increase access to the park.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. This proposal presents an opportunity to create a lot of jobs. What commitment can you give to Council Member

Marmorato, myself and my Bronx elected colleagues that these jobs will actually go to our constituents in the Bronx? Anybody?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Chair, I'll take that. Sorry, I got stuck on mute here virtually, and apologies for not being there. I had a flight cancelled. So, in our RFA submission which will become public here in the very short term, we've committed I believe the number is 70 or 75 percent of the jobs will be from Bronx residents and provided to Bronx residents, and 70 to 75 will be actually filled by minorities. As such, we've taken a look at the demographic. We've compared it to the 20 gaming properties that we have across our portfolio, and we're confident that a vast majority of our constituents in Community Board where we're anchored and also nine and 11. We'll have a majority of our employees that live within those Community Boards themselves. So, those commitments are real. Those are outlined with our gaming license application which, you know, folks that will be on our CAC will have visibility to.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: And how many jobs are you anticipating, Chris, in total?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: We're estimating 4,000 permanent jobs. I think from an FTE standpoint, it's about 3,700 when you mix full-time and part-time.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. And my last question before I turn it over to Council Member Marmorato-- what type of outreach have you done to-date and what is your outreach plan going forward to make sure our communities in the Bronx know about these potential jobs?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: So, we met today with-- I'd have to go back and look. It's probably at least 125 to 150 community organizations, you know, across the board. The various colleges in our direct catchment area including Lehman, you know, Bronx Community College, etcetera, we plan to partner with those, and then we've identified I think 10 or so workforce development programs within our RFA application that we will plan to work with including on construction working with the unions for pre-apprenticeship programs, noting that construction of the facility will take approximately 30 months. So, in terms of putting those programs in place, there will be plenty of time to get those partnerships in

place. We've included having a hiring center within the Bronx, targeting, you know, somewhere near the site. So, all of those will come to fruition if we are selected.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. All sounds great, and I would even encourage a street outreach team as well, maybe to get some people in the local neighborhoods that don't go to any of these community programs to kind of let them know about the jobs that are available to as possible. Council Member Marmorato, I yield the floor to you to ask your questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Thank you, Chair Riley. Okay, so I'm going to start with alienation. What is the rationale for taking this land to create a \$3.1 million square foot casino complex that my neighbors and my neighborhoods and my Community Board have opposed throughout the process? And what consideration was given to an alternative site not located on public park land?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: I'll take that, Council Member. So, I guess first and foremost, scouring New York City, it's very difficult to find 15 to 20 acres of land in aggregate to be able to

execute a project to this size and scale. Relative to why this a great location, I think a few things. Number one, you're in close proximity off of, you know, a major thoroughfare that already handles a very large amount of traffic and infrastructure. It's an ideal location because you're right off of that, and you never actually have to go onto a city street if you're coming from the highway, and I think 85 percent or so of our visitors are projected to come from the highway. I think number two, we actually are nowhere nearby any significant homeowners or neighborhoods. Our site is bound by the golf course, the river, the highway, and graveyard. And sorry, what was the back end of your question?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: What's the rationale?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: It was size and rationale?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Yeah.

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: So, those are the main points. It's a great location access-wise. We're not necessarily in anyone's backyard. You can't directly access the site. And we've

strategically gone through working with New York City Parks and Jack Nichlaus Design to ensure that the golf course stays substantially the same. We're not affecting any of the holes materially. There will be some tweaks with the practice area and new clubhouse, but the golf course will stay the same. So essentially, over time, over the last 60 or 70 years, a former land fill will be converted to what is existing now, a golf course, and an economic engine for the Bronx including the integrated resort.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. Just for the record this is NYCHA's backyard. Throgs Neck Houses, it is in their backyard, your golf course and casino. And also, there is access to get to the property through Emmerson Avenue, but we're going to get to that later, because I do have questions about that. How much park land are you proposing to de-map, and how much of that park land is the park road?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: So, the actual project site is 15.71 acres. The actual roadway that is mapped as park land today and paved, that will be widened. I believe that's around five to six acres in total, and there's an access easement that's a little over an acre that runs-- it's essentially a

roadway today that runs from Hutchison River Parkway north and south all the way to the East River to a parking lot that connects along a pathway there.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. In the original proposal it was said that 18 acres would be used and now I'm starting to see a number of 19 acres. Where is that extra additional acre coming from?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: So, the original proposal what we had talked about actually alienating and us as developer actually buying was 18 acres on the development site where the integrated resort would go. Because we are not acquiring the land where that easement is and where the roadway would go, the roadway is actually being dedicated from one city agency to another. Today, it's under New York City Parks jurisdiction. It's maintained by New York City DOT and would be transferred directly to DOT. So that was not considered in the 18 acres. So, essentially, in the past we were at 18 acres. Today, we're actually just below 16 acres. So, we've been able to strategically limit and lessen the amount of park land that we would actually be taking private ownership of, and that was primarily through the

tightening of some of the project site and keeping the new clubhouse on what is existing park land.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. And in your application, there is mention of the elimination of Park South of Schley Avenue. Can you kind of explain this action and specify where-- what cross streets that would be, because Schley Avenue is very long.

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Can someone pull up the presentation. I think it's easier to see directly on one of the slides.

UNIDENTIFIED: Yes, just give us a minute, please. What slide number would you like?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Can you go back to the roadway where it's mapped orange. It's probably somewhere around 11, 12. Yep, this one. So, if you can zoom in just so everyone can see. So, Schley Avenue is essentially where the park land starts. It's on the top left of the diagram. The orange roadway is highlighted there. That is the current Ring Road which sits all in park land today. That roadway is on average somewhere between 18 to 20 feet wide. That roadway would be widened to the west from Schley all the way down to the Whitestone Bridge. It

would go I think as wide as up to 40 feet. Anita, please keep me honest there and Satchya [sp?]. To the west we'd essentially be utilizing 20 more feet of park land along that roadway, but it would be fully improved. We'd be adding parking, two full moving lanes. Today, that roadway floods, and it becomes essentially a life safety issue and becomes impassible. So, we'll be enhancing the drainage there, as well as all the other improvements I mentioned.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. Now how long is park land alienation valid for? Is there like a sunset clause or an expiration date on the alienation legislation?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: The legislation states that this has to occur within 15 years of passage.

STANLEY SCHLEIN: I would add to that, if I may, that we have to acquire or make the park land improvement commitments on the dollar value dependent on what the evaluation of that 15.7 acres is determined by the City of New York. We are awaiting that communication from the City, DCAS, in particular. Once that number is set, that's when the

conversation as to how it will be applied to improve existing parks or create a new park land will be determined. We are hopefully going to have that information imminently from Parks and from the City.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay, so--

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: [interposing]

Council Member--

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Yes.

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: sorry to interrupt you. If I could also add to that. Part of the state's process is that you have to own or control long-term for 60 years plus 10 years, so 70 years. You have to control your site within 30 days of awarding of a license which is expected to be by the end of Q4 of this year. So, we would take ownership of the project site upon awarding of the license or shortly thereafter.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: So, basically, if you do not-- you're not awarded a license now. The land goes back after 15 years?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Essentially, if we're-- essentially, if we're not awarded a license, nothing happens.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: But you still have the possibility if they do come up with a second round of casino licenses down the road, within this 15 years you can build a casino?

STANLEY SCHLEIN: No, the legislation specifically-- the state legislation, the alienation legislation that was signed by the Governor specifically says if the award is not granted to us by the Gaming Commission, by the Site Selection Board, it is over though as no force in effect. If the Governor were to-- on the state legislation would adopt three new casino sites on top of the others, we'd have to start again.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Start all over again. Okay. Okay. Alright. Now, I just want to go to Ring Road. What will be needed from the DOT to map Ring Road? What improvements will be made to the street, and why is that designation necessary?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Anita, do you want to talk about some of the technical from a land use, and Satchiya [sp?], please?

ANITA LAREMONT: So, we need these actions to facilitate this road being mapped as a city road. The reason that that is being pursued is

because the City has specific standards that apply to roads in terms of width, turning ratios, other things that make a road more useful. And so, that is why we are pursuing this and have worked very closely with DOT with respect to what those improvements will be, and I'll let Satchiya talk more about that.

SATCHIYA: I just invited Nick to come on. He's going to give you the specifics of the Ring Road improvements. He'll probably have to get sworn in first. Can you swear him in? Nick's going to--

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: My apologies. Trying to do too many things at once. Can you please state your name for the record?

NICHOLAS TORTARELLO: Yeah, Nicholas Tortarello with Stonefield Engineering and Design, part of the applicant team.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Do you swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth in response to your question-- to Council Member questions today?

NICHOLAS TORTARELLO: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

NICHOLAS TORTARELLO: So, in terms of the overall improvement to Ring Road as Chris spoke to

earlier, the current roadway is about 18 to 20 feet wide, sometimes provides two moving lanes, but as I'm sure you're well aware, especially during the summer month, is parked along the western curb line that fronts the park which effectively reduces the roadway to a single moving lane. What we're proposing to do by transferring ownership of the roadway from Parks to DOT is upgrade the design of that roadway to be in accordance with the current city standards. So that will provide two full-width moving lanes at all times adjacent to a curbside parking lane that will front the park. We are also providing full width sidewalk, a landscape buffer, a two-way bicycle lane all within this upgraded roadway. Again, the flooding concerns that currently persist, we're working with the City DOT and DEP to implement drainage infrastructure that again is in accordance with the latest city standards where there currently is limited or no drainage infrastructure along the roadway to begin with. We've also worked with the MTA and coordinated with that agency and the City as well. So basically, this roadway is being upgraded from just a strip of pavement with no pavement markings and limited signage to a fully-designed, full-width two moving

lane roadway that fronts the park, will provide access to the park for your constituents and provide access to our project as well.

SATCHIYA: I just want to add one more item to that. There will also be improvements for pedestrian parking. You have right now the EDC parking lot and you have the unpaved lot where the park users park and essentially just cross the street there will be enhanced crossing based on city requirements as well.

ANITA LAREMONT: I'll also note, on Ring Road that in 2015 City Planning had made a recommendation that Ring Road be a dedicated DOT thoroughfare and be improved, and if this project weren't occurring that would not be happening, and if this project does not occur, the City doesn't have any plans or commitment to improve-- make these improvements to Ring Road.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Of course, understood. Who ultimately pays for the road changes? Are all improvements including pedestrian access, lighting, signage paid for by this development team or is that going to come from our City tax dollars via DOT?

ANITA LAREMONT: It's paid for by Bally's. Bally's is paying for it.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Alright. Now is the million-dollar question. Bike lanes? I've never heard of anybody riding a bike to a casino. Have you done-- have you asked? Have you done a study or a survey and asked people who's going to ride their bike to a casino?

NICHOLAS TORTORELLA: The purpose of the bicycle lane is not necessarily to serve our project. It's being implemented in accordance with the City's Complete Street program. The bicycle access will provide people the ability to bike in either direction to and from the park, as well as circulate under the bridge to get to the waterfront area that is to the south of our project site, but the purpose of the bike lane is not necessarily to provide access to our project.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Would you consider possibly removing the bike lane and adding an additional lane of traffic, because we're going to get to traffic later on, but there's going to be an increase of cars coming to this project during peak hours. It's already busy and, you know, a lot of

1 traffic now. But would you consider removing the
2 bike lanes? Because there is a bike lane that goes
3 through Brush Avenue to the park and you have access
4 to go through the park with a bike lane.
5

6 NICHOLAS TORTORELLA: Understood and point
7 well-taken. We have worked with the City DOT
8 extensively on the design and cross-section of this
9 roadway. A third moving lane was raised by our
10 applicant team as a potential alternative, but the
11 City DOT requested that we provide two moving lanes
12 adjacent to the curbside parking lane, with a full-
13 width sidewalk and two-way bike lane. Again, the
14 bike lane component of the design is part of the
15 City's Complete Streets program, and their bike unit
16 at City DOT strongly requested the presence of a bike
17 lane.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. so, as
19 your sitting Council Member who knows the district
20 very well and who I've had conversations upon
21 conversations with DOT about where bike lanes work
22 and they don't work, and they've done a project in my
23 district where they put a bike lane. It didn't work.
24 They finally realized it and they're like making
25 adjustments towards it now. I'm telling you that I

would really highly like it if you would consider my removal of the bike lanes in that area, especially around Ring Road, because there is going to be a lot of traffic coming off of that highway, getting down the service road, and we need to make the cars move, and a bike lane is just going to hold this up. DOT is not-- they're experts on certain things, but not in my district.

NICHOLAS TORTORELLA: Understood. The final design--

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Council Member-- sorry, this is Chris Jewett. I can speak for the entire project team. We can consider this. I think we need to figure out how we communicate that, and if this change can't be amended, but we [inaudible] 100 percent.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Oh, I think it can be changed, because there is an already existing bike path to get to the area. Maybe you should make improvements on that during-- around Brush Road.

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Understood. We'll-- we will explore it.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Thanks. Is this mapping [inaudible] completely contingent on

this casino license being granted? We already discussed that.

ANITA LAREMONT: The answer to that is yes, absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: And is it-- and is tha also true for the rezoning action?

ANITA LAREMONT: Yes, absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Is the rezoning-- okay. With the C84 rezoning, what is the height possibility of this building?

ANITA LAREMONT: I don't know that fact off-hand, but I will get you that.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: You don't know how many stories your project is going to be?

ANITA LAREMONT: Oh, our project.

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: The project sits at about approximately 260 feet at peak. I know our zoning and FFA requirements actually allow to go higher than that. The peak of the Whitestone Bridge is approximately 385 feet, plus or minus. So we're substantially, you know, at 33 percent or so below that. And we strategically designed the building, you know, through a lot of conversations with local community members. We originally had done a much

taller tower, and we've kept it a little bit more sleek with it being low, you know, low hung in the east where you're closer to multifamily or single family properties and then gradually rising in the west as it, you know, kind of fades off from a view standpoint. So,--

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: [interposing]

Okay, now--

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: [interposing] We

tried to keep it low-hung.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Good. I like lower. Lower the better. Since the building is a in a direct flight path with LaGuardia runway 22, have you had much interaction with the FAA to see if there's any conflict with the building height or any visual disturbance with the planes? And especially looking at page six on your presentation, I've never seen-- I don't think I've ever seen that picture where the lights are actually shining through. The casino always looked like a grayish color. Would that interfere or disturb any of the flights coming in on runway 22?

JESS CORRIGAN: Chris, if you want, I'll take that. We're well under-- we did do an FAA check

when we started the design. We're well under the 300 foot-- the lowest point of the FAA barrier and flight path at this end of the site is at about 300 feet. We're well under that. The rendering shows every light in every hotel room on which would rarely happen. And it was meant for drama. If it does happen, it is outward shining, not upward shining so that is not an FAA concern--

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: [interposing]

Okay, so then that brings me--

JESS CORRIGAN: given the path.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: If it's outward shining, what about the residential area surrounding it?

JESS CORRIGAN: It doesn't face the residential area on this side of the river. It does face the river.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: No, in Queens.

JESS CORRIGAN: It does face Queens, but it's a couple of miles away, so it's pretty low-level lighting.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay, alright.

So let's--

JESS CORRIGAN: We're also by the way going to do a bird-friendly design, so the lights will-- you know, exterior lighting will go off at a certain point at night, except for probably one side.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. Alright. What park land improvements have you committed to, both Ferry Point Park and beyond? And are they specifically in District-- Community Board 10, District 13, and what parks will receive upgrades?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: So, Council Member, those are still under negotiation with New York City Parks. As I had mentioned, we do have a couple of land replacement options that we will assign ultimately to New York City Parks as replacements, approximately eight acres. We do have a broker we're working with that is still exploring directly acquiring and optioning-- potential replacement options within District 13. As you know, there's not a lot of vacant or available options for sale that are not, you know, single-family or multi-family homes. And the majority of actual improvements and dollars that are not replacement park land will directly go into Ferry Point Park. You know, I had listed within the presentation some of the

illustrative examples, but we are happy to work with you if there are others that you would like included or prioritized.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Yes, I would like to see some type of acre to acre park land, at least, like, recognized or identified within City Council District 13 Community Board 10. That is very important to me, especially with the increase of motor vehicle and air pollution. Can you just kind of explain to me this acquiring of land in City Island, being that City Island is over six miles away from this site?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Sure. So, we had cast a very wide net within the Bronx. So, the requirement of alienation is you have to have your replacement. It's got to be within the borough. We cast a wide net, and those were the most actionable options. There were none in District 13 or Community Board 10 near the site directly. So, understand the point that, you know, City Island is not is Ferry Point and Throgs Neck, but there was nothing available.

STANLEY SCHLEIN: If I may add, Chris? They're both-- as you well recognize since I am a

constituent of yours and from City Island-- they're both in Council District 13 and Community Board 10's jurisdiction.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay.

STANLEY SCHLEIN: But that's what we look for, and we would look for other sites as Chris had indicated that we can acquire.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Like, my real concern is air quality and to keep the green in the Bronx, being that we have the highest rates of asthma, and especially, if we're going to have an influx of traffic in that area, I'd like to see it as close as possible, even if there could be some trees planted throughout Throgs Neck and within the area. I would really like to see a new park proposed for the Throgs Neck area.

STANLEY SCHLEIN: We could be-- certainly, as part of our proposal, an aggressive tree planting commitment as part of this application process.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. Okay. If the application is approved by City Council, but doesn't get selected, what happens from there? I know it's kind of redundant.

ANITA LAREMONT: Right, it's just the status quo.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. With Ferry Point Park, would you be committed to making basic upgrades like restrooms, lightings, pathways, even if you do not get the license being that you are a neighbor?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: We're open to those discussions. You know, as such, we actually do have approval from FCRC to potentially discuss a longer extension of the license agreement to operate the golf course. Those are things actually that were mentioned in terms of what are some of the things that we could do in order to obtain a longer term extension. So, the answer's 100 percent all up to negotiation, of course.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. have there been any discussions with the administration about increasing the number of water taxis arriving at Ferry Point Park to give your customers an alternate means of access other than bikes?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Satchiya, do you want to--

SATCHIYA: [interposing] Sure.

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: cover that one?

SATCHIYA: We had discussions with EDC who are the current operator of the ferry service. They had said they don't have anything in the short term, but when we explained the project timeline, they said possibly. They did not give us a firm yes or a no.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. and how specifically are you starting to-- stating that you will improve access to the ferry? I know you had said-- mentioned it?

SATCHIYA: Currently, the access from the Ferry to-- is to the park.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Yeah.

SATCHIYA: As part of the park land improvement and if EDC is going to add ferry service, as part of park land permits that access roadway can be improved from the ferry terminal to the park, and since the MTA is potentially considering adding a bus stop at the park, there could be some linkages between the two. So, at this point, we have not heard anything specific, but I believe we are open to any suggestions that'll be provided.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay.

NICHOLAS TORTORELLA: And I may add one point. Satchiya mentioned it earlier, but as part of the Ring Road improvement, we would also be implementing an enhanced signalized pedestrian crossing between the parking facility on the interior side of Ring Road and the existing ferry stop to enhance connectivity between the two across the roadway even with the increased traffic.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Alright. Will Bally's provide funding or subsidies to expand city service to this ferry stop?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: So, I think the short answer is TBD if we can actually expand upon it. I think it's important to note here today, number one, that the gaming revenue that is the state's portion in tax, it's actually split between the state and the city. The city's use is 50 percent and they get towards property taxes and also towards public schools. And number two, today this park land, that 15.7 acres where the site sits today, it generates today zero dollars in property taxes. Based on our forecasts, you know, upon, you know, maturity, we believe and our consultants and experts say that this site will be paying upwards of \$30 to

\$40 million of annual property taxes. So, we will be providing an abundance of monetary assistance to public services for the City.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. Thank you. One major change you've proposed is the East/West overpass on Lafayette Avenue over the Hutchison River Parkway. Can you walk us through what it would look like and how the traffic-- how it would reduce traffic in a meaningful way here. Like, will the overpass be open to the public or just designed primarily for like casino access to loop around?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Sure. If we can pull that slide back up, I think it's helpful to see the illustrative view. And Satchiya, if you and Nick can walk everyone through that it would be helpful.

SATCHIYA: Sure. Just give us one minute.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay, can I ask another question--

UNIDENTIFIED: Do you know what slide number?

SATCHIYA: Yes, what slide number?

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: It is 16.

SATCHIYA: Okay, so the current overpass as you see in that would connect the northbound service road to the southbound service road. Essentially, it is designed in a way to let the traffic connect from the north to the south. In the existing condition as Chris mentioned earlier, you would go through those two signal lights intersection on Lafayette. With the overpass, you would essentially have them a different part to go over without affecting Lafayette Avenue's operations. It is right now being designed with the traffic under the existing conditions or related with the future conservative estimates as per DOT. So that would primarily help the casino users, but would also help the park users and the MTA who would essentially also operate the bridge from there.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. So, I know that you've identified the corner of Lafayette Avenue as I guess the site of increased traffic. Have you done any studies beyond Lafayette Avenue or Lafayette Avenue as a whole? Let's be honest, driving if the Whitestone Bridge is backed up, they cut through Lafayette Avenue, go through my community and go on to the Whitestone Bridge. There's two

entrances onto the Throgs Neck Bridge. Have you done studies over by Locust Point, Shur's [sp?] Avenue, Harding Avenue, because these are the complaints that my constituents raise to me all the time, and there is no casino here.

NICHOLAS TORTORELLA: I think in terms of the local intersection analysis, we have analyzed a portion of the Lafayette Avenue corridor, not just its intersections with the Hutchison River service roads, north and southbound. We have gone as far east as the Cross-Bronx extension intersections, because those would provide access to the Throgs Neck Bridge. Those intersections are all included in the traffic analysis that was conducted as part of the FEIS, and we have analyzed those cut-through routes, as you say, coming to and from the development site, but also based on our existing traffic data collection, the counts that we've conducted during the peak periods reflect these trends that you're talking about. So, we have conducted our traffic analysis that reflects those trends.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay, so what are the solutions?

NICHOLAS TORTORELLA: So, we have proposed a series of mitigation measures that are outlined again in the FEIS. Chris alluded to them earlier.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Over by Shurs [sp?] and Harding Avenue?

NICHOLAS TORTTORELLA: No, they are limited to the study area that we analyzed, and again, we stopped our study area in consultation with the City at the Cross-Bronx extension intersections because those are the intersections that provide ingress and egress from Throgs Neck.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: So, you're going to have an increase of traffic in my district and bringing the casino. I would like you to go beyond just that intersection and the little bit of Lafayette to the cross-Bronx. I'd like you to go to the other entrances of the Throgs Neck Bridge that are going to have increased traffic. So, it's just going to build on and get worse and more-- and we have to come up with solutions because I'm going to be-- keep getting the text messages and the phone calls and, you know, we got to figure out solutions on how it's going to extend throughout the community

and the district. And also, you did the study and you have an Amazon warehouse, a million square foot Amazon warehouse facility, at the footbed of the intersection. They're only operating at a quarter of a percent. What's going to happen when that increases to the full million?

NICHOLAS TORTORELLA: The analysis conducted-- sorry. I didn't want to interrupt there. The analysis conducted as part of the EIS considers the full build-out of the Amazon facility and the future condition. We do understand that it is operating at reduced capacity now, but the full capacity of the building has been assessed in the traffic analysis.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. One last question. Arclight, about the schools, we have a bunch of schools. We have St. Joseph's School of the Deaf. We have PS304, PX10, 10X, and 101. What's going to happen during construction? Are you going to test air quality, noise quality, and are you going to be in direct relations with the schools?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, I recognize you should have called up a full panel up front. Could you please state your name for your record?

MAX STEMBER-YOUNG: Max Stember-Young
with Langin Engineering.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Could you
please-- thank you. Do you swear to tell the truth
and nothing but the truth in response to Council
Member's questions?

MAX STEMBER-YOUNG: I do. Thank you. So,
the question about construction effects. During
ground intrusion activities, we will be implementing
what's called a community air monitoring program. So
we will set up air monitors both upstream and
downstream of the construction area so we will be
able to tell ambient conditions coming into our site,
and the conditions of the air leaving our site
downwind. And if any exceedances are noted during
that air quality monitoring, basically in real-time
it will be sent to the overseeing environmental
engineers table and there'll be a work stop order so
they can investigate what is causing the
exceedance, mitigate that condition and then continue
on with construction. So that will be ongoing
continuously during ground disturbance activities.
The schools are more than a thousand feet away from
the site, so even though we're monitoring air quality

at the edge of our site, we won't see exceedances a thousand feet away at the nearest schools or residences.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Thank you, Council Member Marmorato. There being no more questions, applicant team is now excused.

NICHOLAS TORTORELLA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

ANITA LAREMONT: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER JEWETT: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Alright, we have a very long day, so I'm going to say this once. We're going to give each witness two minutes to testify. When you hear the beautiful bell, can you please wrap it up in under 10 seconds, please. In-person, we have 30 people to testify on Bally's, and we're going to get to the 10 people that are online in approximately an hour. Following, we will start the MSMX hearing. okay? So, the first-- for members of the public here to testify, please note that witnesses will generally be called up in panels of

four. If you are a member of the public signed up to testify on the proposal, please standby when you hear your name being called and prepared to speak when I indicate that you may begin. Please also note that once all panelists in your group have completed their testimony, you will be excused as a group, and the next group of speakers will be introduced. Once removed, participants may continue to view the live stream broadcast of this hearing on the Council's website. Members of the public will be given two minutes to speak. Please do not begin until the Sergeant at Arms has submitted-- excuse me-- has started the clock. The following individuals who have signed up to testify should now come to the witness table. I'm going to call up Charles Sebastien [sp?], Carolina DiFuccia, Susan Caramia, and Max Zappone. Please excuse me if I butcher your name. The following panel will consist of Jose Acosta, Terrell Martin, Frances Territo, and Dean Rick. That will be the following panel. I believe some of them are up top, so they're coming out right now. I'm sorry, can you-- what's your name? Caroline? You can start.

CAROLINA DIFUCCIA: I'm Carolina DiFuccia and I have a small business down in Williamsbridge Road in the Bronx. I'm here to show my support for Bally's. I think-- I mean, this developer, I don't think there's going to ever be another developer to pump this much money into the community. I know there's a lot of questions about traffic and stuff, and hopefully you guys can get through that, but there's nothing that has been put into the Bronx. I've lived there my whole life. I raised my kids there, was born and raised there, and I never seen anyone come in and pump-- and try to fix our community. I mean, there's really nothing to do in the Bronx besides go out to eat and then you go home. Years ago, you would be able to go out and take a walk with your kids later on and go have a coffee or an ice cream. Two weeks ago, my kids after we ate, we're like let's go and get an ice cream. There's no one open. There's a Carvel [sp?], but there's no café. No one stays open anymore at night, so there's no foot traffic. We need people to come in, and I think Bally's being there will bring people in our community and spend money in the restaurants and maybe there'll be more businesses coming in to open

up and we'll have diversity of restaurants and café's and things like that instead of these chain commercial places like a Dunkin Donuts and a Starbucks. I really think that-- I don't-- to be honest, people will go out of their way to go to Brooklyn. They'll go out of their way to go to Queens, Manhattan, because there's places to go and walk around after. Who do you really know like, oh, let me go to the Bronx. I want to go to the Bronx and eat, besides Arthur Avenue or little-- yeah. I mean, I really think it would be a good thing for the Bronx to have Bally's there. I know there's a lot of other concerns which like I said hopefully you guys can work it out, but I don't think it's a bad thing.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much, Carolina. Next we'll hear from-- oh. Before we begin, I just want to state for the record-- no, Carolina, you can sit down. I just want to state for the record we've been joined by Council Member Salaam. Next, we'll hear from Charles.

CHARLES-SABASHTIAN BENSON II: Sorry about that. Good morning. My name is Charles-Sabashtian Benson II, and I'm a Bronx resident. I'm not against opportunity. I'm for real accountability,

and Bally's supported some nonprofits here, especially leading up to this project, and that's much appreciated. But I want to make sure that the support isn't conditional, that it doesn't vanish the moment the project is approved. They mentioned that 70 to 75 percent of the new jobs will go to the Bronx residents. I want to know, like, who's overseeing this to make sure it actually happens and same goes for the \$625 million in community benefits, the park upgrades and the ownership promises. Those were all listed under the title community benefits agreement in the presentation, but is there a signed contract? If this is real, there should be something enforceable. If these promises are to be believed, then we need it in writing. We need a signed community benefit agreement or at the very least, independent oversight and the power to monitor delivery and hold Bally's accountable for-- over time for these benefits that they saying they're bringing to the community. If you're asking to rezone public land and hand over part of our park to a private developer, then the community deserve legal guarantees, not just slides and good intentions. I urge you to vote for this proposal if and if the--

and only if these community benefits can be guaranteed and there's oversight for these things. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Charles. Next, Susan.

SUSAN CALAMIA: Okay. Good morning, Chair Riley and members of the Zoning Subcommittee. My name is Susan Calamia and I'm a proud senior resident of Fort Schuyler House in the Bronx. At Fort Schuyler House, we see firsthand how economic hardship affects our neighbors, especially seniors. Many of us live on fixed incomes and when the economy suffers, it becomes harder to afford even the basics, housing, medical care, food, and transportation. That's why I'm here today to speak in strong support of the Bally's Ferry Point project. This project will bring thousands of good jobs and a much-needed economic boost to our borough. A stronger economy benefits everyone, but especially seniors who depend on stable services and a well-supported community to age with dignity and comfort. Bally's has also pledged to reinvest in the local community, including funding for programs that directly support seniors, low-income facilities and neighborhood organizations.

And for many of us at Fort Schuyler House, we're also looking forward to the entertainment and social opportunities this development would bring. It's not just about jobs or buildings, it's about creating a place where people of all ages, including seniors, can connect, socialize and enjoy life in the community. This is the kind of thoughtful development that uplifts everyone. I urge the Subcommittee to vote yes and help bring this project to life. Thank you all for listening this morning.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Susan.

Next, Max?

MAX ZAPPONE: Good morning and my name is Max Zappone. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak. I'm from the community. I've lived there all my life. There's a few things that worry me. The presentation was great, but the traffic in my opinion is horrendous on the Hutch and nothing Bally has said that they're going to do will make it any better. That's number one. Number two, the Bronx is a poor borough, and I feel that bringing Bally's, a gaming institution, to the Bronx is not going to do anything, but just bring more misery. Number three, everybody's saying that it's great that

they're going to build a casino and they're going to bring-- you know, the area's going to benefit from it, but then I look at all the other areas that there are casinos: Atlantic City, Las Vegas, Yonkers, although it's not a full-- just slots right now, but the area hasn't benefitted from it. It's gotten worse, the surrounding areas. Fourth, they say that they're going to give all this money to the surrounding communities, but is that money they're going to give if they make money? What if they don't make the projected income that they think is going to come in? Then the community should know that money's never going to be invested in the community. And last, we're giving up park land. We already live in a concrete jungle. My kids play on concrete. There's no grass. We're not in Westchester. We're not in Long Island. So, we're just giving up more park land. The air quality is going to get even worse. These are all things that we need to take in consideration. And one last thing, actually. I've been to all these meetings where the community was there, and they're all saying I don't want this casino. I don't want it. Okay? So, if the people who live there don't want it, why's everyone else

pushing for this? So, I urge for you all to vote against it, because the community does not want it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Max. Are there any questions for this applicant panel? Council Member Marmorato?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Hi, Charles. How you doing? Thank you for coming and speaking today. Can you just explain to me which nonprofits Bally's has funded locally?

CHARLES-SABASHTIAN BENSON II: So far I know of Travel with Chaz [sp?], and I think I've maybe seen a couple nonprofits here, but I'm not so sure. But as of right now, Travel with Chaz.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: You said Travel Jazz?

CHARLES-SABASHTIAN BENSON II: Travel with Chaz, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: With Chaz? And where is that nonprofit located?

CHARLES-SABASHTIAN BENSON II: In the Bronx. We're like centered out of Fifth Soundview [sp?].

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: So, that's not anywhere close to where the facility is. So, they're-- okay.

CHARLES-SABASHTIAN BENSON II: Not really [inaudible]

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: That's what I was just curious. So, it's on the other side of Bronx they're funding programs. Okay. and thank you.

CHARLES-SABASHTIAN BENSON II: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: And Susan, hi, how are you? Good to see you. So, I know that you said they're going to offer benefits to allow you to age in place with dignity and comfort. What kind of benefits were they that they were offering you?

SUSAN CALAMIA: I'm sorry. Repeat that.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: You had mentioned in your speech that they're going to offer benefits to help you age with dignity and comfort in your home. Like,--

SUSAN CALAMIA: [interposing] Well--

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: [interposing] What kind of benefits were they offering?

SUSAN CALAMIA: Well, you know, a lot of the seniors, a lot of them can't use walkers, they don't-- they can't walk a lot. They use wheel, you know, the wheelchair things. They like to go to the casinos.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Oh, okay.

SUSAN CALAMIA: Like, basically they love to go to Atlantic City, Wind Creek in Pennsylvania by bus. So, if there was a casino there, they'd obviously go to the closer one without all the transportation and all the--

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: [interposing] Okay. I thought they were building a facility, like a retirement community or something, but--

SUSAN CALAMIA: [interposing] Yeah, it would help them a lot.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: that's what that meant.

SUSAN CALAMIA: That's what they spend their money on.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. Okay, great. Thank you. Good.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. This app--
- excuse me. This witness panel is now excused.

Before we call the next witness panel, to the online people that are testifying, there are some people online that we don't recognize because they did not sign up to register, so if you did not sign up to register and somebody shared this link with you, you will not be able to testify if you do not register at council.nyc.gov/landuse. Once again, if you are online and somebody shared this link with you, please register at council.nyc.gov/landuse. If you are unable to register, you can always submit written testimony to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you. The next applicant-- excuse me. The next panel we're going to call on consists of Jose Acosta, Terrell Martin, Fraces Territo [sp?], and Dean Rick. The following panel after that will consist of Martin Dolgae, Michelle Cristofaro, Max Steinberg Young [sp?], and Juliano Verantes [sp?]. We'll begin first with Jose Acosta.

JOSE ACOSTA: Good morning. My name is Jose Acosta. I'm proud to be member of the Hotel and Gaming Trade Council, a resident of the Bronx. I'm here to behalf [sic] of my union and my community to testify in support of Bally's Ferry Point proposal. This project is an incredible opportunity for the

Bronx and all New York because they will create thousands of good-paying hospitality jobs like mine at a time when we need them the most. Bally's will be one of the largest employers in the Bronx and has commit to investing millions of dollars in the community to improve infrastructure and invest in our quality of life. Now more than ever, hard-working New Yorkers need access to quality jobs with benefits, and this project will be providing. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Jose.

Terrell?

TERRELL MARTIN: Good evening, all. Good morning, afternoon, wherever we are. My name is Terrell Martin. Good afternoon, Mr. Chair, Committee. I'm a proud Bronx native, born, raised and still residing. I'm representative with the New York City District Council of Carpenters. I'm here today to back the Bally's project in the Bronx. Excuse my voice. Carpenters, we do a lot of rallying to protect union jobs, so my voice is a little hoarse. This \$4 billion development at Ferry Point Park isn't just a casino and a hotel, it's a job creator. Construction workers like myself will of course benefit from the good-paying union jobs at

1 this project-- this project will create in the
2 development stage, but the powerful impact of the
3 project stretches beyond the construction site and
4 I'm sure HTC can attest to that. This casino's
5 strategic location at a key nexus between boroughs
6 would serve as an economic catalyst for the Bronx and
7 beyond. We're talking about thousands of good-paying
8 jobs for our community, both in construction and
9 long-term operations. These jobs means stability for
10 our families. I'm from the Bronx. I don't know if I
11 said that already. I did. I'm just kidding. But I
12 remember August of 2014 like it was yesterday. We
13 were able to be proud of the Bronx and no longer go
14 to Yonkers for the mall. We got the big plaza
15 shopping center. I remember the pride and the amount
16 of work that was created. I think it was around 70
17 percent like Bally's is proposing, and that's what
18 this project is to me. It's Bay Plaza times 10 for
19 the Bronx. Bally's is investing in us with the \$625
20 million community benefits package, greenspaces as
21 well. They're improving our parks, rebuilding golf
22 facilities. This project will boost local businesses.
23 I ask that you stand with me, stand with the
24 carpenters in supporting this Bally's project.
25

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Terrell.

TERRELL MARTIN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Frances Torato [sp?],
Frances? Sorry, Frances, one second. Just talk into
the mic.

FRANCES TERRITO: I'm for the project. I
believe that it's work for us people. I mean, it's--
I don't know it's-- it's job improvement. It's for
us elderly. It's going to bring in revenue, you know,
life for us. I live in Fort Schuyler, so that area
basically is desolate. It's not doing any purpose for
us. So I feel, you know, you could come over. I
feel that Bally's will come over all these because
they have to, and I believe it's a positive thing for
the Bronx, honestly. That's all I have.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Frances.
Dean?

DEAN RICKS: Hello? Good morning, Chair
Riley and members of the Zoning Committee. My name
is Dean Ricks. I live and I'm a homeowner in Throgs
Neck. I'm also the President of Parkchester Little
League. Our league has been founded in 1956 with just
12 teams, and today we've grown to 18 teams across
five divisions with boys and girls age four to age

18. Parkchester community-- we serve the Parkchester community with pride, promoting not just baseball but character, leadership, community spirit. We're proud to be a charter member of little league and RBI baseball and to have been the first league in the area to join the Urban Initiative program back in 2005. That partnership helped us to secure and renovate fields and now call home. But even that, even with that progress for Bronx youth leagues have faced new challenges, especially when it comes to resources and field access and funding for year-round programing. We were thrilled to hear about Bally's firm commitment to invest in parks and recreation here in the Bronx, including \$100 million for park land improvements and replacement. That kind of investment is exactly what youth leagues like ours need to grow and thrive. At Parkchester Little League our mission is about more than just baseball. We're building discipline, sportsmanship and life skills. We offer off-season programs focused on fighting childhood obesity and providing community-wide baseball training at Lehman High School during the winter months. We believe that Bally's project would uplift the communities like ours by

strengthening the very infrastructure we rely on,
parks, fields, public space. It will also bring
jobs, economic activity that will help families,
small businesses across the Bronx. We urge this
subcommittee to support the project. Let's make sure
that our young-- let's make sure that our young
athletes have fields and opportunities they deserve.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thanks, Dean. Is
there any questions for this applicant panel?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Yes, I do.
Jose--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Council
Member Marmorato?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Thank you,
Chair. Jose, so where do you work currently?

JOSE ACOSTA: Where do I work?
Manhattan.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Manhattan.

JOSE ACOSTA: But I live like from--
like, three minutes from the project.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay.

JOSE ACOSTA: Live at the Bronx.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. Now, would your union also be working at any of these other proposed casino sites?

JOSE ACOSTA: [inaudible] You know. I think it's a good idea and the best project, you know, to be at the Bronx, opportunities to bring more people, you know, to work and, you know, especially like I say they're going to have more better pay with the local [inaudible] things going to be, you know, [inaudible] the project.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay, thank you. Thank you.

JOSE ACOSTA: I think it's a good thing.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. And Dean, hi.

DEAN RICKS: How you doing?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Where does Parkchester Little League currently use their field?

DEAN RICKS: Okay, so currently we use our field in 1500 Waters [sic] Place, and we don't-- we also use our senior field at Field of Dreams on Randall and White Plains. So, we use both.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. Do you know that currently at Waters Place they are redoing

the both ball fields there? So, they're in the process of renovating them.

DEAN RICKS: Well, not exactly. That's not true to word.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Yes, that is exactly true. The Simone Corporation is redoing the two ball fields on the property.

DEAN RICKS: Okay, so currently-- currently they're at an impasse with some remediations that have to be done, and the projects was-- has not taken off and been nowhere near started for the last few years.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: It's their next phase. So, it will be coming soon. So, sit tight with that. Now, did they offer you any financial number to redo your ball fields?

DEAN RICKS: Well, they didn't-- they offered at a-- they offered to replace the field as the field that they're going to use that space, that land space.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: On Waters Place?

DEAN RICKS: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. Are you aware that they offered \$35 million to Pelham Bay Little League to redo their entire field?

DEAN RICKS: No, I'm not aware of that.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Oh, you better get as much as you can out of this.

DEAN RICKS: Okay. Well, hopefully.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. Alright.

DEAN RICKS: I really hope so.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Alright, thank you witness panel. You're excused. The next panel to come up consists of Martin Dolgae [sp?], Michelle Cristofaro, Max Steinberg Young, and Juliana Berentes [sp?]. Okay, the following will consist of Vincent Albanese, Bob Jaen, Ray West, and Shakira Crawford [sp?]. We'll begin first with Martin.

MARTIN DOLGOW: Hello?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead, Martin.

MARTIN DOLGOW: Good morning, Chair Riley and distinguished members of the Zoning Subcommittee. My name is Martin Dolgow and I've been a proud resident of this community for over 40 years. I

raised my family here, served as the Director of the local Chamber of Commerce, and have been deeply involved in my church and in my civic life for decades. This neighborhood isn't just where I live, it's where I built my life, my relationships, and my purpose. That's why I'm here today to voice my strong support for the Bally's Ferry Point project. As someone who has spent years advocating for local businesses and economic growth, I see this proposal for what it truly is, a transformational investment in the Bronx. It will bring thousands of good-paying jobs, support small businesses, and generate the kind of development that lifts entire neighborhoods. I also want to highlight something that doesn't always get the attention it deserves, public safety. Bally's has committed to making real investments in safety and infrastructure which is something that matters deeply to me and my neighbors. A safer, better lit, more accessible community benefits everyone, especially our seniors, families and small businesses. This project is about creating opportunity, dignity and long-term stability for the people who have made this community what it is, and for those of us who have been here for decades, we

welcome the future with open arms. I urge the subcommittee to support this proposal. Let's move forward together and bring meaningful growth and security to the Bronx. Thank you.

MICHELLE CRISTOFARO: Good morning, Chair Riley and members of the Zoning Subcommittee. My name is Michelle Cristofaro and I'm a resident of Council District 13. I'm 13 years old, turning 14 soon, and I'm proud to say that I'll be an incoming freshman at Preston High School this fall. It's been my dream for a long time to attend Preston. I've worked hard in school to make that dream a reality, and I was honored to be the salutatorian of my graduating class. When I found out that Preston might close, I was devastated. My friends and I had already gone through so much during COVID and it finally felt like things were back on track. We were excited about high school and starting fresh, but hearing that the school might shut down took all of that away. We were heartbroken, but then we heard the incredible news, Preston High School would stay open. Thanks to the efforts of the community and the critical support of the Bally's Foundation, our school was saved. I can't describe how relieved and

excited I was. I meant that I could still follow my dream and attend the school that means so much to me and so many others. I'm really looking forward to the next four years at Preston. I plan to work hard, stay focused and make the most of this opportunity. I'm grateful to be here today to share how much the Bally's Foundation has helped students like me by making sure Preston High School can stay open and serve future generations. The Bally's resort is going to create great-paying jobs, jobs that provide pensions, healthcare and daycare, everything a family needs to prosper in the borough of the Bronx. Bally's is our future and it will enable families to be able to send their children to top quality schools like Preston High School. Thank you.

SARAH COLLADO: Good morning, Chair Riley and members of the Zoning Subcommittee. My name is Sarah Collado and I'm a resident of Council District 13. I'm 13 years old, turning 14 soon. I am an incoming Preston student and grateful to Bally Foundation for saving our school. Preston was my first choice for academics and all of my sports programming. I'm now able to play volleyball and basketball fulltime while learning from a top-notch

school. I'm a first-generation Dominican-American and I fully understand what this opportunity means to me. [speaking Spanish]

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Max Steinberg? Max Steinberg Young? Okay. Thank you. Any questions for this panel? Alright, you're excused. Thank you so much. Next, Vincent Albanese, Bob Jaen-- I don't know if I'm pronouncing it right-- It's Bob Jaen. Thank you, Bob. Ray West and Shakira Crawford. Vincet, you may begin.

VINCENT ALBANESE: My name is Vincent Albanese, Executive Director of the New York State Laborers Political Action Committee, and the Director of Policy and Public Affairs for our organizing fund. I'm here today on behalf of the New York State Laborers, LIUNA, representing over 40,000 members in this state, over 16,000 of them residing here in New York City. I'm here today to express our unequivocal support that the City of New York and this City Council approve this ULURP. We believe that his project and its development group have and will continue to demonstrate a genuine commitment to mitigating any potential negative impacts, and provide countless positive impacts for our members in

the community. While we clearly support all of the proposed viable casino bids that have made commitments to use union labor, we felt it necessary to speak here today to particularly highlight the exceptional commitment that Bally's has made to the laborers and the unionized workers across the country. Bally's has time and time again proven their partnership with organized labor, creating tens of thousands of unionized jobs which are the backbone of our middle class communities throughout the United States. We see no reason that given their track record this project should it be selected will not also provide those same benefits to our members and the economic wellbeing of the borough. However, maybe most importantly this project will provide life-changing work opportunities, not just to our existing members, but to the next generation of laborers in the Bronx, a borough that is often left out of major infrastructure investments. This project potentially represents a historic moment in which the benefits of union membership will be available to countless New Yorkers and new workers in and around the surrounding project site. Without investments of this scale, we fear the economic inequalities that exist across the

borough will continue to perpetuate. We believe that if Bally's given a fair and unbiased opportunity to address all impacts, it will clearly demonstrate the unprecedented benefits this project will provide. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Vincent. Thank you, Vincent. Bob? Bob, can you turn your mic on, please? There you go.

BOB JAEN: Okay. My name is Bob Jaen. I am the Executive Director of Throgs Neck Business Improvement District, representing the affected area for Bally's proposal, property owners, private homeowners, and business owners. The Bronx faces a high unemployment rate of 6.1 percent with Bronx County having the worst job market in the state. A survey shows 40 percent of the respondents are experiencing multiple economic hardships. Bally's proposal offers a solution, creating over 1,200 jobs within the organization. Modern casinos now include lodging, restaurants, shops, entertainment, attracting more tourism dollars to retail and dining that they do to gaming. Though Bally's casino is pending, it's positive impact is evident. Operating a golf course on the site, Bally's has improved the

area and provided a free shuttle bus to connect the community with the commercial districts, addressing poor public transit. MTA when we reached out to them, myself and Senator Nathalia Fernandez, turned down any possible connection to expanding the existing bus routes that they had. Bally's came through, asked what we wanted. We asked and we wanted transit from Ferry Point Park to the first commercial corridor which was our BID, and they turned around, and you now have transit from Ferry Point Park through the Throgs Neck BID to the Westchester Square Train and back, and it's absolutely free to everyone. Bally's has been a great neighbor saving Preston's Girl's High School from closure and committing to local hiring and business calibrations. This development is a boost that the Bronx and Throgs Neck needs. So, I'll leave you with this, ask yourself a question. When you want to build something, you need a good foundation, you need good partners, you need good workers. Nothing better than union workers. I was a union official for 35 years. So, make it easy on yourself, urge and support the proposal. It'll work for us. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Ray?

RAY WEST: Good afternoon. my name is Ray West. I'm the Business Representative for the Bronx for Local Three in the IBW Electricians. I'm also a resident of Throgs Neck. I grew up there my whole life. So, I have a little bit of-- two different perspectives when it comes to the project. For me, the labor standards that are attached to this project, and the union being the development-- the construction, the maintenance, all of that stuff is unprecedented labor standards. It's a no-brainer for the building trades and for us as a union. For the neighborhood, the attention to detail that Bally's has given to all the things that are problematic and all the wants and the needs and the difference between those two things. They have always tried to put forth and recognize everything the neighborhood is looking for within their means, and in this climate of development, especially in the Bronx, very rarely have I come across any developers that really care about the neighborhood in any way. They usually just taking the lowest price and getting the job done, and being from the Bronx and dealing with construction, I really support this project, and I

thank Bally's for all of their work towards the neighborhood. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Council Member Marmorato? You're excused. Thank you. Next, we'll have Mariella Gonzalez [sp?], James Gray, Anthony Mercado, and Jahira Flores. The following panel will consist of Marques Payne, Catherine MacKay, Jandida Rosa, and Sarah Callado. That will be the following panel. You may begin, sir. Yes.

ANTHONY MERCADO: Good afternoon. I am Anthony Mercado. I'm an organizer with the International Brotherhood Electrical Workers.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: If I-- come one. Sorry, if I called your name, please come up to the panel. Mariella Gonzalez, James Gray, and Jahira Flores [sp?] Go ahead Mr. Mercado, sorry about that.

ANTHONY MERCADO: I'm a lifelong resident of the Bronx. My parents were union workers in the Bronx. My mom was a lifelong retired-- in the Baker's Union. My stepdad was at Hunts Point. We fully support this Bally's proposal. We speak today about redevelopment. In my terms of being an organizer and a former sharp [sic] student in the Bronx, we don't call these jobs. I take a little

offense. We speak more about careers. We start-- all the building trades behind me, I support them, too. We believe that these are career jobs that provide sustainable wages, jobs with integrity. Money goes back to our community. We live here. I do not commute from another borough. I'm still here. I'm 57 years old, born and raised in south Bronx. I live in the Soundview area, and our office is in the Throgs Neck area, closer to Schuylerville at Bruckner Tremont. We truly support jobs at this development. It's critical to us. Not long ago, it was the Yankee Stadium was probably the biggest job at one time, and then many decades before that it was the Hunt Square Market where I got my first job as a shop steward in the Hunts Square Market, UFCW. We stand firmly with development of Bronx. We're tired of being the bottom of the barrel. We want development. We want to rise to that occasion. Thank you, Bally's, for all you've done. I yield my time.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Mariella? Mariella Gonzalez? What's your name?

JAHIRA FLORES: Jahira.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Jahira? And your name, ma'am? What's your name? Oh, you're the next

panel, alright. You can just stay there. It's alright. Ms. Flores, go ahead.

JAHIRA FLORES: Good morning, Chair Riley and members of the Zoning Subcommittee. My name is Jahira and I'm a resident of the Bronx and someone who deeply cares about the long-term prosperity of our community. I'm here today to voice my strong support for the Bally's Ferry Point Casino project. One of the most important aspects of this project is its commitment to creating union jobs, good-paying, stable positions that come with benefits and opportunities for advancement. For too long our community has faced economic instability and too many of our neighbors are stuck in jobs that don't pay enough to support a family. Bally's is offering something different, a pathway to sustainable careers, not just short-term employment, and by partnering with union training programs they're ensuring that the Bronx residents are ready to step into these jobs and build their real futures. This project is also-- will help boost small businesses, increase foot traffic from tourists, and visitors will help local restaurants, bodegas, barber shops, and countless of other businesses in the area. It's

the kind of economic ripple effect that can lift an entire neighborhood. This isn't just a casino, it's a chance for the Bronx to grow with dignity and opportunity. I urge you to support the Bally's proposal and bring this investment to life. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. James?

JAMES GRAY: Morning, Chairman Riley and members of the Zoning Subcommittee. My name is James C.B. Gray, former Vice President of the National Action Network Bronx Chapter, currently President of the Arc of Justice Bronx Chapter. Throughout the years I've served in the Bronx community by providing resources on many different levels. I'm not an expert on zoning in any capacity, but from my understanding, what was once a vacant landfill could possibly be a thriving casino that could not only bring hundreds of jobs to the Bronx, but also create an opportunity to strengthen the local small business community in the Bronx as well, and I understand that there's going to be some kickback on both sides. But one of the things that makes us resilient as leaders is the opportunity to resolve issues in order to accommodate any opportunity to provide resources for

the people of the Bronx. I think the people of the Bronx have suffered throughout the years immensely by being deprived of resources and opportunities, and I think that right now we have an opportunity to right the wrongs, to make things better and to revitalize the infrastructure on all levels. I'm in favor of Bally's coming to the Bronx, and I would urge anybody who has the opportunity or a say-so or decision that could be heard or penetrated to do the right thing. There's a lot of people that are depending on better jobs and better opportunities, and I'm someone who supports that. Nobody's paying me to say anything. I came here because I'm really passionate about the Bronx, and I've served a lot of time to provide resources in the Bronx. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. And Janida Rosa? You could go ahead, because you're right here, Ms. Rosa. Hold on, Ms. Rosa. Let me just make sure you turn it on. One second.

JANIDA ROSA: Throgs Neck neighborhood-- I am here today in support of the licensing for the casino. The benefits to our community will be increased in employment opportunities, security for our neighborhood, and independent senior community.

It will provide wide range of employment opportunity year-round. We will have great intervention by the Police Department. Seniors will be able to go to the casino without relying on family or chart [sic] bus [sic] to go to the casino. We could go our own. For all these reasons I stated, I move for a yes to vote for the licensing for the casino.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Ms. Rosa.
Council Member Marmorato?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: [inaudible]
What's your first name again?

JAHIRA FLORES: Jahira.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Jahira, where do you live exactly in the Bronx?

JAHIRA FLORES: I live in Throgs Neck on Harding and Graff [sp?].

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. In the back by--

JAHIRA FLORES: The new ferry point.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. how would you feel if they opened access to the casino on Harding Avenue? Would you still be for the casino?

JAHIRA FLORES: That's something that I will have to consider. Actually, my family and I

have spoken about that. We know that it will bring increased traffic to our side, but we're hoping that Bally's and the City can work something out for those neighborhood residents.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. Thank you.

JAHIRA FLORES: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member. This panel's excused. Is a Mariella Gonzalez here? Mariella Gonzalez? Okay. Ms. Catherine, you could come on up. It's your time now. Ms. Catherine MacKay, Marques Payne, Donald Brathwaite, and Gilberto Constantinez. If you hear your name, you could please come up. Donald Brathwaite from IBEW and Gilberto? Thank you. I'm going to also call up Lauren Patterson and Judi Durso. Lauren? And Judi Durso? Alright, Ms. Catherine, you may begin. Ms. Catherine, you could press the button. Thanks.

CATHERINE MACKAY: Hi. I represent Doctor Anderson Torres at Regional Aid for Interim Needs. As a proud Bronxite, administrator for a not-for-profit organization, an active member of this community, I am writing to express my strong support for the

proposed Bally's Casino project at Ferry Point. I have been part of the fabric of the Bronx community for the past 55 years and leader of the RAIN organization for the past 13 years. I have always believed in the potential of our borough to grow and thrive. The Bally's proposal represents a unique opportunity to bring substantial economic investment to the Bronx creating good paying jobs, boasting local tourism, and enhancing the infrastructure in ways that will benefit residents and small businesses alike. The casino would not only attract new visitors to our borough, but also help strengthen the local community by increasing responsible consumer spending in surrounding neighborhoods. The proposed investments in transportation and public space improvements are long overdue and will help make the Bronx an even better place to live, work and do business. Thank you for your continued advocacy for Bronx communities. I respectfully urge you to support the Bally's casino proposal and ensure that Bronx businesses like mine are included in the conversation as the project moves forward. With that said, I am a lifelong Bronxite. I do live off of Harding and Pennyfield, and with all due respect, the problem

with the overflow traffic started when they opened the bridge access 24 hours a day. If that was closed, that would change. And I do personally support the Bally's project.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Marques?

MARQUES PAYNE: Thank you, Chairman, and thank you, Council Members. Hi, my name is Marques Payne. I live and own a business in the Bronx, and I work with community organizations. I'm in support of the Bally's development proposal because I think it's a great opportunity for the borough as a whole. I'm a huge advocate for economic development opportunities. I believe that this-- we're in the midst of a huge win and we're fortunate to have this opportunity of this magnitude. And considering the investment that they've already made in the community, I believe it's an exemplary community benefits agreement. I mean, what they've already done with Preston-- there's been plenty of schools that wish they could have been saved by some private funding. And plus, I think the \$625 million or even half of that is better than anything that we're getting from the Yankees, and I love the Yankees, you know what I'm saying? Additionally, I believe that

City Council Members and elected officials will be able to steer that fund in terms of a resource and be able to give it out in the Bronx as a whole. As a parent of two daughters and a former Membership Director for the Bronx Chamber of Commerce, I've seen firsthand how powerful business support and investment is in our community, and that's why I'm here to strongly support the Bally's Ferry Point project. I think the project isn't about bringing entertainment space or things of that nature, I think it's about bringing opportunity. I believe it'll boost our local economy, create new jobs, and bring resource and careers that families depend on, especially if they're able to hire within the Bronx and within the district as the stipulation that they seem to be committed to. Additionally, I think it'll raise the profile of our community which is really important to me, and I want my kids to be able to inherit a borough that's boasting and thriving and doing something great, not just, you know, reaching for straws and surviving. And finally, as it pertains to the land use which is what you guys are voting on, I think the opportunity to improve the waterfront property and transform the community is

something we can't pass up. You know, just entering into the borough, I think it's supposed to be beautiful, and adding subsequent roads and [inaudible] is something that they need. So, I'm in support of it. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Lauren?

LAUREN PATTERSON: Hello, good afternoon, everybody. I'm speaking on behalf of the people I work with. I don't much about the zoning stuff. I know about children of the community, though. I know that when there was nobody working in the parks clearing the parks, a couple people from Travel with Chaz, that you asked about earlier, was in the parks cleaning it for free right over there across the street from Kips Bay. Very few other people were doing that. I know that the food that's given away on Throgs Neck in front of PS72, we do that often. That's Travel with Chaz. I know that the [inaudible] thing that leaves from by PS72, that's us that takes them [inaudible] every year. Just because yeah, we may be housed in different part of the Bronx, we are the Bronx. We look out for Throgs Neck. We look out for every part of the Bronx. So, if it's good for any part of the Bronx, it's good for all of the

Bronx. So, to say oh, because we're housed or we run a program in a different part of the Bronx that we're separate, I don't understand that. I thought we all stood up together. So, I stand up and say if this is going to be an opportunity for us to work together to create opportunities for all people in the Bronx, then let's do it.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Donald?

DONALD BRATHWAITE: Good afternoon. My name is Donald Brathwaite. I'm a resident of the Bronx for 36 years. I'm a member of Local Three for 26 years. I reside in Co-op City. I'm for the Bally's project. It's going to bring union paying careers to the Bronx. We got apprenticeship. They talk about people from the community. We got a big community in Throgs Neck from Local Three and from the different trades. So, it's going to bring money in the community, and like everybody said the Bronx is the poorest borough, one of the-- this is a big developer coming to the Bronx. I'm for it.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Judi?

JUDI DURSO: Thank you. Good morning, Chair Riley and members of the Zoning Committee. My name is Judi Durso. I'm a lifelong resident of the

Bronx. I beat you. I'm here 65 years+, and I want to express my full support for the Bally's Ferry Point Casino project because it brings to us more than just jobs. It brings vision. This project has the power to turn the Bronx into a regional hub, a place where people come not just to visit, but to experience our culture, our food, our community, our diversity. With high-quality entertainment, dining, and events, Bally's will help reshape how people view our borough, turning an overlooked area, which is an understatement, into a sought-after destination. For residents this means more than excitement. It means access to cultural programming, live performances, family-friendly events and local partnerships that bring vibrancy to our public life. I also appreciate Bally's commitment to doing this responsibly. Their investment in responsible gaming programs and support for those impacted by gambling shows a thoughtful approach to our community development. The Bronx which we love deserves to shine, and this project can help us do just that. I urge the Subcommittee to vote in favor and help bring this wonderful vision to life.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Before you go-- Mariella Gonzalez, for the last time if you're here please let us know. If there's anyone else in here in-person that wants to testify on Bally's in-person please see one of the Sergeant at Arms to fill out a speaker's card, okay? and if Mariella Gonzalez is here, please let us know if you are here. Okay. Before we go to Gilberto, the first online panel I will call after this will consist of Carmello Sottile, Carole DeChiara, Grace Marrero, and David Abreu. Okay. Gilberto, you may begin.

GILBERTO CONSTANTINEZ: Hello. My name-- good morning everyone. I mean, good afternoon. My name is Gilberto Constantinez, Jr. I'm in favor of this project. I was born, raised, and still current resident of the Bronx, the south Bronx to be more specific. I was blessed with the opportunity to be part of Local Three and have a living wage career, and I entered to a five and a half year apprenticeship program to where I'm proud to say I've worked in parts of New York City and Westchester, and as an apprentice I'm able to-- with my friends and family, like little kid point out and say I work there, I helped build that. You don't know how proud

I am and feel like a little kid saying wow, I helped build that. I didn't get the opportunity to work in Yankee Stadium or other recognized places, but that's what the Local has able-- was able to let me do, and this project has many benefits, including like my fellow union members or other tradesmen and women able to do so. There's a lot of benefits for the Bronx. And the benefits for the Bronx residents casino project, living wage union jobs with benefits and strong worker protections, worker opportunity for Bronx residents, access to apprenticeships and training programs provided by the unions which I'm a good example of, workforce development funding for long-term career support-- not jobs, careers-- past economic mobility through stable skilled trade careers. We're skilled, trained workers. Safer working conditions and unionized job sites, in short, Bronx residents will gain access to living wage, long-term union careers with training and support. Again, I live-- I was born and raised, and I'm able to-- if I'm giving the opportunity to work in the Bronx, I'm able to reinvest, because I'll spend in the Bronx also. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Council Member Marmorato?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: I'll be very quickly. Catherine, the Community Board voted to have that access opened by the Throgs Neck Bridge. So that was done a long time ago before I was in office, just to let you know, and it has created a lot of traffic and confusion within the district, and it's unfortunate. Now, I just want to ask the union guys-- being that you guys do live in the Bronx, are you guaranteed to work in this facility, or it just however your company sends you? Like, how does that-- I mean, I don't really know how unions work in that sense. But you have like a preference being that you do live in the borough?

DONALD BRATHWAITE: Yes, we have the control to put specific residents on those jobs. So they can put the Bronx residents on those jobs.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. Alright, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. This panel is excused. Thank you for testifying. The last in-person panel we're going to call up before we transition to online, in-person, Jacqueline Torres,

Raul Rivera, and Lauren Gurrera [sp?]. We'll begin first with Jacqueline Torres.

JACQUELINE TORRES: Good afternoon. My name is Jacqueline Torres. Thank you for having me here today. I am a resident of Throgs Neck, and I graduated right there at Lehman High School, so I'm very connected to the community. I'm here to represents the thousands of residents I had the pleasure of speaking to regarding this and other issues within the district. As already discussed, traffic, public safety, and infrastructure are major concerns. My comments are geared more toward those who are in the position to negotiate the project. Funding should be earmarked specifically for public safety, as well as repair to infrastructure that is already struggling within the districts. The homeowners and residents should benefit from the funding directly so that quality of life can improve. For example, repairs to homes that currently get water into their basement every time that it rains. Also, critical to residents are the implementation of the enforcement measures to ensure that those-- that that funding gets to where it's set to go. As has been testified already today, we have seen that there

have been projects and over the years those entities will not, you know-- the enforcement measures were not there to make them keep their side of the deal. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Ms. Torres. I'm also going to call up Alyssa Topa [sp?] to testify. Alyssa? Next we'll hear from Lauren.

LAURA GUERRIERO: Laura.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Laura, excuse me.

LAURA GUERRIERO: It's okay. So my name is Laura Guerriero and I'm speaking today in favor of the Bally's Casino project. I'm a lifelong resident of the Throgs Neck Country Club community and publisher of the Bronx Times Reporter. During the nearly 40 years I've been associated with this borough-wide newspaper, I've witnessed the commitment of the Bronx leadership and residents and their efforts to improve the borough's housing, educational opportunities, and skilled workforce. So many times business expansion has bypassed the Bronx, chain stores, banks, so on, coming from Manhattan then going into Westchester and ignoring the Bronx and it's 1.4 million residents. The Bally's Casino project is an opportunity for the Bronx to reverse

the economic slight it has endured for countless decades. When I imagine the potential of this project's immense effect on employment, the \$100 million in park improvements and the annual \$10 million+ benefits package, I believe the Bally's Casino project clearly delivers the greatest economic impact of all the suitors for the three casino licenses. Of course, Bally's has already impacted the Bronx. It saved Preston High School from closing and purchased an 18-hole golf course, and has now turned into a tournament-worthy course. I vote yes for Bally's and the union jobs they will be providing. Thank you.

RAUL RIVERA: Hello. My name is Raul Rivera. I'm a native from the Bronx. I'm 55 years old. I'm advocate for the drivers and I oppose the Casino. The people in Coney Island oppose the casino. We don't trust the unions. We already know that Richard Morocco [sp?] is in bed with Zohran Mamdani. If you know about casinos, if you've been to a casino, you should know that the house always wins. The people lose. We say no to the casino. And one of the greatest threats to this city right now is

Zohran Mamdani who's right now in bed with Richard Morocco and the unions.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Raul, can you please stay on topic.

RAUL RIVERA: Well, I'm--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Please.

RAUL RIVERA: I'm on topic. I'm on topic. The problem is that it's going to bring crime to the Bronx, and we already know that the City Council hates the police, so it's dangerous to have a casino. We're okay with building jobs and all that stuff, but the unions are dirty. They can't be trusted. They only care about work. That's all they care about. Once the casino is built, the unions will be gone. The casino will be there, and the district will not prosper, right? Also, if we're going to help the Bronx, we need our Council Members to raise their voice against this Zohran Mamdani, this communist. You have to raise your voice.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

RAUL RIVERA: We have to block him from winning.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Raul.
Thank you, Raul. I appreciate it.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Quiet in the chamber,
please.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Alisa?

ALISA TOFA: Good afternoon, Chair Riley
and members of the Zoning Subcommittee. My name is
Alisa Tofa and I'm a proud parent of two young ladies
who attend Preston High School, as well as a resident
of Council District 13. I grew up in Throgs Neck, my
husband in Morris Park, and now we are raising our
family in the Pelham Bay community. We are
homeowners and our community is not just where we
live, but it is our home. There are a lot of great
neighborhoods in New York City, but this one is truly
special. It has a deep sense of community, a rich
history, and people who care about their neighbors. I
want to see this neighborhood continue to grow and
thrive, not only for my two girls, but for many
generations to come. As a parent, I believe deeply
in importance of investing of the future of our
youth. That's why I am here today to express my
strong support for the Bally's Casino project at
Ferry Point. We've already seen the positive impact
that Bally's can have on our community. When Preston
High School was at risk of closing, it was the

Bally's Foundation that stepped in with critical immediate support helping to keep the school open and preserving a vital institution that means so much, not only to my family, but to so many others in the Bronx. Bally's has also supported the Columbus Day Parade in Morris Park and Edgewater Athletic Labor Day Olympics. Too many young people in our borough graduate without a clear path forward. Bally's commitment to workforce development including job training programs, internships and scholarships can help change that. These are real investments and real futures. Ensuring that we have safer greenspaces for outdoor activities, recreation, and community gatherings is crucial in an ever-changing world where everything seems to be technology-oriented, especially for our younger generations. Beyond that, economic activity generated by this project will help fund our schools, afterschool programs, extracurricular activities that have been historically underfunded. Our students deserve every chance to succeed and I believe this project will help provide these opportunities. I urge the Subcommittee to support this proposal and vote yes. I thank you for your time today.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. I just want to state for the record we're joined by Council Member Bottcher. Council Member Marmorato, do you have any question for this panel? Alright. You're excused. Thank you so much.

ALISA TOFA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: We're going to transition to online testimony. We're going to start with the first panel which consists of Carmello Sottile, Carole DeChiara, Grace Marrero, and David Abreu. Excuse me if I butchered your name. We'll begin first with Carmello.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Carmello Sottile, if you can hear me, please unmute and you may begin. Carmello Sottile?

CARMELLO SOTTILE: Yes, this is Carmello. Can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you. You may begin.

CARMELLO SOTTILE: Okay, hi. I am a lifelong resident of the Bronx. I grew up in Morris Park. Recently moved to Throgs Neck. Now, I have some stats here for you guys. I'm just going to read

them a little bit, and then I'm going to be done.

One, Atlantic City was given a casino. They had a 78

percent increase in violent crimes, a 41 percent

increase in burglaries, a 30 percent increase in

vehicles thefts, a three percent in larcenies in

Atlantic City and nearby regions. Is this something

we really need in this neighborhood? People talk

about improving the neighborhoods. This sounds like

it's going to make the neighborhood much, much worse.

I understand you guys want to have jobs and you guys

want to have a career, and you guys want to make your

lives better. There are 90 percent of the houses in

Throgs Neck that have lead lines. Let's start

working on that. Maybe we can get some houses in a

better shape and some of the neighborhoods in a

better shape rather than a casino that is just going

to degrade the neighborhood and it's just degeneracy.

People think that the neighborhood shops are going to

be getting more foot traffic. Who's going to leave

the casino with all those amenities to go to the foot

traffic of the neighborhood there? You guys are

asking to kill the neighborhood with this place. I

strongly suggest you guys do not vote for this place.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Carmello.

Next is Carole DeChiara. You can press *6 to unmute, Carole, if you can hear me.

CAROLE DECHIARA: Hi. Can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you.

CAROLE DECHIARA: Oh, thank you. Thank you, Council Members, for listening to the Throgs Neck residents today. I would just first like to say that the majority of the people of Throgs Neck can't be there or can be online because we're working-class people and we do have jobs. The second thing I'd like to say is all you have to look is to Yankee Stadium and Van Cortlandt Park to know that corporations don't always keep up with the bargaining deals that they offer. The land is very important and that's what this meeting is about. It's very toxic, and when the golf course was developed, it was-- it had major delays due to methane gas. The low-income residents were getting very sick. The site was and had to be encapsulated with clay and increased the price of this project drastically with much delay. So, before we consider building on this site, how are we going to guarantee that we're not going to breathe in hazardous waste? Secondly, the waterfront is

wetlands and should remain that way. And so our waterfront is disappearing because of development and this cannot happen. I invite all the City Council members to drive on a Friday night to witness nightmare traffic in this community that we have to deal with. I cannot even leave my home on weekends sometimes, because I cannot get out of the neighborhood. Driving from 95 over the Hutch, from the Hutch to 95, they cut through the side streets, and all you hear is honking. So, God forbid there's an accident. We are completely inundated and we cannot even move within our neighborhoods. Park land is valuable, and we don't want to lose that. So, with that, I would like to say please oppose this project and listen to the community, the people who live in Throgs Neck and not union workers who are just looking to make money. We live here, and we don't want to breathe in methane gas. And you can look online for all this information. It is well-available. The tox-- the site is very toxic. So, I'd like to know how they're going to fix that--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Your time has expired.

CAROLE DECHIARA: and build high-rise buildings. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Ms. Carole. Next, we'll hear from Grace Marrero.

GRACE MARRERO: Hi. Can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, we can hear you, Ms. Grace.

GRACE MARRERO: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for letting me speak. Well, Bally's came loaded for bear apparently. They have their union guys coming to support it. They prefaced with Preston, that whole-- that whole debacle with Preston High School was to lead us to this point. As a senior citizen and a lifelong Bronxite, I am so opposed to this, Bally's, because we don't need this in our neighborhood. Home ownership and home property values are going to go down the tube. Crime is going to increase. Whatever happens there, the people that are going to go to Bally's, the dregs of society that will go to Bally's are going to tickle their way down to everybody else's neighborhoods, and that's a danger for us. You know, I find it funny that we have senior citizens talking about that they have a problem living off of social security, and yet, they

1 want to go to Bally's to squander whatever little
2 money they have. It makes no sense. Make it make
3 sense, ladies. This project is going to be an
4 abomination to our community, and my-- a question I
5 have is why does it have to be-- why are we going to
6 sell them the land? You know, this is going to set a
7 precedent. If they can buy one piece of park land,
8 next thing they're going to be hitting Pelham Bay
9 Park and Orchard Beach and everything else, and we're
10 going to start losing park land. Why not lease it to
11 Bally's to be a good neighbor? This way, they don't
12 own it. If they own it and things go south, what are
13 they going to do with it? They decide they want to
14 build up? They're going to be building up for
15 affordable "housing" which we all know is not
16 affordable.

17
18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time
19 has expired.

20 GRACE MARRERO: We are low-income. We
21 are low-income in this borough, and yes, we need
22 economic development--

23 CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Thank
24 you, Ms. Grace.

25 GRACE MARRERO: it has to be--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Next, we'll hear from David Abreu.

DAVID ABREU: Hi, can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead, David.

DAVID ABREU: Yes. Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is David Abreu and I'm the Clean Water Advocate at Save the Sound. Save the Sound is a nonprofit environmental organization advocating for the protection and improvement of the water, land, air of the entire Long Island Sound region. We have been involved in each step of the ULURP and SECOR [sic] process for this proposal since the first public hearing opportunity before Community Board 10 where we heard for ourselves how strongly opposed the local community is to Bally's proposal to site a 3.1 million square foot casino complex in Ferry Point Park. Throughout the process we have detailed our many concerns with this project and its inadequate environmental impact statement, including the alienation of public park land and the environmental impact of the massive development on the surrounding impaired waterways of Westchester Creek and the Upper East River and the western narrows of Long Island Sound. Bally's final environmental impact statement

still does not address many of our concerns about these potential negative impacts, and FEIS acknowledges that the project will lead to an increase of stormwater run-off, but it fails to explain how it will mitigate these impacts. It also does not adequately explain whether the project may cause or contribute to an exceedance of the capacity of an existing combine sewer connection. The FEIS also fails to adequately describe and address the impact of the loss of at least 19.81 acres and possibly up to 25.34 acres of clearly irreplaceable public park land from Ferry Point Park, instead, including vague and non-specific references to potential park land improvements and replacement park land options. We're also concerned with impacts on the adjacent New York State identified disadvantaged communities, hazardous materials from the landfill beneath the golf course and wildlife, as well as the FEIS' failure to consider reasonable alternatives that might reduce the project's impact by reducing its size. Save the Sound will also be submitting written testimony to the Council expanding on these and other concerns unaddressed in FEIS, and we urge the City Council to strongly consider these

potential negative impacts and listen to the local community most impacted, which decidedly voted against this proposal to keep their park land as park land for future park uses. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, David. Council Member Marmorato, you have any questions for this panel?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: No, I'm good. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Alright. The next panel I'm going to call up consists of Hashim Campbell, Natalia Corridori, and Michael Kaess. We'll begin first with Hashim Campbell. Hashim Campbell, if you can hear me, please unmute and you may begin. Hashim Campbell? Okay. Let us try Natalia Corridori. Natalia, if you can hear me, please unmute and you may begin.

NATALIA CORRIDORI: Hi. Hello, guys. [inaudible] Okay. [inaudible] I'm here wearing many hats as President of [inaudible] a long-time employee--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Natalia, I think you have some feedback. Natalia, can you hear me?

NATALIA CORRIDORI: Yes. Can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yes, go ahead. Try right now.

NATALIA CORRIDORI: Alright, Good morning, Chair Riley and Zoning Subcommittee. My name is Natalia Corridori and am her wearing many hats, as President of Pelham Bay Little League, a long-time employee and manager at Artisanal Pastry Shop, an iconic Bronx business, a Bronx homeowner, and most importantly, a proud parent raising my family right here where I grew up. My family came to the Bronx in 1982 chasing the American dream and we found it. We built a life here through hard work, community and opportunity, but I'm also painfully aware that far too many Bronx families today don't get the same chance. The Bally's Casino Hotel and Convention Center is an opportunity to change that. The project means thousands of good paying union jobs just to build it, and then 4,000 permanent livable wage jobs in hospitality and operation, real jobs that Bronx families can build their futures on. In a borough that still struggles with the highest poverty and unemployment rates in the City, we can't ignore

what that means. But Bally's isn't just promising jobs. They're showing they want to be good neighbors. They saved Preston High School when it need help. They want to implement a Community Board 10 graffiti cleanup and pay to keep our shopping areas clean. They didn't just propose a new police substation in Throgs Neck. They're also willing to fund additional substations elsewhere in the Bronx, fully funded by them. Through the alienation process there's a parking lot at Ferry Point, Bally's would invest \$110 million directly back into our local parks, an investment Community Board 10 has never seen before. As President of Pelham Bay Little League, I can tell you firsthand what that means for our kids. Our league [inaudible] thousand of children from every corner of the Bronx since 1954. That's 71 years. Kids whose families work hard but can't always afford safe, quality programs. With this funding we could give them more than just a feel. We could build them a future. Sports keeps kids off the street--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you so much. Your time has expired.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much, Natalie. Next, we'll hear from Hashim Campbell. I just wanted to state, you could always present your testimony to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov if you're not able to finish your testimony. We'll next-- we'll hear from Hashim Campbell.

HASHIM CAMPBELL: Good afternoon everyone. Thank you for allowing me to be here. My name is Hashim Campbell. I'm a Bronx resident, a homeowner, and a business owner in the Bronx. I'm here to just voice my support for the Bally's casino project. I think it would be an excellent idea because jobs are definitely needed in the Bronx, and I think it will bring also just additional money back into the Bronx. A lot of times we're going elsewhere to spend our money and sending the money outside of the community I think would be great idea to have the casino to bring some additional funds into the community. That's all I want to say.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. I just want to state for the record we've been joined by Council Member Powers. Next, we'll hear from Michael Kaess. Michael Kaess, if you can hear me?

MICHAEL KAES: Good morning. My name is Michael Kaess and I'm a resident in Council District 13. I'll be clear. I want New York City to win all the available downstate casino licensing. And I believe the process should be allowed to play out for each New York City-based proposal. So that the Gaming Facility Location Board can determine the best fit. If Bally's is not selected at that stage, I won't lose any sleep over it. What matters is that the Bronx gets a fair shot, and unfortunately, our Council Member has not been a good faith partner. For example, Marmorato did not disclose that her brother was working for the former [inaudible] in Nassau County while she spent the campaign criticizing the Bronx proposal.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Michael, can you please stay on topic, please. Stay on topic, Mike. Thank you.

MICHAEL KAESS: Marmorato [inaudible] stakeholders. When she received a letter of support from a local school, she told her allies at a conservative party meeting "I don't give a shit about what the principal of [inaudible] has to say about

this." And then spoke as if the jobs being offered are beneath her and her family.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Mike--

MICHAEL KAESS: Now, I happen to be--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Michael, Mike, Mike, I need you stay on topic regarding the project. Alright? We're not talking about any campaigns or anything right now, please. Or we're going to have to move on to the next person. Please continue.

MICHAEL KAESS: On the issue of park land alienation, Marmorato also had proposed building housing at the Ferry Point Golf Course as alternative to the 6,000-unit rezoning, because "it is far away from everything." So, I don't believe she's opposed to park land alienation at that location for a large development. Also, I promise you that if it is built, I will bike there. As a cyclist, I know where bike lanes work. I did speak with the applicant team that part of the lane appears redundant with a path inside the park, but we absolutely need a bike lane along the underpass to access the site. Lastly, regarding the Midtown south proposal also being heard by committee today, it has my full support. Give the Bronx a fair shot. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Council Member Marmorato, do you have any questions for this panel? Alright, this panel is excused. Next, we're going to hear from William Rivera. One second. Excuse me, sorry. I'm going to go back to in-person testimony, and I'm going to call up Miguel Torres and Madeline Applebaum [sp?], and Christopher-- oh, okay. So we're just going to hear from Miguel Torres and Madeline Applebaum. Are you testifying for Bally's or-- for Bally's? Okay, so come on, Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: I'm a speak other one too after.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: No problem.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah. So, can I go first?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Go ahead.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah. Hello, my name is Christopher Leon Johnson. I'm showing my support for the Bally's Casino in the Bronx. I want to be on the record that I support the Coney Island BID in Brooklyn, but I want to make this clear that, like I said, I'm not trying to get kicked out here, because I'm going to testify for the next panel that

the Council Member Marmorato brother is the lobbyist
for--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Hey--

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: [interposing]
No, no, this is the truth. He's a lobbyist for
[inaudible].

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Chris, Chris, Chris,
Chris, Chris-- we're not doing that.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Okay, I
understand.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Alright?

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Understand.
But we need the jobs in the City. We need a lot of
jobs in the City. Let's make that clear that we need
a lot of jobs in the Bronx. I think that the jobs in
the Bronx should go first. I believe that. Like I
said, I'm not here to get kicked out of here, but I'm
saying just to be transparent on the record that this
Council Member is running for re-election and she's
doing this to appease the voter block in-- what is
it-- Throgs Neck and-- what's the other spot? City
Island. That's all she cares about it. She don't
care about Pelham Bay who really needs the jobs in
that district, people in Pelham Bay Park. Like I

said, I'm not trying to get kicked out of here, but the truth like I said, she need to be transparent on the record that her brother was a lobbyist for the Sands [sic] Casino in Long Island.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank--

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: [interposing]
Understand, but like I said, we need the jobs in Pelham Bay--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Thank you, Chris.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: and you can tell right now, she doesn't-- hey, I have like 15 seconds. But if she doesn't care about the jobs, the people in Pelham Bay, they should vote her out of office in Pelham Bay. Just don't care-- just don't try to act like you care about the people, but you only care about those white folks in Throgs Neck and City Island. But like I said, Black people need the work at those casino's, too. Shout out to the ATC [sic]. Shout out to all of these unions that have a lot of minorities in these unions. But like I said, the people here need to start calling this Council Member out, that she doesn't care about the Black people that live in Pelham Bay and Alice [sic] and

she only care about the white folks, the little racist white KKK folks that lives in the Throgs Neck and--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Chris, Chris--

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: City Island, and that's the truth.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Chris. Thank you, Chris.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: I'm for the casino. We need Black jobs. We need minority jobs. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Alright, thank you. Thank you. Thank you, Chris. Thank you. Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: [inaudible]

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Christopher.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Can I state something on the record?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: If you have a question for this panel, you may go, Council Member.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: For the record, my brother is not a lobbyist for Sands [sic] Casino and never was, and I was just in Allerton

[sp?] Avenue over the weekend spending time with my family at a movie night with my constituents, and there were people of all color there, so.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member, and I can attest to that as well. So, thank you for your service. Okay. There being no other members of the public who wish to testify on Bally's, this application is now closed. Thank you so much. Alright, so there being no other members of the public who wish to testify on LUs 321-- excuse me. Excuse me. [gavel] There being no other members of the public who wish to testify on LUs 321, 322 and 323 related to the Bally's development proposal, this public hearing is now closed, and the item is laid over. Thank you so much. I will now open up the public hearing on LUs 324 and 325 relating to the MSMX proposal in Council Member Bottcher's district in Manhattan. For anyone wishing to testify on this item remotely, if you have not already done so, you must register online by visiting the Council's website at council.nyc.gov/landuse. Excuse me, I stand corrected. This proposal-- excuse me, we're still in a hearing, can you please exit quietly? Thank you. I stand corrected. This proposal is

located in Council Member Bottcher and Powers' district in Manhattan. For anyone with us in-person, please see one of the Sergeant at Arms to submit a speaker's card, and if you're filling out a speaker's card, please indicate if you are testifying in favor or in opposition. As always, if you prefer to submit a written testimony, you may do so by emailing it to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Council Member Bottcher, do you have an opening statement on this?

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you so much, Chair Riley, and thank you to all the members of this subcommittee. Today, we are holding a hearing on one of New York City's most consequential land use actions in many years, one that will potentially permit nearly 10,000 new homes, including nearly 3,000 permanently affordable homes to be constructed in the heart of Midtown Manhattan, across 42 blocks. It would permit residential development in areas that do not currently permit residential development. This is one of those moments, rare and consequential when the decisions that we make will determine the future of New York City for generations to come. This is a test of our values, our priorities and our leadership, and at the center of

it all is affordability, the question of whether working middle-class New Yorkers will still be able to call this city home. So today, we're presented with a rare opportunity to take one of the most transit-dense, centrally-located neighborhoods in the United States and unlock it for the kind of housing affordability and livability that this moment demands all while strengthening the vibrant industries that call this district home. So, with this action we have some clear goals. First, we have to correct the simple reality that large swaths of Midtown Manhattan do not permit residential use. That is an outdated concept. We know that the healthiest, most vibrant neighborhoods are mixed-use neighborhoods, alive day and night. The idea of commercial-only zoning is a relic of the past. Cities thrive when people live in them, not just commute through them. So we want a Midtown South that's a 24/7 neighborhood rich with life, commerce, residents of all backgrounds, races, income levels, and we'll be making Midtown South safer by using one of the most proven and time-tested deterrents to crime, Jane Jacobs [sp?] Eyes on the Street. Second, we must seize the massive housing potential here and address the fact that countless

people want to live here, but only a fraction can. That's why housing is so expensive in New York City. People want to live in Manhattan. Why do we live in New York City? Today, I just decided to look and see how much a house in Orlando rents for. You can rent a house in suburban Orlando with up to five bedrooms and a pool for as little as \$2,000 a month. You can get a year pass to Disney world for \$1,500. The downside is-- oh, and they have like 250 days of sunshine a year. The downside is you've got to live in Orlando. You've got to drive to do anything, to see anyone. We've got to seize the massive housing potential here. In New York City you walk out your front door and you have access to everything that's best. The best of everything on planet earth, museums, stages, parks, jobs, a subway network that can take you anywhere. That's why so many people want to live here. And if we don't acknowledge that and plan for that, we're going to continue to see long-term residents lose out, be pushed out as prices spiral even further out of reach. And around the country, we're seeing that building houses works. Austin, Texas saw nearly 50,000 apartments constructed between 2023 and 2024. Rents have

dropped 22 percent since August 2023, the cheapest in the U.S. Denver, Colorado, 20,000 new units in 2024. Rents are going down. Columbus, Ohio, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Nashville, Tennessee all have seen housing booms, and the landlords are losing out because they've been forced to cut rents. The tenants are benefitting. And we saw it here, too. During the pandemic, there was a lot of available units. We got phone calls from landlords who were complaining that their buildings were half empty, rental buildings on Sixth Avenue. Their buildings are half-empty. We saw deals, rental deals that I haven't seen since I moved to New York in 2001. So, we've got to do this, but importantly and vitally, we must achieve this housing growth while also safeguarding what makes this area essential to our city's economy and our spirit. Midtown South is home to creative industries, tech firms, design offices, and the incredibly vibrant garment district that supports thousands of New Yorkers in the fashion industry. So, City Planning says that this proposal balances housing growth with economic vitality, and today we're going to scrutinize that claim together. We need housing, but we've got to get it right. That

means adding parks, transit upgrades, landmark protections, support for the fashion industry, and the plan that doesn't wipe out the industries that make New York City unique. Midtown South can shine as a national model, but only if we pair this rezoning with resources, enforcement, and accountability. I want to thank my colleague, Council Member Keith Powers, whose district covers part of this area and my staff and the Council's Planning and Land Use Unit, and all the community members and stakeholders who are out here today to testify. I look forward to today's presentation and the presentation and testimony from the community.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Council Member Powers?

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you. Thank you, Council Member Bottcher, for those remarks, and good morning everyone. I'm City Council Member Keith Powers. I want to thank my colleagues from the Department of City Planning and other agencies for being here today to discuss the Midtown South Mixed-Use plan, commonly known these days as MSMX. As many of you know, I've been a supporter throughout my time in the City Council of zoning changes in the City to

help address the housing crisis and to redevelop areas in dire need of more housing and vitality.

Just last year, the Council passed a citywide rezoning to take a big step towards increasing housing here and addressing the shortage of housing citywide, which as to me a first step in a larger conversation about how we can continue to move forward, and now we're here to talk about Midtown.

Midtown, to me, is an excellent candidate for a neighborhood that can and should absorb more housing and a place where opportunity is very rich when it comes to what is available in terms of jobs and transit and schools and much more, and also to make this a neighborhood a 24/7 neighborhood which I think would help elevate public safety and making sure that we have a neighborhood that is strengthened at all hours of the day, and being proposed in already well-developed part of New York City with easy transit access for new residents, close to major subway lines, and easy access to our rail, with the opportunity to create 10,000 new units and nearly 3,000 affordable middle-income units as well. I want to echo some of the comments that Council Member Bottcher said, which is to make sure that as we move

forward this plan, I urge the administration to work with us and the Council to strengthen it and ensure it meets the needs of those intended to serve. We are, of course, experiencing a housing emergency with rental vacancy rates at a record low, and it's I think evident in my district and I think throughout Manhattan where affordable units are currently scarce. We have new tools here to address the housing crisis in high-density districts via the citywide rezoning we did last year, and state action that has enabled new tools here as well, to build residential developments and thousands of permanently affordable units. But we also-- and we miss-- and I think it's important we leverage those tools in places like Midtown. We also have to look at concrete strategies to protect the existing industries within the rezoning area. For example, the garment and flower sectors and have commitments to protect those industries as part of what we do forward, knowing that there have been past efforts in 2018 to try to address that, and we must learn from those experiences to figure out how to effectively do that in the future. There's other concerns that many folks have raised about in making sure that as we

transfer to residential, we also make sure we address the open spaces and the amenities and school seats, and other things that will be required as we move forward to make this a truly vibrant place for families and children and seniors and young professionals to thrive. Thank you for all the work that's been done to date. Thank you to my council colleague, Council Member Bottcher, and all the members of this committee and staff who have been accommodating us as we walk through this. I'm very interested to hear the comments from both the administration and the public here today to figure out how we can build a plan that works for all industries, all sectors, and all needs. Thanks so much.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you, Council Member Bottcher and Powers. I will now call for the applicant panel for this proposal which consists of Erik Botsfor, Nabeela Malik, Julianne Herskowitz, and David Breen. Counsel, can you please administer the affirmation?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good morning. Well, good afternoon, actually. Could you please raise your right hand and state your name for the record?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Erik Botsford.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR MALIK: Nabeela Malik.

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

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: I do.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR MALIK: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Is there anyone else going to testify? Is anyone else testifying with you guys?

UNIDENTIFIED: We're here for Q&A.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The [inaudible] for Q&A?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: These are members here for Q&A, yes.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay, well, why don't we swear--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Yeah, we just swear you all in right now, yeah. So, if you're going to be Q&A, if you could raise your right hand and state your name for the record?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HERSKOWITZ:

Julianne Herskowitz.

DIRECTOR BREEN: David Breen.

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

DIRECTOR BREEN: I do.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HERSKOWITZ: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay.

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

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you, Chair Riley. My name is Erik Botsford. I'm the Director of the Manhattan office at the Department of City Planning. And good afternoon, Chair Riley, Council Member Bottcher, Council Member Powers, Chair Salamanca. I'm joined also today by Nabeela Malik, our Deputy Director of the Manhattan Office at the Department of City Planning, as well as colleagues

from DCP, EDC, and DOT. And we're happy to be here today to present the Midtown South Mixed-Used Plan, or as we call it, MSMX. MSMX is the culmination of multiple years of study, engagement with the local community and collaboration with our partner agencies and elected officials. We want to particularly thank Council Member Bottcher and Council Member Powers along with Borough President Levine for your partnership and vision here. You called on us to bring more housing to this neighborhood, and we're very thankful for your leadership in this process. Next slide, please? The MSMX plan lays the foundation for a dynamic lively neighborhood where housing can flourish alongside a robust economy and a high-quality public realm. It's about transforming Midtown South into a mixed-use district, a place where living, working, and creating all co-exist naturally. The Plan has three primary objectives. First, create around the clock mixed-use neighborhoods by allowing housing for the first time, and requiring income restricted housing for the first time via the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing, or MIH program. Second, enhance economic vitality, enabling residential growth while supporting diverse mix of

businesses that already thrive here. And third, elevate quality of life by enhancing street activity, shaping building form, and creating public spaces that are welcoming both day and night. Next slide. To achieve all this, the MSMX plan proposes two land use actions, a zoning map amendment and a zoning text amendment. We are particularly excited that MSMX uses new zoning districts created by City of Yes for economic opportunity and housing opportunity and demonstrates that we are responding to our city's housing crisis by deploying new tools to unlock housing. These new districts allow for commercial and manufacturing businesses alongside higher density housing in a way that supports vibrant, high-density neighborhoods, and Midtown South is the ideal place to launch these districts. The text amendment would create the new special Midtown South Mixed-Use District which would include urban design regulations as well as incentives for transit and public realm improvements. The text amendment would also apply MIH district-wide for all new housing, both new construction and conversions. These actions would help create a vibrant 24/7 mixed-use Midtown South with a projected 9,700 new homes, including up to

2,900 permanent income-restricted homes through MIH.

And crucially, the plan also preserves the full range of commercial and light manufacturing uses already

found throughout Midtown South. Next slide? The

MSMX plan builds on the momentum of the Bronx Metro

North in Atlantic Avenue mixed-use plans as well as

the three ground-breaking City of Yes initiatives,

all of which were adopted by the City Council. MSMX

marks the next step in our efforts to tackle New York

City's housing crisis and create more housing

opportunities for all New Yorkers. Next slide.

We'll next turn to some table-setting and look at the

MSMX area. Next slide, please. So, here's aerial

view of the MSMX plan area outlined in yellow. It's

composed of four distinct subareas. We call them

quadrants, located across 42 blocks between 23rd and

40th Streets from Fifth Avenue over to Eighth Avenue.

Although geographically separate, these four areas

share a number of important characteristics. First,

they are in the center of everything, in the heart of

an area that connects Midtown to Penn Station to

Hudson Yards and Flat Iron. They have incredible

transit access with multiple subway lines as well as

Penn Station and the Port Authority Bus Terminal just

steps away. They offer exceptional access to jobs, businesses and fantastic amenities such as Bryant Park, Madison Square Park, and Herald and Greeley Squares. These are also very highly built-up areas with many large loft buildings and a wide variety of building heights. And finally, one critical pieces that ties all four of these areas together. They are all saddled with decade's old M16 manufacturing zoning that does not allow housing. Despite being completely surrounded by mixed-use districts that do. Next slide, please. Because housing is not allowed under the existing M16 zoning, it's not surprising to learn that relatively few people live in this area today. If you look at this map, you can see how stark this difference is. The dark red and orange areas just outside the MSMX plan area include large amounts of housing, while within the plan area, housing is sparse. In fact, there are only about 2,300 homes in the plan area today, versus 74,000 homes within a 10-minute walk, and this is in one of the City's most transit-accessible and job-dense areas. This absence of housing can leave the area feeling empty and lifeless after work hours. Streets go quiet. Local business lose foot traffic, and the

sense of safety and vibrancy fades with the crowd. The lack of housing undermines this neighborhood's energy, affects quality of life, and deprives New Yorkers of homes close to jobs, transit, and amenities. Next slide, please. Despite the lack of housing here, this dense neighborhood is actually well-suited for it. This map shows the range of existing built density, the size of buildings that are already present in the neighborhood today. Generally, darker purple and blue colors are buildings with lower built density, smaller buildings, and warmer colors are large buildings with higher buildings FARs. You can see a lot of yellow with in the MSMX boundaries and surrounding it. That yellow color signifies very high-density buildings of 17.5 FAR or higher. By contrast, the existing M16 zoning only permits an FAR of 10. You can see on this map of these high densities aren't only located along the avenues. Instead, they extend across entire blocks, both avenues and mid-blocks. The northern quadrants are clearly the densest with the biggest and bulkiest existing buildings. The southern quadrants transition to more moderate density areas to the south, but are still quite

varied with high-density and tall buildings, but also significant opportunities for new housing. Next slide. And here's an image that helps bring that map to life. It shows three different buildings in MSMX, each built in a different era over the past 100 years, and each with densities ranging from 18 to over 30 FAR. Buildings in the MSMX plan area can even reach 40 FAR. But from the pedestrian perspective, they don't stand out all that dramatically. They feel very solidly like Midtown South buildings. Next slide, please. The built density understandably correlates with a concentration of economic activity with the study area serving as an important regional employment center. The 42 blocks of the plan area are home to 135,000 jobs across 7,500 businesses. Over the past decade, the plan area has seen job growth that has both outpaced citywide and national trends. That said, the job landscape has changed considerably over time, as certain sectors have grown and others have declined. Manufacturing and wholesale employment have dropped by 30 percent with fashion manufacturing and wholesale jobs seeing even steeper declines. The city continues to use non-zoning tools to support

fashion manufacturing in particular and is actively exploring additional strategies to support this sector going forward. At the same time, though, a wide range of other jobs have seen dramatic increases in Midtown South, including creative, tech, hospitality, and other office uses. Next slide. As with all our neighborhood plans, MSMX began with robust community engagement. We met with people who live, work, and own businesses and properties in the area and heard their priorities for Midtown South. We held public meetings throughout the planning process and hosted roundtable conversations with stakeholders from residents to small business owners to housing, real estate and social service experts. We also conducted outreach through our website, weekly office hours and online survey and numerous site visits. From all of these conversations, key community priorities emerge for Midtown South, ranging from a strong desire to see housing created, to calls for an activated public realm. These priorities serve as the foundation for the MSMX plan and its three overarching goals: creating mixed-use communities, supporting vital economic activity, and enhancing neighborhood character. Next slide? Now

we will turn to the proposal itself. Next slide?

Again, the two proposed actions are a zoning map amendment and a zoning text amendment. The zoning map amendment would rezone all of the existing M16 manufacturing districts in the plan area to pair mixed-use, commercial, manufacturing, and residential districts that you see on the screen. This pairing of manufacturing in residential zoning allows for housing in new construction and conversions alongside the light manufacturing, office, wholesale, and other non-residential uses that exist today in Midtown South. Again, the plan area is currently zoned with M16 manufacturing zoning. You can see on this proposed zoning map that we're replacing this existing one-size-fits-all zoning with different districts for different parts of the plan area. It's a nuanced approach that reflects existing conditions and the opportunities to provide more housing for New Yorkers. Higher densities are proposed for the northern portions and the areas around Penn Station because these are the highest density areas today. The southeast quadrant has distinct zoning that reflects the appropriateness of this area for residential use with the surrounding area seeing a

large amount of new luxury housing with no affordable housing requirements. Meanwhile, the southwest area has lower densities that reflects the area's transition to more moderate density areas to the south. Each of these districts would fall within the new special district, ensuring we can shape building form and incentivize public realm improvements throughout the area. Next slide. We are particularly excited to be debuting the new R11 and R12 high-density residential zoning districts in the MSMX plan. These new districts were created through City of Yes after Albany finally lifted the outdated FAR cap which had restricted residential density in New York City for decades. The removal of the FAR cap was a major step forward for tackling our housing crisis and the result of years of advocacy and hard work for any of those who are here today. Midtown south is exactly the kind of centrally located high opportunity area where these new districts belong, and we think mapping them here for the first time is the right move. Next slide. The zoning districts are just one piece of the full picture. It's critically important to ensure that we celebrate the existing built character of the neighborhood and

create an inviting and vibrant pedestrian experience.

In this regard, the most important thing is how buildings are perceived by the New Yorker walking down the sidewalk, how the building meets the street.

Right now, the existing manufacturing regulations are pretty much a free-for-all when it comes to urban

design with no requirements for street walls that

match the incredible buildings that are found here

today, and as a result, many recent buildings built

under these outdated manufacturing rules don't

contribute to the streetscape and pull away from the

sidewalk, creating what we call missing teeth in

otherwise strong, loft-like streets. As illustrated

in the pedestrian view on the right on the screen

where new MSMX buildings are outlined in black, we

are proposing bulk and urban design rules to

reinforce the area's loft character with strong

street walls and just enough flexibility to match

surrounding context and allow for architectural

expression. These regulations would apply for the

entirety of the plan area. Next slide, please. The

new special district would contain a number of

additional provisions you can see here on the screen.

These regulations provide additional incentives for

important amenities such as public schools, open space, and transit improvements. Next slide?

Finally, we're excited about the fact that the entirety of the special district will be mapped with mandatory inclusionary housing. This is the first application of MIH in Midtown and its first application in high-density Manhattan. This is a big step forward for ensuring that Manhattan is a place where New Yorkers of all income levels can afford to live. The proposal would map MIH options one, two, and three throughout the special district. All three of these options would apply to both new construction and residential conversions. By applying MIH, the proposal could generate up to 2,900 permanently income restricted homes in Midtown South. Next slide. Lastly, we'll take a minute to go over what we heard during the public review process. Next slide, please. As you can see on the map on the right, the plan area is mostly located within Manhattan Community District Five with two smaller portions within Manhattan Community District Four, and you can see here the outcome of the votes with CB5, the Borough President and the Borough Board all providing favorable recommendations on the plan.

We've appreciated the close partnership with Council Members Bottcher and Powers, as well as Borough President Levine, from the outset of this planning process, and we also appreciate Community Boards Four and Five for their close attention, feedback and participation. Next slide. Based on input from the community during the public review process, the City Planning Commission approved the MSMX plan with two modifications. The first modification provides important flexibility for sites that contain an LPC designated landmark, recognizing that it may be difficult to comply with the special district's strong street wall regulations. Some landmark buildings are set back from the street, and we want to ensure that this important historical context is reflected in our proposal. The second modification simply maintains an existing provision that applies to the portion of one block in MSMX. This modification would continue to allow transfers of floor area from listed Broadway theaters, continuing a provision that applies today on this block and blocks to the north in the Midtown Theater sub-district. Next slide. So, in summary, we're proposing a zoning map amendment that would replace

outdated manufacturing-only districts with high-density mixed-use districts allowing for a dynamic mix of housing, commercial, manufacturing, and community facility uses. The second land use action is a zoning text amendment to map mandatory inclusionary housing and create zoning rules for the new special district. The proposed actions could result in approximately 10,000 new homes, up to 2,900 of which would be permanently income restricted. Next slide, please. The MSMX plan is ambitious, as befits a dynamic and high-density area like Midtown South. It brings housing to the heart of Manhattan, giving New Yorkers more opportunities to live in the center of everything, close to jobs, amenities and transit. And the plan ensures that Midtown South remains a home for a wide range of uses, including light manufacturing, office, wholesale and retail establishments. This plan is a win for New Yorkers who desperately need housing, a win for Midtown South and a win for New York City. Thank you. We hope this presentation has been informative and we look forward to answering your questions.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you so much. I have a few questions and I'm going to turn it over to

Council Member Bottcher followed by Council Member Powers. New York City has a housing supply crisis that must be addressed, but the commercial core of Midtown also provides critical jobs and is essential to the City's tax base. Between the City of Yes changes to allow more flexibility for conversions, the MSMX proposal and the announced Manhattan plan DCP is looking to add, adds a lot of housing to Manhattan and there is no vacant land in Manhattan. So, my question is, how can we ensure that we are maintaining the right balance between space for housing and space for businesses like the fashion industry in Manhattan? The garment industry is composed of 100 small businesses that provide good-paying jobs that the City must preserve.

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you, Chair Riley. We absolutely agree that housing needs to co-exist with commercial, light manufacturing and other uses, and the Midtown South plan does just that. It allows housing while continuing to allow all of the uses that are preened in Midtown South today that includes light manufacturing, commercial office and wholesale and other uses. I think when you look at Manhattan as a whole, we have some neighborhoods that

are exclusively residential, but the core of Manhattan is really characterized by mixed-use zoning districts. In fact, as noted in the presentation, the MSMX plan area is anomalous in that it is a manufacturing-only zone today, but it is completely surrounded by districts that are zoned for mixed, commercial, and residential use today. Areas like Midtown and Flat Iron, immediately adjacent to the MSMX plan area are zoned for mixed-use today where housing can coexist with non-residential uses, and what we've seen in this area is that housing does not out-compete commercial uses in these areas. They can coexist naturally. They do coexist naturally in these areas, and we think this is the right move for Midtown South.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: There's residential units in the area, correct?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: There are residential units in the area, and there is a continued presence for commercial and other uses. We think Midtown South is going to remain a very strong place to continue to do business, and we certainly have seen that it is an attractive place and has been over

time, as are adjacent areas that allow for residential and non-residential uses today.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: And you've been working with a lot of the small businesses within the garment district?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: We've had the great pleasure of engaging with small businesses in the garment district, property owners in the garment district, through our community and stakeholder engagement process. We've held roundtable meetings to have really focused, thematic conversations on the challenges faced by businesses in the MSMX plan area today. We've really enjoyed being able to go out and tour individual business and we really, you know, been thankful for the information that we've learned through this process from existing businesses and stakeholders.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay. Will there be any assistance provided for displaced businesses?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you for that question. The City is currently engaged with looking at tools that may be necessary to support businesses within the MSMX plan area. Again, we think the really key message here and one thing that we heard

loud and clear during our engagement process is that there's broad-based support for the introduction of housing in Midtown South and that comes from local businesses as well who have pointed out that the area currently suffers today from a lack of 24/7 activity, and that includes, you know, a feeling of safety on the streets, services that can serve both residents, but also people who work in the area today. All these things are lacking because of the lack of housing in the area. When it comes to support for existing businesses, the City is actively engaged right now in exploring tools that could achieve that.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Is the admin open to creating or funding such a program-- excuse me, creating and funding such a program specifically for the fashion industry business?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you very much for that question. Julieanne, would you like to speak to programs that are underway today?

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Yeah.

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HERSKOWITZ: So, thank you so much--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing]

Julianne, just state your name for the record.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HERSKOWITZ: Yes, of course. So, my name is Julieanne Herskowitz. I'm a Senior Vice President at the New York City Economic Development Corporation. You know, without a doubt, EDC is invested in the future, growth, and sustainability of the fashion industry in New York City. Thankfully, New York City continues to be a global hub of fashion. Every day, young talent continues to flock here. We have wonderful educational institutions that are focused on the fashion industry, and New York City continues to still be a attracter of top talent and a hub of creativity. Council Member, you asked specifically what are we doing to support fashion, and I'm happy to share that we at EDC have been looking within the entire suite of tools within our toolkit to support fashion both in the garment center as well as citywide. So, specifically that looks, frankly, in a lot of different ways. Whether that's programmatic and workforce development initiatives that we are supporting like NYC EDC's Founder Fellowship. That specifically is a program we've had 15 fashion tech

start-ups participate in this program where they have access to venture capital, mentorship, business development to help innovative businesses scale up.

A couple examples of those types of businesses include retail. This is a business that helps brands sell their wares in high-traffic retail corridors, as well as companies like SXD that create zero-waste design and no-waste pattern making. On the--

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: [interposing] Are these designed specifically for the fashion industry, or are these just--

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HERSKOWITZ:
[interposing] Yes.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Oh, okay.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HERSKOWITZ: Yeah, so these are fashion-forward businesses that have taken advantage of this workforce and business development program.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Okay.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HERSKOWITZ: I'd also like to share that we also have a new discretionary tax incentive called MCOR specifically that refers to the Manhattan Commercial Revitalization Initiative. Specifically, there we

are helping to transform aging, commercial buildings in Manhattan south of 59th Street. One such building that has taken advantage of those tax incentives is the WSA building that opened up just actually down here in lower Manhattan, 175 Water Street. I think, Council Member, you toured that building recently. That has become a hub for fashion, which is so exciting where fashion tenantry is happening across the entire value chain of the industry from design, advertising, sample-taking. It is such a new hub that I also understand that the Council of Fashion Designers of America have also relocated their offices to this building downtown. We also have some unique partnerships and ability to disperse City capital dollars. So, specifically, we recently announced Gotham Foundry. This is a project that brings \$45 million to a new consortium of educational institutions, including Columbia University, the Advanced Science Research Center, the City University of New York's Graduate Center, and the Fashion Institute of Technology, and specifically they're creating a new, cutting-edge first of its kind sustainable materials innovations hub. FIT specifically will lead the fashion and design

industry verticals including commercialization, programming workforce development, as well as investment in their existing campus. And I know also, Council Member Bottcher, that you also recently allocated some funding to FIT to invest in their space as well which is wonderful.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HERSKOWITZ: So, these are a couple of the examples of the work that we're doing.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: I appreciate it. Thank you. We have heard concerns that providing 18 FAR will leave no incentive for developers to use landmarks, TDRs or proposed bonuses for public spaces, subway stations, or school improvements. What is DCP's response to this concern?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you. Well, first, I would like to say that these areas are extremely dense today. As I talked about it in the presentation, there are many buildings in the area today that exceed the densities that are-- that we are proposing as part of this plan, maximum of 18 FAR, buildings that can range up to 30 FAR, or even 40 FAR in the plan area. So, this is an area that

can support density, and really this is the way that we can get housing opportunity here utilizing these new zoning districts that we have created through City of Yes. So, this is an area that can support density. We think 18 FAR is the right place, the right place for portions of this area. Others are proposed for 15 FAR for residential. Calls to reduce density in certain areas, you know, we think are not supported by the existing conditions on the ground, nor the opportunity in certain areas to provide housing for New Yorkers. So, we think tha the densities that we're proposing, 15 or 18 FAR for residential, are certainly appropriate. if there is utilization of optional zoning mechanisms such as landmark TDRs or transit bonuses on top of it, we think that is fantastic. There's great public benefit to be grained through the preservation of landmarks, through the provision of transit improvements and public space improvements, all things that zoning incentive can achieve, but we cannot cross our fingers and hope that there is uptake of these provisions to make up for housing losses that would come through reduction of density. You know, again, reducing density in parts of the

plan area as we've heard through the public review process would result in dramatic decreases in the as-of-right potential to create housing. In some cases, as much as 55 percent reduction in housing, and again, we cannot nor should we rely upon optional zoning mechanisms that, you know, can be costly and take time to receive to make up that difference.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. Another point, speaking on density-- concern was the increase of density on more narrow streets along the mid-block rather than focusing on density on wider streets. Can you explain the plan and rationale for adding more density along narrow street-- side streets-- excluding the avenues?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you for that question. And you know, it's a really important one to address. Certain areas of Manhattan are characterized by differences whether in zoning districts or the size of buildings on avenues or wide streets and mid-blocks or narrow streets. And you know, that's an important characteristic in certain areas of Manhattan. That, however, is not the characteristic of Midtown South today, nor much of the surrounding area around Midtown South. There are

very large buildings to be found on avenues, very large buildings to be found on mid-blocks today, very high density extending across the entirety of blocks in Midtown South today. So, you do not have a distinction between wide and narrow streets or avenues and mid-blocks in existing Midtown South built environment, nor in the existing zoning that's in place today. The existing M16 zoning that's present in Midtown South today stretches across both avenues and mid-blocks, the entirety of blocks, and the same holds true for other zoning districts beyond the M16 zoning, and even where we have distinct zoning districts that are mapped, where looking at the zoning map you may think that there are differences between avenues and mid-blocks. You can have the same densities that are permitted across those zoning districts. So, for example, in the southern quadrants of MSMX, the two southern parts of the plan area, you have a similar density that's permitted across spanning six avenues from east to west, across both avenues and mid-blocks, allowing high density on both narrow and wide streets. So, again, we think that the MSMX plan which generally allows high-density housing to maximize opportunities

for housing on both avenues mid-blocks is supported by the existing zoning-- supported by the existing built density and by characteristics of the surrounding neighborhood as well.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Thank you. My last question before I turn it over to Council Member Bottcher. Did the environmental review analyze whether the rezoning would generate a wave of conversions from commercial and manufacturing to residential?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you for that question. We certainly feel that there's an important role here for both new construction. There is significant opportunity for new construction in the Midtown South plan, as well as for conversions of existing buildings. The City of Yes for Housing Opportunity initiative which was recently adopted expanded the ability of buildings to convert to housing, and we think that that will certainly play an important role in Midtown South.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: What will happen to a lot of the small businesses in that area?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you. The environmental review when looking at what is likely

to happen following a rezoning looked at both the opportunity for new construction taking place on vacant lots for example, parking lots, or sites where smaller buildings are located, as well as the potential for conversions. We're able to make predictions about where new construction may be located based on discreet criteria that we follow through the environmental review process. When it comes to conversions, those buildings are already constructed. Decisions whether to convert or leave the building under existing non-residential use are subject to a very complex host of factors that individual property owners will make. So we did not identify specific buildings that were likely to convert in the environmental review process.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Well, I'll let the Council Members speak, but I think that's a concern for the small businesses that represent the area that a lot of them will be losing their businesses if these owners are converting the entire building to residential. So, just want to put that at the mind of DCP and see if you guys could do anything to address that. We're going to first start with

Council Member Bottcher, followed by Council Member Powers.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Thank you, Chair. So, this neighborhood rezoning would introduce residential uses for the first time, and it would give them a residential FAR of up to 18, which as you stated has been newly created and never previously mapped. This density is proposed for areas that have been home to concentrations of industrial sectors such as the garment district, flower district, industry suppliers, and other manufacturing and wholesale uses. These businesses are important parts of New York City's economic ecosystem and many of them depend on being in Manhattan and in Midtown South. The stated goals of the MSMX plan are to recognize this and to envision a continued mix of uses, including support for the fashion industry. How did DCP fully examine how this new development will impact the existing industries and jobs? What was the methodology that was used for your analysis?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you, Council Member Bottcher, and I want to thank you for your introductory statement expressing support for housing

in Midtown South. The Midtown South area is extremely well-placed to both welcome new housing and continue to provide a home for the important non-residential uses that are present there today, have been there over time, and provide opportunities for new businesses to open in Midtown South as well. Again, it's a strong commercial manufacturing area, 135,000 jobs across 7,500 businesses in the area today, and again, when we looked at the potential for introducing housing here at high-density, again with the desire to be ambitious, utilize new tools that we have to create housing in Midtown South, we were able to, again, identify areas where we think housing is likely to be constructed through our environmental review process. We did not determine the environmental review, determine that there would not be a significant adverse impact from displacement of existing businesses in the area, but I think most significantly, the MSMX proposal does not change the ability for existing businesses to locate here, to thrive here, and to continue to grow in Midtown South, and that includes manufacturing, office, wholesale, the full suite of non-residential uses that are present in the area today.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: What are the specific impacts on businesses and workers that you anticipate seeing as a result of this rezoning?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you. I think one of the most significant impacts that we would see on businesses and workers is the creation of a more vibrant and 24/7 Midtown South. During our public engagement process, our stakeholder engagement process, one thing that we heard loud and clear across the board in addition to a desire for housing, what the housing-- introduction of housing in Midtown South could achieve, and that really speaks to the vitality of this neighborhood, especially after work hours. We heard concerns about the lack of foot traffic after work hours, concerns about, you know, that there was not enough activity on the streets, and there was not enough activity to support businesses that can serve people who live and work in this neighborhood today. And you know, we heard loud and clear concerns about the public realm in these neighborhoods today, and you know, as you said, Council Member, in your remarks, you know, one of the most critical things that we can do here is get eyes on the street in this neighborhood, something that

currently doesn't exist after work hours. It's a very small amount of housing in this area today, almost no housing, especially in the northern portions of the plan area and the introduction of housing the creation of mixed-use districts is really the key to success for so many of our Manhattan neighborhoods, ones where people work, people live today, people want to go out to eat, go shopping. Those are neighborhoods that today have a wide range of uses that are permitted, including housing, and that is what we are trying to achieve here in Midtown South.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: But what's the impact with respect to displacement of both businesses and workers?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you for that question. So, again, the-- I think it's worth noting that the area surrounding Midtown South within about a half-mile radius-- so, you know, kind of what we look at for environmental review purposes-- has about 870,000 jobs. Again, these are areas that already permit a wide range of uses today, including housing and extremely robust job market, 870,000 jobs. The environmental review for the Midtown South plan

expected or projected that about 770 businesses could be displaced through new construction in the area. So, 135,000 jobs in the area. About a little over 5,000 jobs could be displaced as a result of this proposal, and you know, again looking at the bigger picture of 870,000 jobs in the wider area. And again, want to come back to the fact that the change in zoning that is being proposed in Midtown South does not change the uses that are present there today. They would continue to be permitted. That includes light manufacturing, office, wholesale, businesses that might be displaced from one site for new construction of new housing would be able to relocate within the study area. Zoning would not be a barrier to being able to continue to locate and grow non-residential businesses in Midtown South.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: DCP has repeatedly referred to potential non-zoning tools to support the fashion industry, but we've seen very little in terms of new proposals. When can we expect to see some concrete proposals from you with respect to non-zoning tools to support the fashion industry?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you very much, Council Member. And you know, I think as Julieanne

walked through, the City has a robust set of non-zoning tools today that are supporting garment and fashion uses both in the garment district in Midtown South and across the City, and we are actively engaged right now, the City together with our agency partners such as EDC to determine-- and working together with stakeholders to determine what are the challenges that this industry faced today in Midtown South and what are the best tools to address those challenges. We're going to continue to explore that as this plan moves forward, and-- Julieanne, anything more you want to add there?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HERSKOWITZ: I definitely would just echo the last sentiment. I'm happy to go through any of the new suite of tools that I referenced earlier, but without a doubt, you know, we have a longstanding, over a decade, relationship with the Council of Fashion Designers of America where we've dispersed hundreds of fashion manufacturing innovation grants to businesses that has resulted in, you know, real improvements within fashion manufacturer spaces, specifically and primarily within the garment center. We are looking across the board at our toolkit, focused on, as

noted, programmatic workforce development initiatives. We also have the Sunset Park real estate portfolio which we are actively recruiting fashion and fashion manufacturing businesses to locate there where we can specifically offer affordable competitive rents, long-term and flexible leases, especially at the new Mead Campus which is very exciting as well, but then specifically in the garment center, we are looking to support the industry that is there and welcome new ideas, you know, whether that's across the aisle or specifically, you know, as we continue to work and learn from the Council of Fashion Designers of America and all that they are understanding about this very changing industry in New York City.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: There have been concerns raised from a number of stakeholders about the proposed density in the southeast quadrant, and what is your view on reducing that as-of-right density in that quadrant and creating that housing through other means such as the tools with landmarks transfers?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you, Council Member. Yes, we certainly have heard the calls to

reduce the density in the southeast quadrant. We are proposing 18 FAR or 12, one of the new zoning districts created through City of Yes after the cap on residential density was lifted in Albany, and you know, we think that the R12, the 18 FAR district, makes sense for the southeast quadrant. I think it's important to note that the southeast quadrant is probably the area of MSMX that is most primed to welcome new housing today. It has fantastic access to amenities. It is surrounded by an existing residential context, whether it's along Sixth Avenue or to the east, you know, north of Madison Square Park. You've seen a lot of housing created immediately adjacent to the southeast quadrant. Jeff Bezos just bought and combined I think five penthouse apartments and had his furniture craned and lifted into his unit there, and I think one of the most significant things about it is that there no affordable housing requirement in any of those areas where housing is being created today. In the MSMX plan and in the southeast quadrant, we're proposing 18 FAR because we think this is an area that, again is primed to welcome housing. It has some of the most significant sites where new housing could be

constructed on vacant parcels. We can map mandatory inclusionary housing here and maximize the amount of affordable housing that we can create in what is right now a luxury housing district, and we think that the 18 FAR is supported. It's important for us to be ambitious in this plan, to be able to maximize housing. Our city is built on the bedrock of as-of-right housing development. That is where the vast majority of our housing comes from today is through as-of-right development. So we think that is important as a matter of policy for us to determine what is the right residential density to put in place here and to not, again, hope that by reducing density and then expecting or hoping that private property owners will pick up the slack and utilize optional zoning mechanisms to make up for that loss of housing. We don't think that's the right approach here. From a matter of policy, we don't think it's going to produce the amount of housing that is appropriate for this area. One final thing that I'll say, Council Member, is that the proposal that we've heard for the reduction of density in the southeast quadrant, dropping from 18 FAR down to 12 FAR would result in about a 55 percent loss in housing from

what we are proposing in the MSMX proposal. That is a dramatic decrease in the housing potential here, and expecting or hoping that landmark TDRs, the ability of landmark properties to sell their excess development rights to make up that difference is simply not possible. There is not enough floor area, excess floor area on landmark properties, to be able to make up that difference. We also know that, you know, again, these are optional mechanisms. They are-- you know, there's a cost involved. In buying that floor area for a landmark. It's not a certain thing to take place. We think that if it happens, it is a wonderful thing, and we welcome it. It's great for landmarks. It's great for the architectural character of these neighborhoods, and it provides a landing place for these otherwise unbuilt development rights. But again, I don't think that we should or we can rely on landmarks to come in and save the day if we cut housing in the southeast quadrant in particular.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: I think a lot of people would be more comfortable with the projections of city planning if zoning lot mergers had been taken into account during the EIS process.

Why was zoning lot mergers not considered when identifying projected development sites, and what is your analysis-- whether they were included or not in the official EIS, what does City Planning anticipate seeing with respect to zoning lot mergers?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you. We-- I think it's really important to emphasize that as part of our environmental review process where we look at the area block by block, lot by lot, very careful analysis of existing conditions to make determinations about the likelihood of individual sites to redevelop following a zoning change. That analysis does take into account the possibility of zoning lot mergers on sites that we think are the most likely to assemble into a single development site. In some cases, these are separate sites that are under same ownership. In some cases, the characteristics of a site we think make them especially likely to merge and develop into a single lot and a single development. So, it's not that we don't take that into account. Zoning lot mergers are subject to a private transaction between property owners, usually a financial transaction between property owners. It's not something that the City is

involved in. we don't mediate that process. So, aside from, you know, applying our standard environmental criteria, it's not something that we try to predict where every single zoning lot merger would take place. I think it's really important also to emphasize that, you know, mergers do happen from time to time across the City. It's certainly not the case that, you know, every possible zoning law, you know, with a neighbor merges with that zoning lot. I know during the public review process there were some presentations and assertions that were made about zoning lot mergers taking place in MSMX that you-- frankly, from our perspective we believe are really wildly unrealistic that, you know, the entirety of blocks, you know, or, you know, nine out of ten sites on a block would merge together into a single development. You know, that is not something that you see very frequently take place, and you know, again, we don't think that, you know, focusing on those kinds of, you know, potential unrealistic scenarios is the way to go here. Instead, I think it's really important to focus on the fact that, you know, we are proposing densities here to maximize the housing potential for New Yorkers in Midtown South

and to get the most amount of housing that we think is appropriate here and to utilize new tools that have been given to us to address the City's housing crisis. Doing things like shutting off zoning lot mergers, you know, hold a real prospect of having unintended consequences that are difficult to predict. Again, it's part of the existing landscape of development and land use in our city our today, and we don't see those kinds of worst case or unrealistic scenarios happening everywhere in our city.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: One of the absolute worst buildings to be constructed in New York City in decades is 262 Fifth Avenue, which on Fifth Avenue and 29th Street blocks the Empire State Building from the Flat Iron District and many other locations, and one of the worst things about it is there's 26 units in the building. What does this proposal do to prevent that kind of development, 26 units and a 860-foot building?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you, Council Member. Yes, we know that building well. We've heard a lot about that building during our process. I think it's really important to note that it is

outside of the plan area for MSMX. It's not within the boundaries that we are proposing for rezoning. And is really, I think, indicative of what happens when you don't have a thoughtful process, a planning process and a thoughtful plan in place for development of an area. That building that you referenced to 262 Fifth Avenue, it's in an area that does not have any affordable housing requirements today. So, it's a location where you can build and exclusively ultra luxury building and the kinds of prices that you get for ultra luxury, those 26 units that you referenced, can support the construction of an extraordinarily expensive building to build a super tall building like that. By contrast, the MSMX plan, what we are proposing, again, maximizes our housing potential here. It gets close to 10,000 units of housing in the MSMX plan area. It also requires for the first time Mandatory Inclusionary Housing apply here. So, a requirement that between 20 and 30 percent of all units within any building, new construction or conversion, in MSMX would have permanently income-restricted housing within that building. And there are a number of pieces to the MIH program that serve to steer buildings in a

certain direction, steer them away from the type of building that you referenced, the 262 Fifth Avenue building towards buildings of a more appropriate building height for MSMX. The MIIH program, for example, requires that the affordable units within the building are distributed across the majority of the floors of the building. And what we've seen in practice in areas where we have mapped MIH and where affordable housing has been provided in mixed buildings such as we expect to see in Midtown South is that it is simply not financially viable nor attractive to construct those kinds of buildings. You're not going to have a thousand foot tall building with affordable housing located throughout 65 percent of the floors in that building. Instead, what you see are the kinds of buildings that, you know, we see all around us here in lower Manhattan. You see in Midtown South today buildings 30 stories, 40 stories, 50 stories in height. That's where it's financially feasible to be able to provide affordable housing through the requirements of MIH. These are buildings that are solidly part of the context of the Midtown South today where you have a wide variety of building heights. So we think it's extraordinarily

unlikely that you're going to see buildings like that in the Midtown South are following this rezoning and the application of MIH.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Going to turn it back to my colleagues. I got a couple more, but I'll turn it over to my colleagues.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Council Member Powers?

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you, and thank you for those thoughtful questions and thoughtful answers. I had a whole series of questions. I just want to talk about some of the existing businesses and industries that are there. I think Council Member Bottcher covered a lot of it, but I may circle back. We're talking a lot about the MIH part of this and the application currently maps three options, Option One which requires 25 percent of floor area at 60 AMI, Option Two, 30 percent at an average of 80 AMI and Option Three, 20 percent at an average of 40 AMI. I think I got that right.

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: I think some conditions within those that also regulate how high and things like that. How many different income

[inaudible]. Do you have an estimate of how many affordable units are created in each of those three scenarios?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: The scenario-- thank you very much for that, for that question. The 2,900 figure that we is-- and I just want to confirm with my team here, the middle of those after the 25 percent. I'm sorry. That's option one, the 25 percent. So yes, the middle of those options gets you to the 2,900 units. I would have to do the math quickly on my phone calculator and get back to you on the other two.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: So, wait on. So Option One is where you get 2,900 units, is that correct?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Option One, yes,

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay. Option Two which is at 30 percent of units you would generate a higher amount and we can do the math on a--

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: [interposing] Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: back of napkin to figure out.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR MALIK: Sorry, can I just make a correction?

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: You may.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR MALIK: The total up to 2,900 is maxing out. So, 30 percent is 2,900.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: SO, that's Option Two, right?

DEPUTY DIRECTOR MALIK: That is Option Two, correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay, I got it, okay. so that's the high-- that's the high amount if you take Option Two.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR MALIK: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: And you go down if you use the other options. Okay.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR MALIK: Right.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Have you given any thoughts or preference to which of those options makes the most sense for this area?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you, Council Member. We by providing for both options, one, two, and three, we're providing the maximum latitude for the Council to determine the appropriate MIH band here. We think the most critical thing here is the application for MIH and, you know, certainly up to 2,900 units is a tremendous thing for an area that is

today producing zero income-restricted units. But that is, you know, we're-- you know, we think it it's the Council's decision to make the appropriate option here to apply.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Sure. Appreciate that. We-- there are two different-- and we will exercise that option [inaudible]. There are different sort of pathways to development in this area if you are an existing property owner. There is taking the new, you know,-- the new iteration of 421A, 45X to support new construction development, while alternately there is a tax incentive for-- in building and conversion if I am correct, with their own different affordability requirements and other requirements. Do we envision-- and forgetting the actual tax incentives for a second, those are two different alternative options, one that comes with totally brand new ground-up development, you know, place was a building, others where we're taking the shell of a building I suppose and redoing the inside of it, which is its own challenge. And I think most people when they think about conversions think about that second one, not the sort of switch-- changing a switch on the-- you know, what's allowed there and

therefore incentivizing something new. Obviously, how we address FAR, things might also I suppose trigger different incentives for people to do different things. But what is the feedback, what is the envisioning right now of what that mix might look like or which path might lead to more development? And what do you see as really the sort of the outcome of this when it comes to either ground-up new development versus taking existing buildings and converting them from the inside?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you, Council Member Powers. I think what we expect to see here and we certainly hope to see here is a little bit of everything that you outlined, and you know, that really is part of creating a vibrant mixed-use district, especially in an area like Midtown South that is so heavily built-out today. We think that there is certainly a role for new construction, and there are fantastic opportunities for new construction within the MSMX plan area. This is where we can get, you know, our, you know, modern, high-quality housing including the affordable housing through MIH. There's a role for conversion of existing buildings, and we certainly think that

there, you know, are-- you know, there's the potential for conversions in Midtown South. We've got many very large buildings in Midtown South that, you know, could be potential candidates for conversions, again, with affordable housing requirements through MIH. And you know, I think it's worth noting a lot of those-- many of those large buildings today exceed even the densities that we're proposing for new construction under this plan, buildings that are 20 FAR or 30 FAR. So, there is real potential for significant housing through conversions, and then there's also a significant role for buildings to remain under existing use, non-residential use today whether it's for light manufacturing or office. And in making our best guess of what we think is likely to take place here, which is a little bit of everything, and the creation of mixed-use districts, we are looking at adjacent areas, some of which were rezoned to allow housing and some of which long had mixed-use housing in place that allowed both residential and non-residential uses. In the first category, looking at areas where zoning was changed over the past, you know, decades to allow and introduce housing, what we did not see

was a dramatic shift from areas becoming non-residential to becoming exclusively residential. Instead, we saw what we're expecting to see in Midtown South and what we've long talked about which is housing coming in on sites where it makes the most sense, where it's simplest and easiest and, you know, frankly costs the least to produce housing, things like parking lots or, you know, significantly under-built sites, but areas still retaining their strong, non-residential commercial character, still a large presence of jobs. And the same holds true for areas that have had mixed use zoning for many decades. That includes the areas to the east of Fifth Avenue, for example, you know, north of Madison Square Park, areas of Midtown, thee have had mixed-use zoning for many decades, and you know-- so this is-- you know, has led us to believe that we certainly think that that's going to be the future for Midtown South and we feel confident that that's case. You mentioned the new tax incentives in Albany, whether for new construction or conversions. You know, I think that those are both very new. We're going to have to see how those play out. We've been very encouraged to hear early enthusiasm, especially for the 467M tax

incentives for conversions, but again, these are both very new programs. I think we're going to have to see how they play out in new neighborhoods where new housing is unlocked like Midtown South.

CHAIRPERSON RILEY: Excuse me, Council Member Powers. Due to scheduling conflict, I have to leave. I'm going to hand this over to Council Member Bottcher to be the Acting Chair for the remainder of this hearing. Council Member Powers, you can continue your questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you. We'll miss you.

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you, Chair Riley.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you for that answers, and we'll have some follow-up questions on that. I want to talk about a thing that the community brings up, but obviously anybody who's been in Midtown knows the lack of open space and park space in that area. You know, appreciate sort of what you're talking about when it comes to not-- it's not going to overnight and certainly not switch over to a fully residential community. If you just walk around the Financial District I think you see, you

know, a mix of some residential buildings with lots of commercial. If you're a commercial space today, you're fully leased up or you're doing well.

Doubtful you're going to do the conversion, but for buildings that are in stress or looking for flexibility, that's where you might see it. What new parks and open space does the City plan to introduce as part of the rezoning. Have you been in touch with Parks Department to look at strategies for creating new spaces or opportunities for upgrades or renovations to existing spaces?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you, Council Member. I'll lead with the point that I think you made which is, you know, just a reminder that our time horizon that we look at for when the 9,700 new homes would come to Midtown South is a 10-year time horizon. So, you're absolutely right, this is not a switch that flips and suddenly you have tens of thousands of new people living in this area. So, I think that there's time for us to continue to plan for the growth of Midtown South and the introduction of housing into the area. Unlike in many areas where we engage in neighborhood planning efforts, the City does not own significant property in the Midtown

South plan area today. So, our options to create new open space on city-owned property is very, very limited in Midtown South, and we're working closely with our partner agencies. That includes the Parks Department. That includes DOT to find opportunities to improve the public realm in Midtown South. There are obviously some key extremely high-quality parks, you know, right on the door step of Midtown South today, whether it's Madison Square Park or Bryant Park, but we really are looking at options for how we can improve the public realm in Midtown South itself today. And one key thing that we can do through zoning is to incentivize the creation of additional public open space on private properties. It's a really key piece of our zoning toolkit to get additional public open space, especially in our densest neighborhoods that, you know, have the highest amount of people living or working or pedestrian traffic in them, and may lack opportunities for public open space. This is the privately-owned public spaces program. That program applies in Midtown South today. The MSMX proposal would not change the ability for privately-owned public spaces, or POPS, to be created in Midtown

South and we've seen some extremely high-quality POPS created across the city recently, especially under our current very stringent design regulations that we have for these POPS. The MSMX proposal also expands the ability to create additional private-- on public open space on private property by introducing the covered pedestrian space, POPS typology to Midtown South. That allows for the creation of indoor or weather-protected POPS to complement what are normally mostly outdoor plazas through the standard POPS program. So, we think that's really a key component of the MSMX proposal is to leverage the private sector to be able to provide public open space on private property at no cost to taxpayers.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Thank you. Have you also, beyond that, looked at ways to widen sidewalks, add street trees, other amenities, improve the public realm and streetscape on the avenues and the side streets?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you. Yes, those are certainly things that, you know, we've heard about. Again, coming back to this idea that we heard throughout our public and stakeholder engagement process was that, you know, the public

realm in Midtown South needs attention and has very high pedestrian volumes today, and a desire for the streets and sidewalks of Midtown South to not just accommodate those volumes, but to be very welcoming for pedestrians, and the City is engaged in efforts right now in Midtown South and in the future to improve the public realm through efforts like Broadway Vision, for example. We have a colleague from DOT, David Breen, here who can certainly provide additional information if you'd like it on DOT's initiatives and efforts in Midtown South today.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay, thanks.

Can I ask a question to DOT while we have it on topic. Transit in this area, something we all care about a lot. High transit corridor here. Council Member Bottcher and I-- I authored a letter, Council Member Bottcher signed onto it along with many of our colleagues for a busway on 34th Street which would help people traveling right through this area from east to west, high transit area. I know that DOT has been looking at it. Can you give us the latest update on that, and do you see it as an addition of-- a welcome addition to this conversation as part of the rezoning.

DIRECTOR BREEN: Certainly. David Breen, I'm the Director of Strategic Initiatives at New York City DOT. Thanks for the question. Yes, so as you are aware, we've been conducting some preliminary outreach on the prospects of a 34th Street bus-way project throughout the first half of this year. We've gathered some tremendous feedback through that process to-date, and we're currently working through our traffic analysis to inform both the design going forward and to ensure that we're able to respond to the questions and feedback that we have received so far. So, we're currently working through that process and we're looking forward to returning to the community in the coming months with an update on what we've learned, how we can ensure the project is-- and how we can ensure the process is most successful going forward.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: And what's the timeline on that?

DIRECTOR BREEN: As I said, we're working through the analysis right now. So, I think once we've completed that which I anticipate in the next few months we'll be able to return to Community Boards. That should coincide with the return from

summer recess, and we'll be able to continue our conversations.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Got it. We have no summer recess. I wish we did. Just kidding. So, we think about in the fall, early fall? I'm not putting you under the-- but just reasonable standard you're to think that maybe by early fall we'll be having a conversation?

DIRECTOR BREEN: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Okay. I would just encourage as we're moving forward with this proposal we also get some updates on where that proposal stands, being that we're talking about making a new residential neighborhood here in Midtown, and you know, being able to lean into open space, public realm, and transit improvements as part of this would be-- and I know there's other transit upgrades that we've discussed. It would be welcome to be able to figure out how we kind of move this forward together as a residential neighborhood. Thank you for that answer. I'm going to go back to zoning. That's my last question for DOT, so thank you. There's a conversation I know you were having about the south quadrant, but this-- I'm sure we

should have this conversation-- this can apply to other quadrants as well. And that conversation is sort of, you know, where to set the FAR, how to look at the landmark transfers and how we're activated because of City of Yes to be like landmark transfers that can go further across the street. And the transit bonuses and other bonuses here, and I would imagine the landmarks in that quadrant who now have a new regime of how to transfer their landmark rights are likely going to be advocating to be able to use those over adding new as-of-right FAR. And I just want to kind of jump back into that conversation for a second. The-- right-- so, could you just-- I guess give me your analysis of the two scenarios in terms of housing generated and outcomes. One is use the full tools here that are available to us when it come to FAR, things that were granted to us by the state, the City activated allow for sort of the maximum amount of housing to be built here on those sites which optimizes our affordable housing and our total housing goal, and put that at the highest amount. That scenario compared to a lower amount to then try to incentive the transit bonuses, the landmark bonus-- the landmark transfers, and I think there's-- and

the POPS would be the third bonus there. To allow those three to be used. Because I guess one question is whether the 18 FAR disincentivizes the use of those other three. I'm not offering an opinion on that. I'm just asking a question. Versus doing it at a lower amount and then trying to incentivize those others to be used. What's lost and gained in the scenario where you transfer to the second one? And would just be curious to see your take on-- a comparison on those two scenarios.

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: Thank you. I do have an opinion on it, and I'll-- so, again, we arrived at the density for the various districts, the proposed density for the various districts in Midtown South looking at a combination of factors. This is what we do with all of our planning initiatives. We look at the existing conditions that are there today to help inform what the neighborhood-- what's the appropriate density? What can the neighborhood support today? That's a key component of planning work and certainly factored into looking at the highest densities for the two northern quadrants where the existing densities are highest today. The other thing that's really important to look at here, though, is what are

the objectives of this proposal? What are the opportunities that we can seize here? Especially in the Midtown South plan when it comes to allowing housing for the first time here. As I said before, the southeast quadrant is probably the best place to welcome new housing, new residents, especially across a range of income levels. It's an area that has a lot of housing around it today on Sixth Avenue, Fifth Avenue, points east and to the south without affordable housing requirements. So, of course, in Midtown South we can allow that housing. We can require and mandate affordable housing through the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program. That's all key, and we think the 18 FAR for residential, the R12 district in the southeast quadrant is appropriate both based on the characteristics of the area today, very wide range of building sizes. Building heights in the southeast quadrant, probably the widest range of building heights in the plan area, but also the opportunities that are provided there. You have very significant development sites that are kind of shovel ready in the southeast quadrant compared to other areas where, you know, the northwest quadrant, for example, largely built out with very large existing

buildings, very challenging to see new construction taking place in that neighborhood. The southeast quadrant by contrast, we have some real significant potential to get early, very reliable housing in that neighborhood in short order for Midtown South. So, we think that's really key. The dropping from the 18 FAR down to a 12 FAR, which has been proposed as a way to provide additional value to landmarked properties, for example, so they can sell their development rights. Again, that would come with a dramatic loss of housing. 1.1 million square feet of housing lost in that area, going from 18 FAR to 12 FAR. It's about a 55 percent cut over what we are proposing. Looking to the 10 landmarks within that area to make up that difference simply is not possible. Those 10 landmarks have about 420,000 square feet of excess floor area on them, available for transfer, again as a voluntary mechanism. Nothing compels anybody to buy those development rights for a landmark to sell those development rights, but just simply look at the base math. 1.1 million square feet lost by reducing the zoning 420,000 square feet available to try to make up that

difference through optional mechanisms, you simply can't make up for that loss.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: But, and just to-- just offering a response to that. Arguably, you would use a landmark plus something else, isn't that fair to say?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: You could use landmark. You could also seek a POPS bonus, for example. I think it's really worth noting that the certain of the bonuses, the POPS bonus, the transit bonus, for example--

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: [interposing] You can't mix-- can you mix them, or no?

DIRECTOR BOTSFORD: You can mix them, but taken together in aggregate, they cannot increase the amount of floor area on a receiving site by more than 20 percent. So you can't just stack these endlessly again to try to make up for that 1.1 million square foot loss. Again, these are all mechanisms that we think are fantastic if they're utilized. They provide immense benefit to the public for improved transit or open spaces or landmark preservation. But again, they're optional, and we simply cannot and we should not rely upon them by artificially suppressing

density and then hoping that private actors will come in and make up that difference. You know, the other thing that I'll note and this is something you may hear today as well is that, you know, there is additional ability for properties within historic districts to transfer development rights to help make up this difference. Properties other than designated landmarks, and that is not a mechanism that exists in zoning today. See, there's no special ability for historic districts to transfer excess floor area in the way that landmark properties can do. And just one more point that I'll make. In addition to-- I talked about the bonuses like POPS and transit that are capped at a 20 percent increase-- landmark transfers are also in addition capped at a 20 percent increase, as well, separate from the bonuses.

COUNCIL MEMBER POWERS: Got it. Thank you. I'm going to-- I know we got a lot of people here to testify, so I'm going to hold my questions from there. [inaudible].

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: I've got about 27 additional questions, but out of respect for the public, I know a lot of people have been here since 10 in the morning. We have 80 people signed up to

testify. So, let's go ahead and move forward.

Counsel, are there any members of the public who would like to testify?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, as was just mentioned, we have quite a crowd. So we have approximately 40 people here in-person and approximately another 40 people online. We're going to start with the in-person testimony. That's about two minutes per testimony. So, for people online, it'll probably be about an hour to two hours before we can get to you. So, we just wanted to give you that notice. Now we're going to start with in-person testimony.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: So, our first panel is Emilyn Edillon, Gigi Burris, Ryan Wilbat, and Andrea Goldwyn. And the panel after that just to give you a heads up will be Madeline McGrory, James Coakley, Aislin Klein, and Frank Fish. So, for the members of the public who are here to testify, please note that witnesses will generally be called in panels of four. If you're a member of the public signed up to testify on a proposal, please standby when you hear your name being called and prepare to speak when I indicate that you may begin. Please

also note that once all panelists in your group have completed their testimony you'll be excused as a group, and the next group of speakers will be introduced. Once removed participants may continue to view the live stream broadcast of this hearing on the Council website. Members of the public will be given two minutes to speak. Please do not begin until the Sergeant at Arms has started the clock. So, we'll begin with Emilyn Edillon.

EMILYN EDILLON: Good afternoon. My name is Emilyn Edillon and I lead Supply Chain Initiatives at the Council of Fashion Designers of America. I'm here today on behalf of our CEO, Steven Kolb. First, thank you to the mayor, City Council, NYC EDC, and the many landlords that have supported fashion over the years. Fashion is more than a culture. It's an economic engine for this city, supporting over 180,000 jobs, generating more than 11 billion in wages, and contributing \$600 million in tax revenue annually. We applaud progress and support city initiatives like MSMX that aim to modernize and activate space, but not at the cost of fashion's future. The garment district is the home to cutters, sewers, graters, and finishers often just blocks from

designers. This proximity isn't tradition. It's an operational necessity. Speed, quality and trust define New York City production and it can't be outsourced. Without meaningful support for these businesses their survival in the city is in jeopardy, and with them, the entire fashion ecosystem. In 2018, the city made key commitments to preserve space, invest in local manufacturing and offer tax relief. Many of those promises remain unmet. Since 2013, the CFDA's Fashion Manufacturing initiative in partnership with NYC EDC has invested over \$6.1 million into New York's manufacturing network, impacting more than 2,000 workers. We've done our part. Now it's time for the City to do the same. We ask you to: One, honor the 2018 commitments. Two, preserve and expand access to affordable and protected production space. Three, invest in the future of New York City fashion workforce. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

Gigi Burris?

GIGI BURRIS: My name is Gigi Burris O'Hara. I am the founder of Gigi Burris Millinery, a luxury hat company that proudly produces each hat in

New York City, and I am also the executive Chairwoman of Closely Crafted, a nonprofit organization founded to preserve luxury craftsmanship in the American fashion industry. Hat making in New York has made growing my niche business possible, and it allows me to create hats for runway, for TV shows, for retailers like Bergdorf Goodman, and it's become increasingly difficult to produce here. And I work with a third generation blocking factory and they had been in the garment center since 1958 for over 60 years, and in the 2018 rezoning, the building that they occupied was sold and turned into a hotel, and they moved to Bushwick. And it's been really a struggle for me as a small business owner because I have to transport all the way to Bushwick, all of my materials. Suppliers are in the Garment Center, and without a clear displacement fund in place, it's really-- it's going to a pain point for other brands. And Closely Crafted, our mission is to inspire the next generation of creators, and without the space to do so, without the experts to train, we aren't going to have a sustainable fashion industry with new artisans coming into this field. So, we absolutely need to have workforce development dollars that are

clearly outlined as part of this plan. And New York fashion is a global leader in the fashion space because we're able to make here, we're able to show here, we're able to sell here, and if we lose the ability to make here, we're going to lose that position as a global fashion leader. And so what I want to see is clearer reforms in place. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

Ryan Wilbat?

RYAN WILBAT: Good afternoon, City Council Members. My name is Ryan Wilbat and I'm a member of the USA 829 Union working as an assistant costumer designer across theater, TV, film, and fashion. I came to New York City to study theatrical design at New York University where I was quickly introduced to the Garment District, a place that became a classroom of its own. The shops were a place for discovery stocked with experts in fabrics, notions, tools, and the process of making made-to-order garments. They have shaped my education and continue to be essential to my work. Over the years, the Garment District has become inseparable for my career. Every vendor and manufacturer I rely on is rooted there. Many are multigenerational businesses

and landmarks in their own right. New York City without the Garment District as we know it would be missing a key part of its identity, both culturally and economically. The MSMX rezoning plan as proposed invites the shuttering of these stores and manufacturers, as well as the industries they feed. Historically, the Garment District gave rise to icons like Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren that is responsible for the costumes behind Broadway, the Met Opera and New York City Ballet, all institutions which have defined this city. It has made in-city production possible for TV and film from Breakfast at Tiffany's to Sex in the City, both known for their iconic style. For me and my peers this rezoning could further affect our industry that has been challenged by the culmination of the pandemic and cost of living in this city, but it is still fighting and functioning. It could also mean a loss of opportunities to build the next great New York brand, musical, show, or film. Thank you, and please reconsider the consequences of the MSMX plan as proposed.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Andrea Goldwyn.

ANDREA GOLDWYN: Good afternoon, Council Members Bottcher and Powers. I'm Andrea Goldwyn speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The Conservancy is dedicated to preserving, revitalizing and reusing New York's historic buildings and neighborhoods. We support affordable housing. We want to ensure that New York's rich diversity of architecture continues to enhance the City, creating jobs, housing New Yorkers, encouraging sustainability and welcoming visitors from around the world. Conversion of underused buildings is at the heart of preservation, and we support this concept for Midtown South, but in practice we fear that the blanket upzoning will encourage massive new construction, and the demolition of the historic buildings that contribute so much to this community. The Madison Square North and Ladies' Mile Historic Districts overlap with the southeast quadrant. These historic districts have been remarkably successful, creating housing, fostering commercial and retail uses, and becoming destinations for New Yorkers and visitors. The upzoning will increase development pressure and pressure the LPC to approve out-of-scale new

buildings. The northwest section includes the Garment Center historic district listed on the national register of historic places. These buildings still contain hundreds of businesses and thousands of jobs which form a unique ecosystem of design and production. The rezoning will fast-forward the building's demolition and hasten the demise of the Garment Center. The rezoning is also at odds with recently passed laws. City of Yes expanded the ability for individual landmarks to sell unused development rights, but the upzoning would extinguish those opportunities. Changes to the MDL that ended the 12 FAR limit exempted historic districts. There's no reason why the City should now increase the FAR above 12 in the district. We urge the Council to make changes that tailor the plan for each quadrant, reducing the FAR in some sections to an R10 equivalent or 12 FAR or even excluding historic districts would prioritize reuse of existing historic buildings, encourage sustainable development and still support the City's goals of increasing housing. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you very much. Now we'll hear from our next our panel,

Madeline McGrory, James Coakley, Aislinn Klein, and Frank Fish. We'll begin with Madeline McGrory.

MADELINE MCGRORY: Hello. My name's Madeline McGrory and I'm here delivering testimony on behalf of Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today about our housing crisis and the important role the Midtown South mixed-use rezoning proposal will play in addressing it. Midtown South has always been critical to our city's economy, first, as a vibrant manufacturing hub, then as a commercial corridor where workers from across the City make a living. Today, we have an extraordinary opportunity to transform these 42 blocks into a vibrant community where people can both live and work. This rezoning was the centerpiece of my office's Housing Manhattanites Report which identified opportunities across our borough to unlock new housing sites. This type of proposal is exactly what's required to meaningfully address the housing crisis. The proposal will create a pathway for the creation of approximately 9,676 new dwelling units including over 2,000 permanently affordable homes in one of the most transit-rich areas of our city. Future residents

will have access to 14 subway lines in proximity to Penn Station in addition to walkable access to over 135,000 existing jobs in the area. Despite being centrally located with unparalleled transit access, these 42 blocks experienced dramatic population fluctuations between work days and evenings because people can work here, but cannot live here. We cannot overstate the urgent need to build more housing in Manhattan. Vacancy rates are at historically-low levels and median asking rents have reached historic highs which has led to housing becoming increasingly inaccessible for most New Yorkers. The manufacturing zoning that is currently mapped in this area prevents it from helping address Manhattan's most pressing challenge, increasing our housing supply. Several policy and planning initiatives have aligned to make this the perfect moment for this proposal, including the state's lifting of the 12 FAR cap on residential development and the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity text amendments introducing higher-density residential districts. I'm thrilled to offer my support for this project. While I strongly support his proposal, we

must ensure that community resources grow alongside increased population.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: James Coakley?

JAMES COAKLEY: Thank you, sir. My name's James Coakley. I'm here to support this rezoning plan. I want to commend the members of the City Planning for their thought that they-- and background studies that they put forward. I think it's very well thought out and will bring meaningful, robust housing to the area. Many of the buildings in this area currently sit vacant or nearly vacant and are certainly underutilized and are in need of redevelopment. Many of these buildings could easily bring 50 to 100 new housing units to life, while a small drop in the bucket of what the City needs citywide, it is certainly a great place to start. As important is the speed at which some of these units could be brought to market. By adaptably reusing some of these buildings in mid-block, less commercially desirable areas, housing could be brought to market perhaps in months rather than years. The adoption of this plan would spur additional economic activity for many of the small businesses in the area that have never fully

recovered from the COVID pandemic. I think an 18 FAR is certainly the right and most meaningful adaptation here. It makes sense. It would certainly be well within the character and charm of the area. Furthermore, there are many existing mixed-use zones in New York City, as well as other communities that have proven to be both successful from a residential and housing market and have also supported commerce and industry within that same area. Thank you for the opportunity today.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Aislinn Klein?

AISLINN KLEIN: Hi, my name is Aislinn Klein. I'm from the Municipal Art Society of New York. MAS supports the Midtown South mixed-use plan to foster a vibrant 24/7 mixed-use neighborhood including affordable housing, eased [sic] office to housing conversions, and public realm improvements. MSMX is consistent with our support for the city of Yes for Housing Opportunity zoning amendment with its promise of mixed-use development with deep housing affordability and a transit-rich neighborhood with the infrastructure that can accommodate new growth. All these factors are critical to helping our city mitigate its housing crisis. However, the projected

displacement of the remaining garment industry businesses is of great concern. The draft environmental impact statement notes that an estimated 114 businesses could potentially be displaced under the proposal. Yet, this was determined to not have a significant adverse impact. The fact is, many garment businesses are small, unique shops that provide products that cannot be purchased elsewhere in the City. Many still serve the nearby Broadway Theater District. We urge the City Council to review and consider the New York Fashion Workforce Development Coalition's recommendations to ensure that garment industry businesses are supported and remain active and parallel with meeting the development goals of the Midtown South plan. These measures include workforce programs, the release of remaining garment district alliance funds, tax relief for fashion-related business and displacement relief fund. Additionally, the City must prioritize and incentivize adaptive re-use over demolition to minimize long-term garment tenant displacement. MAS is also concerned that the rezoning favors big box retail and class A office space. Ninety-nine percent of office space in the

rezoning area is class B or C. How can the City balance new affordable housing development and support for small businesses who want to remain in place, but will not be able to afford Class A rent. Can I keep going?

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: You could just complete the thought, please.

AISLINN KLEIN: Okay. Class B and C office space plays a valuable role in this city, especially for nonprofit organizations and small businesses who cannot afford Class A. Eliminating large swaths of Class B and C office space will not only leave a void in the market, it will also diminish the vitality and diversity of the area's urban fabric. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We ask that the concerns outlined by the coalition be addressed. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you. Frank Fish?

FRANK FISH: Good afternoon, Councilman. My name is Frank Fish. I'm with BFJ Planning. I'm Principal of the firm. We're located here in Manhattan in the Flat Iron District, so we have a good view of the building case you mentioned earlier

on Fifth Avenue. But I'm speaking here on behalf of the Garment District Alliance and the BID who we've worked with since 2021, 2022, and I think you're both familiar with the study we produced. Your office has it, and I have an extra copy if other council people want it. But what it did was trace out the Garment District. This is in the northwest quadrant of what City Planning's proposing, and I'm here basically to speak in favor of adoption of Midtown South as a zoning proposal. But our report went through with the Department of City Planning and also both of yourself with Council Members, and we also met with Boards Four and Five on this. What happened-- what we found was that it's a discouraging situation in the northwest quadrant in the Garment District. There were some-- in 87, there was some 30,000 Garment District jobs. That now has come down in 2016 to 5,000, and it's somewhere in the vicinity we think of 4,000. After 2016, COVID hit and office employees started-- some started working from home. This led to the Garment District losing a very significant population in terms of workforce. Today, as has been mentioned earlier, the garment district has not much liveliness on the streets. One of the

reasons is, too, that the garment industry itself in terms of space consists of less than two percent of the total square footage in the Garment District, specifically about 1.8 percent, and that has been declining. So, it's a terrible situation in the district, and I think the thing to say is that the zoning will actually help the Garment District, and in terms of the garment industry itself, as you've heard earlier, that's primarily an economic issue, not a zoning issue. So, we'd ask you to consider adopting the Midtown South.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you. The next panel is Jean Prabhu, Teresa Snider-Stein, Jonathan Hayden, and Stephanie Smallwood [sp?]. The panel after that will be Helen Hwang, Steve Boxer, David West, and Ali Begaze [sp?]. Start with Jean Prabhu. Just push the button on the-- there you go.

JEAN PRABHU: Good afternoon. I'm Jean Prabhu from Staten Island, New York. Thank you for permitting me to speak. You may wonder why a person from Staten Island is here to testify regarding Midtown Manhattan. It's simple. The Garment District and industry is precious to all New Yorkers, including those in the outer boroughs, many of whom

worked in the Garment District their entire lives. As an Italian-American, I think particularly of the Nona's [sic] I knew growing up in Brooklyn who went daily went to the Garment District to share their talents as seamstresses, designers, and in other creative businesses. On their behalf, their children and their grandchildren and today's talented and creative garment district workers, I respectfully ask the City to improve the proposed plan by supporting the garment industry and small businesses with specific incentives for retention of manufacturing jobs. Incentivizing adaptive reuse of all the area's historic building for housing and lowering the proposed residential FAR to eliminate the possibility of wide-scale demolition of the area. We can have housing and jobs and protect our historic buildings and historic fashion industry. Please create a plan that works for all of this. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

Teresa Snider-Stein?

TERESA SNIDER-STEIN: Hello. Hi. My name is Teresa Snider-Stein and I'm a costume designer and educator who has relied on the Garment District and its unique resources since I arrived fresh-faced from

Ohio in 1980. As a professional costume designer I'm a member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, IATSE, Local 829, and as a full professor, I run the Costume Design MFA, BFA, BA programs at CUNY's Brooklyn College here in New York City. The Garment District with its fabrication resources and highly-skilled artisans were an essential part of my journey from the entry level of a costume intern to Procurement Specialist at Parson's Mirrors, a top-tier costume shop that built the most fabulous costumes on Broadway for Cats, Phantom of the Opera and others, to roles as Assistant Costume Designer and to Costume Designer for my career in my career in theater, film, and television. Here's just one example. When the writes at the Late Show with David Letterman needed an instant Dalai Lama costume, I raced down from 52nd Street to the Garment District to locate and purchase the saffron and maroon fabrics the team needed to create the costume. We had about an hour. It was key the Garment District was close by. That kind of thing happened often, and without the Garment District, it just would not be possible for the costume team to be successful. The other days we

might have had a bit more time, but the proximity, again, of the Garment District and all of its resources together near Broadway, film, television remains precious and irreplaceable. The Garment District's specific resources and highly-skilled workforce have been invaluable to me, both from my 45 year as a professional costume designer, and for the last 17 years I've stewarded the next generation of bright-eyed students into the industry where they now rely on the Garment District and all that it has to offer. Please save it.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Jonathan

Hayden?

JOHNATHAN HAYDEN: Good afternoon,

Council Members. My name is Johnathan Hayden and I'm a fashion designer and member of the Governing Board of the New York Fashion Workers Development Coalition. I came to New York City in 2015 from Texas with that dream, landing an internship at 550 Fashion Avenue and running errands throughout the vibrant Garment District. Today, I design and produce my collection from my studio renovated into a 40-year-old cut and sew factory on 38th Street, owned by an immigrant Chinese couple, Charlene and Chen

[sp?], who I call my fashion parents. They along with the entirety of support from all the Garment District businesses I once visited as a bright-eyed intern have been my partners throughout many endeavors, including the ultimate getting to New York Fashion Week. From an intern to independent brand, indeed today's student is the designer of tomorrow. The dress you see in front of you, epitomizes the alchemy of Garment District businesses: custom printed laser-cut cotton from 38th, pleated on 37th, corset organza on 36th, boning, binding, lining, and zipper block by block from 36th to 38th between Broadway and Eighth Avenue, hand-embroidered. Over a month it was ultimately constructed like the garments in production of many great American brands by blue collar and immigrant artisans who work to simply provide a better life for their children every day, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. We choose to do business in America. Fashion's aspiration is an American dream, and this one was proudly made in New York City, the only place in America where the distance between an idea and its execution is within walking distance. The City should seek to co-create with its makers and bridge rather than a toll [sic] with developers, a

vision for the future and facilitate transition, whatever that may be. Without these block by block resources, this intra-industry ecosystem in the northwest quadrant of the MSMX plan that produces billions in America's cultural exports, I ask you what' Fashion Avenue without fashion? Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you. Stephanie Smallwood? Oh, great job. Helen Hwang, Steven Boxer, David West, Ali Begaze-- I apologize. And next will be George Kalajia, Emily White, Katherine Nicklos, and Pooja Patel. Helen Hwang?

HELEN HWANG: Thank you. My name is Helen Hwang, and I serve as Chair of the Urban Land Institute New York District Council. ULI is the oldest and largest network of cross-sector real estate and land use professionals in the world, uniting over 45,000 members globally across the private, public and nonprofit sectors. The Midtown South mixed-use plan is a transformational initiative that re-envisions one of Manhattan's most iconic, yet undervalued districts. It builds on Midtown South's legacy, particularly the Garment District's role in fashion and creative production, and supports its evolution into a 21st century hub for living,

innovation and culture. It promotes adaptive use, office residential conversions, and greater residential density, including affordable housing through the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program. The inclusion of MIH is especially significant as it ensures the new residential development and will deliver long-term sustainable affordability in one of the most infrastructure-rich and opportunity-dense areas of the City. Importantly, the plan also supports zoning for light manufacturing and creative industries from fashion and food to design, helping sustain the diverse economy that defines this neighborhood. Building community is about more than buildings. It's about enhancing quality of life, stitching the district into the daily life of the City so it serves not just those passing through, but those who call this place home. The plan modernizes outdated zoning that has long-constrained the district's potential. It creates space for housing, jobs, civic spaces, and essential retail, all while preserving Midtown South architectural and cultural character. It strikes a thoughtful balance between preservation and progress. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCER: Steve Boxer?

STEVE BOXER: Good afternoon. My name is Steve Boxer. I own Pachyderm Consulting, a IT-managed service provider, a New York born and raised business over the last 25 years, and I strongly support MSMX. My business was located in the Garment District for 15 years because of the neighborhood's unparalleled transit access made it easy for me to get to work, to attract employees, and to reach my client's sites. However, the Garment District today is struggling from long-lasting impacts of the pandemic, commercial vacancies, failing retail, and increased crime have diminished the quality of life in that neighborhood which I love, making it difficult to find and retain quality employees. In 2022 I moved my company just out of the Garment District to a safer, more attractive neighborhood. However, I still commute through Garment District almost daily and find myself feeling vulnerable, if not a bit sad, when I need to work during evenings and weekends, because the neighborhood feels a little less safe, and frankly particularly dangerous during those late hours. I support the MSMX plan, because it's abundantly clear that the Garment District's reliance on commercial tenants is today untenable. I

would love to move back into the area and my employees would love to live in Midtown, but the City must encourage the Garment District's development into a self-sustaining 24/7 community with mixed-uses that can support each other and bring a new vibrancy back to the streets. This can only be accomplished by encouraging more residential conversions and development to take place. At a time when the City is experiencing a housing crisis that further threatens the workforce, MSMX presents and opportunity to revitalize the Garment District in the heart of Midtown while also addressing this critical city need. I urge the passing of MSMX proposal. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

David West?

DAVID WEST: Yes, good afternoon. My name is David West. I'm a partner with Hill West Architects. I've been a practicing architect in the New York City housing space since the mid-1980s. during that time the markets have gone through numerous cycles and produced thousands of units of housing in a wide array of Manhattan neighborhoods. One notable exception has been the mid-blocks in

Midtown South. These have been effectively off-limits to housing production due to the restricted zoning in place, a hold-over from a bygone era, intended to preserve this transit-rich, centrally-located area of the world's foremost metropolis for an imaginary renaissance of garment manufacturing for trading and alike. I know this area well, having had several business offices located in the area which due to the restrictions became something of a mecca for architects and engineers, among other BNC class office users. In the late 80s and early 90s, vestiges of the former manufacturing trades were everywhere. Today, they are few and far between. For the most part, the only new development that has occurred has been a plethora of hotels which are no longer possible due to the special permit. For a city with such a dire need for housing, to preserve this fast area for a memory of a century-old economy is outrageous and short-sided. Therefore, I am a full-throated supporter of MSMX. The zoning text and mechanisms are straightforward and simple. I believe based on our hands-on analysis of multiple sites, that the enactment of MSMX will unlock housing development on numerous sites and result in a mix of

uses and scales of building that will revitalize and enhance this area on a meaningful scale. Furthermore, a large percentage of this development will be affordable through MIH in conjunction with 467M and 485X. In conclusion, I strongly support the rezoning effort. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Ali Begaze?
How's that? Much better.

ALI BEGAZO: Is this on? Yep. My name is Ali Begazo, and I'm here today to represent the Flatiron Nomad Partnership Business Improvement District. The BID supported DCP's early work on the MSMX plan. We remain enthusiastically supportive of updating outdated zoning to allow high-density residential conversions and new development. However, we are concerned that the most recent version could negatively affect the district's balance of commercial, residential, historic, and retail uses. We believe the plan can be refined to meet all the City's housing goals while protecting what makes our neighborhood so special. To that end, we offer a few suggestions. First, unlike the other three quadrants, the southeast quadrant is underbuilt and contains a large amount of unused FAR. More than

half of the area falls within the historic districts, and there are 12 landmark properties. We request the proposal be modified so that surplus property air rights are utilized. Such a revision would allow all 3,175 projected housing units for the quadrant while supporting the area's historical and architectural qualities. Second, the urban design modifications in the proposal when applied to the southeast quadrant would throw the mid-block side streets to permanent shadow and have significant impacts on the light and air of existing buildings. We urge these impacts be carefully looked at and mitigated. Third, privately-owned public spaces or POPS in our districts often become points of concern for the community rather than valued assets. POPS should not be the City's solution to the rezoning's impact on the limited open space resources of the area. Instead, the plans would support the upkeep and expansion of successful public spaces such as Madison Square Park, Flatiron Public Plazas and the Broadway Vision Corridor through a targeted public realm investment fund, governing group, and concept plan added to the zoning resolution. In conclusion, we hope this proposal will be modified in accordance with the above

concerns to yield a plan that can achieve all the City's housing goals, and also further elevate the vitality of Flatiron, Nomad, and Greater Midtown South. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you so much. Next, we have George Kalajian, Emily White, Katherine Nicklos, and Pooja Patel. Going to start with George Kalajian.

GEORGE KALAJIAN: Hello? Good afternoon, Council Members. My name is George Kalajian and I'm the fifth generation in the fashion industry, and I own one of the last pleating studios in New York City. I've been coming to the Garment Center since I was five years old, and everything I learned, I learned from my father. This isn't just my business, it's a legacy and skill passed down through generations. The Garment District isn't just real estate. It's a collective canvas, a workshop without walls stretched across blocks of Midtown powered by human hands and imagination. We dress First Ladies. We build wardrobes for Broadway. We restore relics for the Metropolitan Museum. We make art, not mass-production. While I support progress, I feel that if proper consideration isn't given to our industry,

generations of knowledge will be lost, not just mine, but my peers and what future generations could inherit. If you break this ecosystem it won't come back. Please protect it before it's gone for good.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Thank you.
Emily White.

EMILY WHITE: Hello. My name Emily White. I work in the costume industry as an assistant and designer and as a member of USA 829. The Garment District is an essential resource for our industry. Last week, I was in the Garment District every day but one, sourcing and buying fabric and visiting costume shops in the area. The Garment District is an incredibly valuable center of resources and knowledge, including very specialized workshops. There are beadars, there are pleaters, there are costume shops, and so many more. The physical resources that these workshops-- the physical resources that the Garment District are what these workshops and designers need to do our work. The Garment District is a unique and irreplaceable location in New York City, and it's essential to the continued existence of our industry in this city.

Please, continue to protect the Garment District.

Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Thank you.

Katherine Nicklos.

KATIE SUE NICKLOS: My stage name. Thank you. Good afternoon. It's nice to see you. I'm Katie Sue Nicklos. I live in Council Member Powers' district. I'm sorry he's not here to hear me. And my fourth-generation glove factory, Wing and Weft Gloves, it operates in Council Member Bottcher's. I'm here with the New York Fashion Workforce Development Coalition, representing thousands of very non-imaginary makers, vendors, and creative workers urging you to protect the Garment District. The district was born of necessity. A century ago, immigrant garment workers, mainly women, were pushed out of downtown into Midtown. In a really cool zoning move, the City built them a home called the Garment District. It became one of the most successful urban planning moves in our city history. Today, you face a very similar, totally super cool zoning opportunity. The current MSMX plan admits it would displace 779 businesses and over 5,000 jobs, roughly the entire footprint of the Garment District.

My business and the jobs provided-- I provide are on that list. That stinks. But we have a chance to do better. Imagine Midtown is an innovation campus, controlled rent commercial lofts besides new housing, factory buildings, housing training labs for Parson's and Pratt students, tourist hot spots where people watch couture made in real-time, picture-maker pop-up, a Garment District museum all in a cluster of blocks that already fuel Broadway, film, TV fashion and Fashion Week generating billions from a few walkable streets. This infrastructure works. Last week, Marc Jacobs dropped off fabric at our door on Wednesday and we delivered 10 pairs of runway-ready gloves by Friday for his show at the New York Public Library yesterday. That's only possible because we're all in the same zip code. What's next for the City Council in four weeks are conversations to build a future that we can be proud of. Please keep us in these conversations. It might be tempting to hear only the billionaires who own the land, but it's the makers who generate the cultural and economic currency that keeps New York on the world stage. We need a seat at the table if you want to get this right. We don't want to leave. We choose to be

here. Please choose to keep us here. Thanks. And I look forward to working with you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

Pooja Patel?

POOJA PATEL: Hi, everyone. My name is Pooja Patel. I'm a staffer at USA 829 IATSE, the union which represents thousands of costume designers working across film, television and commercials, as well as theater, opera, and ballet. And I'm here before you today to plead that you listen to the voices of those in the garment district that continue to embody the neighborhood's namesake to this day. This community of artisans is responsible for nurturing the next generation of creatives and it provides a space for our costume designers in the entertainment industry to continue crafting the stories that audiences around the world know and love. Our costume designers on Broadway, off-Broadway, regional theater, and in film and television rely on the Garment District for the purpose of raw materials, the custom fabrication of costume pieces, and the alteration and maintenance of these garments during the time that they are used. The timeline of any production involves strict

scheduling constraints, the need for quick turnaround, and efficient and professional work every single time. The manufacturers of the Garment District provide that in close proximity to each other and near multiple transportation hubs, allowing those within City limits and all along the tristate area to purchase these materials in New York City, and so I respectfully ask that you hear the demands of New York Fashion Workforce Development Coalition and its allies and utilize the seven concrete recommendations outlined in the advocacy letter sent to many of you. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you very much. Next, we'll have Maddie DeCerbo, Teddy Drucker, Jessica Ortiz, and Audrey Wilson. After that, we'll have Orli Nativ, Renee Cafaro, Brian Weber, and Frampton Tolbert. And we can start with Maddie DeCerbo.

MADDIE DECERBO: Hi, my name is Maddie DeCerbo, and I'm here on behalf of the Real Estate Board of New York. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the Midtown South Mixed-Use plan. MSMX is a critical step toward addressing the housing crisis by enabling more housing, both market-

rate and permanently affordable in a centrally located transit-rich neighborhood. The Garment District has one of the lowest residential populations in the City and commercial vacancy rates hover between 25 and 40 percent. This necessary rezoning will bring much-needed public realm improvements and drive economic recovery. The plan aligns with the City's goal to build 500,000 new units in the next decade in the Manhattan plan's 100,000 unit target. It also will allow residential use in areas that have long been restricted to manufacturing and office. Importantly, this rezoning will be the first to use new tools from the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity by mapping R11 and R12 districts and enabling office and residential conversions. It's expected to create nearly 9,700 units including 2,000 permanently-affordable homes. MSMX also ensures we can fully leverage new state housing incentives like 45X and 467M. The 467M tax incentive was carefully calibrated given the complexities and cost involved with conversions and requires 25 percent of the building to permanently affordable at an average AMI of 80 percent. Additionally, this may be the best opportunity for

45X to be viably used for new construction which imposes a 25 percent affordability requirement at 60 percent AMI. It's important to note that limiting MIH options to lower the AMI average would render these programs financially unfeasible, and we recommend all three MIH options and proposed entities remain through adoption. Any reduction in the proposed entities could result in 3,000 fewer homes, including many affordable ones. There would be a missed opportunity, especially when surrounding neighborhoods permit much higher densities. This plan also advances tools that reinforce the public realm, including TDRs and POPS that both support preservation and new development. The creation of a 24/7 mixed-use neighborhood will re-establish vibrancy in Midtown South, and we recommend the Council approve this rezoning.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Teddy Drucker?

TEDDY DRUCKER: Thank you. My phone died, so I'm going to wing this a little bit. My name is Teddy Drucker and I work for a third-generation real estate company withholdings in the proposed Midtown South rezoning district. We are very strong proponents of the proposal. Midtown

South allowed my family to live the American Dream. My grandfather came to this country in the 1930s with not a penny to his name. He set up a textile business located at Midtown South and wound up acquiring a couple of properties of the fruits of his labor. That business is the lifeblood of our family today. But Midtown South today is struggling, the commercial market. Construction costs are exorbitant to build new space for office tenants and demand is not what it used to be. The proposed legislation changes and zoning changes are a beautiful, elegant solution to address these issues. In addition, I am a resident one block to the east of the southeast quadrant, and I can tell you that it is simply unaffordable. And so, because of these two things, I'm a very big proponent of it. I believe that it's going to address a lot of affordable housing needs that are needed. It's going to add life to our streetscapes that are desperately needed and really incentivize, you know, economic development within the area that has been home to my family for three generations. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Jessica Ortiz?

JESSICA ORTIZ: Hello, Councilman

Bottcher. My name is Jessica Ortiz, and I'm here today representing SEIU Local 32BJ. 32BJ is the largest union of property service workers in the country representing over 175,000 members across 13 states, including tens of thousands of commercial property service workers, security officers and residential building staff in New York City. I am here to speak in support of the proposed Midtown South Mixed-Use rezoning proposal. 32BJ supports the proposal both for its ambitious housing targets and the opportunity to revitalize a struggling neighborhood. The housing crisis is severe and worsening. 32BJ families like all New Yorkers are struggling to find decent affordable homes. We need more housing to be built in every neighborhood to ensure that working families are not displaced by dwindling supply and skyrocketing rents. This rezoning is estimated to bring close to 10,000 units of housing, almost 3,000 of which would be affordable to a city in desperate need. We need solutions at this scale if we want to truly address this crisis. Additionally, these residential developments would employ hundreds of residential workers who would have

the opportunity to achieve the family-sustaining wages and benefits that 32BJ members enjoy, bolstering our city's middle class. Midtown South is the ideal area for this bold change. This-- the challenges facing older office stock in the neighborhood are well-documented. When offices struggle with occupancy, that pain is felt acutely by 32BJ members who show up every morning to clean, maintain and secure the buildings. We need to increase occupancy to protect the jobs that 32BJ families in New York rely on. By bringing life to the neighborhood, this proposal will help support the offices and building service jobs in them for years to come. As the cost of living rises, and working New Yorkers struggle to stay in their homes, it is more important now than ever to create affordable housing and good jobs to uphold industry standards. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Audrey Wilson?

AUDREY WILSON: Good afternoon. My name is Audrey Wilson, and on behalf of Vornado Realty Trust, I'd like to applaud the City and the City Planning Commission for their extraordinary efforts to reshape Midtown South into a vibrant, mixed-use

neighborhood in the heart of Manhattan by permitting increased housing density. Vornado is the largest property owner in the PENN District with over nine million square feet of office and retail plus future development sites, including within and adjacent to the MSMX boundaries. As the PENN District has transformed, it has become obvious to all that the adjacent manufacturing districts in Midtown South have been left behind. We are testifying today to express our strong support for the proposed Midtown South mixed-use plan which is a critical step towards increasing housing production in one of the most centrally-located and infrastructure-rich neighborhoods in New York City. Over the last several years, Vornado has invested over \$2.5 billion transforming the PENN District. Vornado is a major principal in the public/private partnerships that improve Penn Station, including the Moynihan Train Hall, the expanded Logn Island Railroad Concourse, two accessible entrances, and countless public realm improvements with DCP and DOT. In the face of our city's housing shortage, this area checks many of the boxes for successful housing production, convenience to jobs, access to the most robust transportation

network, rich amenity offerings, and a place of opportunity for many New Yorkers. Importantly it is these characteristics that make the R11 And R12 densities proposed not only appropriate, but logical. If not here, where? DCP estimates MSMX will result in the development of approximately 9,700 new homes, including 2,900 affordable units through the mapping of Mandatory Inclusionary Housing. Any reduction in the proposed density will significantly impact these reductions. We do have three suggestions that will improve the MSMX proposal and promote even more housing growth. One, relax the floor area averaging rules for split lots. Two, all MIH options should remain available, and three, clarify how MIH and UAP work together. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you very much. Next, we'll have Orli Nativ, Renee Cafaro, Brian Weber, and Frampton Tolbert. Orli Nativ?

ORILI NATIV: Good afternoon, members of the Council and Committee. My name Orli Nativ, and I am a costume designer, milliner, props and crafts artisan, and shopper for live entertainment in New York City. I'm here today to express concerns and opposition to the MSMX plan as it currently stands.

The garment district is a vital part of the ecosystem in New York City, especially the fashion, film, and theater industries. It stands in a unique position in the country and it's deserving of protection within an effect that spans beyond New York itself. I often work for theaters and designers across the country when they regularly rely on garment district vendors and fabricators to provide materials and crafts which are becoming increasingly and accessible elsewhere in America. As a designer and shopper, the special resources of the Garment District allow me to not only be efficient and thorough, but continually engage in a vibrant community of small independent businesses and creators and in connection with historic lineage of garment workers that made the neighborhood theater and fashion in New York City all that it is today. It's inspiring. It's energizing and it's a critical part of my life and work as a costume and production professional. I worry about the MSMX plan's lack of protection for extant businesses in this conversion process, and the strong possibility of displacement and disruption of fabric stores, specialty vendors, manufacturers that are already operating on very slender margins. We've

heard a number of times today just as we did in 2018 about incentives to have these businesses just move elsewhere in the city, but to do so would uproot a critical nexus of production support and lead to the further erosion of heritage craft. While housing, especially truly affordable housing, is a crucial need in our city, it should not come at the cost of jobs, businesses, creatives, and the special character that makes the garment district a place where people actually work and where people will want to live. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

Renee Cafaro?

RENEE CAFARO: Thank you, Council Member Bottcher and the Land Use Commission, for letting us be here and hear the public. I hope that we are really truly being listened to. I am a fashion designer and I run a business and own a business in the northwest quadrant. I also have lived in the Midtown area for 21 years. When I started my business I did it with a core mission being to bolster the Garment District. Everything on my body and everything that we sell is sourced. All my fabric is sourced in the district. It is cut and

sewn there, and everything is manufactured from top to bottom on 38th Street. I will not repeat what others have said about how inextricably linked all of us are, but I will address what many have been trying to say about the Garment District being sort of on its knees and dead and dying. Some would have you believe that there's just nothing but tumbleweed coming down 38th Street, but that is not true. We know this every day. And I am here on behalf of the thousands of sewers, immigrant workers, hourly workers, shop workers that could not afford to be here all day today, and we speak for so many more than are in this room. And so, we are asking you to realize that, yes, we absolutely need to have more affordable housing. We need to have more affordability. A lot of those numbers that you're hearing about the decline in the businesses in the area isn't just that people don't want the garment industry anymore. It's not that garment workers are obsolete. It is that the City has yet time and again to not help us with rent stabilization for Class B office space and Class C office space. we need to make sure we prioritize that affordability as well reject this plan to bring forth a plan that could

really have something that brings a work/live space, a mixed-use space for the freelancers and artisans that I work with every single day that would love to live and work in the area, and not just have half-empty, half-used maximum of 2,900 affordable units with tens of thousands of units of market rate apartments. We need to think about a good balance, and please reject this plan. Go back to the drawing board and bring us back something for all New Yorkers.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Brian Weber?

BRIAN WEBER: Thank you, Erik. For public record, my name is Brian Weber. I serve as President of the Midtown South Precinct Community Council, public member of Community Board Four's Land Use and Zoning Committee, and resident member of the Garment District Alliance, but today I offer testimony as a resident living in the proposed northwest quadrant. A Commissioner from-- the former Commissioner from the Department of City Planning told me that the first and foremost job of the City is to care, and that means to care for its residents and the people who work there, the people who commute through there, a whole range of people. And I think

that what needs to come out of the MSMX plan is a very balanced approach that allows for lifting of restrictions on manufacturing to convert to housing, but also fosters and provides ample opportunity for garment industries to survive and thrive, and as someone who lives in the northwest quadrant, I can echo what she said. There are no tumbleweeds on the street. We have a lot of problems on the street, as you know, but not tumbleweeds. That said, I cannot support an FAR of 18. I appreciate what Eric Botsford said about this being an opportunity to try out a new FAR, but I don't think you do that in the midst of a dense, urban environment that's already built. So, I can support MSMX if it allows for the conversion and adaptive re-use of existing manufacturing into residential, but I think that the current plan incentivized demolition and new build over the preservation and conservation. I think that adds additional real estate forces and pressures onto the existing garment district, and I think we can find a compromise in there to all for both new housing and garment work uses, and I'll call you up and tell you more.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

BRIAN WEBER: And I was just the opening act of Frampton Tolbert.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Frampton Tolbert.

FRAMPTON TOLBERT: Good afternoon, Council Member. I'm Frampton Tolbert, Executive Director of the Historic Districts Council, the citywide advocate for New York's historic neighborhoods and representing more than 500 community groups across the City. We strongly support new housing in Midtown South, but the current proposed rezoning does not create a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood. We implore the Council to make the following improvement so that the rezoning creates housing quickly and sustainably while safeguarding Midtown South's historic fabric and supporting manufacturing jobs. We urge you to lower the plan to propose residential FAR. We oppose creating residential FAR that's higher than commercial FAR, because we believe it incentivizes demolition over adaptive reuse. Having an equal commercial and residential FAR will allow property owners to decide what makes sense for their own properties. Additionally, lowering the plan's FAR also supports

the use of landmark TDRs which are recently expanded under City of Yes. We'd like you to incentivize adaptive reuse. As you know, there are hundreds of commercial historic buildings in this neighborhood, and we need more incentives for the conversion of these buildings which will help the city achieve its housing goals more sustainably, create-- celebrate the iconic architecture the area is known for and create a shorter timeline for housing to come online. Finally, as many have said, we support the garment industry and small businesses. This plan currently offers no incentives for retention of manufacturing jobs. We need new strategies in this area, especially in the garment district. Many of these long-time businesses need to be in this location and have nowhere else to go. If we lose these jobs, New York City's economy will suffer. We can have both housing and jobs. We need to create a plan that works for everyone. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you very much. Next, we're going to have Frank Clarke, Andrew Udis, Brad Gambrone, Solomon Blecher. After that we'll have Louis Munuez [sp?], Luis Lujerte [sp?],

Tony Johnson, and Mariana Sprajc. We'll start with Frank Clarke?

FRANK CLARKE: Hi, good afternoon, Council Member Bottcher, and thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Frank Clarke, Director of Government Relations at the New York Building Congress which represents over 500 organizations and 250,000 skilled tradespeople dedicated to the growth and prosperity of our city. For too long, Midtown South has been constrained by outdated zoning rules that simply don't reflect the neighborhood it is today, nor one that it has the potential to become. With more than 135,000 jobs over 7,000 businesses, and unmatched transit access through 14 subway lines, this area is one of the most economically important districts in New York, but it has been blocked from evolving into a true live/work community. This plan changes that. It makes it possible to convert underutilized office buildings into homes for New Yorkers. By increasing the FAR, it legalizes the construction of nearly 10,000 new homes, increases neighborhood vibrancy and makes it possible for Midtown South to become the 24/7 mixed-use hub our city needs. The Financial District is a

clear example of how this type of rezoning can be a massive success. It's a prime example of how we can update outdated and restrictive zoning to expand opportunity, increase transit access, support job growth and build the kind of city where people want to live and work. We're in the midst of a housing crisis and we need bold action that aligns housing growth with infrastructure and job centers. That's exactly what this plan does. It positions Midtown South to grow sustainably and thrive for decades to come. The Building Congress applauds the Department of City Planning, the administration, Council Members Bottcher and Powers, and all the stakeholders who helped shape this proposal. It's clear this wasn't rushed or talked down. It reflects over a year of public engagement, incorporates meaningful community input, the kind of thoughtful planning process New Yorkers need. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Andrew Udis?

ANDREW UDIS: Good afternoon. My name is Andy Udis. I'm with ABS Partners Real Estate, also a member of the Garment District Alliance. I'm the leasing and managing agent for numerous garment center buildings. I'm here today to express my

strong support for the Midtown South mixed-use rezoning proposal, this once in a lifetime generational opportunity to reposition a centrally-located, transit-rich part of our city for the future by enabling urgently-needed housing supporting economic recovery and enhancing the public realm.

The plan is essential to allow residential development in Midtown South, including the Garment District where many of the buildings are outdated and commercial zoning has prevented housing for decades.

This plan which will enable office to residential conversion, deliver housing including affordable units through the use of 467M, and revitalize a struggling neighborhood with the reduction of obsolete office stock that is driving down the retail experience in the district due to the lack of foot traffic. The Garment District currently has one of the lowest residential populations in the city, and a new residential population will bring stability, activate the streetscape, support local businesses and improve public safety. Vacancy rates in many of the buildings hover between 25 and 40 percent, and the neighborhood has struggled to recover post-pandemic. The neighborhood rezoning brings more than

zoning. It guarantees additional capital and investment by a variety of city agencies to address quality of life concerns and ensure a safe and habitable mixed-use community that's supported by the appropriate city infrastructure. Thank you for your leadership on this vital initiative. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Brad Giambrone?

BRAD GIAMBRONE: Good afternoon, Council Members. My name is Brad Gambrone. I'm here on behalf of Steven Kaufman, owner of the Kaufman Organization. Mr. Kaufman wanted to be here personally to speak to you, but he's recovering from a recent surgery and unfortunately could not attend. I'm here to express strong support for the Midtown South mixed-use rezoning proposal. The Kaufman family have owned and operated a number of buildings in the Garment District for over 100 years. Some of these properties include 457th Avenue, 462 and 477th Avenue, 132, West 36th, 212, West 35th, 519 Eighth Avenue, and 242 West 36th Street. Kaufman's not only own the properties, we have worked here daily starting as a garment family. Our office is located in 457th Avenue which is one of our properties. I've worked with Steve for the last 15 years and have seen

the area decline significantly post-pandemic. Our properties have typically experienced robust tenancy and a high vacancy with tenants voicing concerns over safety, traveling to and from their office. Steve Kaufman has always strongly believed that the area should be a mixed-use zone, as it currently lacks the vibrancy and resilience of our other neighborhoods. The area is significantly behind locations like the Flatiron and Chelsea Districts due to lack of street life brought through a mixed-use work/play environment. We own properties in these areas and experience the difference firsthand. Our Midtown South properties experience continual turnover, some with vacancy rates which creep up as high 35 percent with few customers and high competition for them. Construction costs continually increase retail-- increased retail vacancy is high. The number of properties in the area have fallen into disrepair causing blocks to become dark, leading to an uptick in negative street activity. I'm in Midtown all day, Monday through Friday, mornings and evenings and experience the conditions firsthand. Our food service businesses are struggling and we report a significant a drop in customers due to office

vacancies and the retail is in severe trouble. The blocks between Seventh and Eighth Avenue have been extremely hard hit. We have a property on Eighth Avenue that went an entire year without a single showing of space. It's proven challenging to operate properties in this time. For this reason, Kaufman Organization is in strong support of MSMX rezoning. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Solomon

Blecher?

SOLOMON BLECHER: Hello, members of the City Council Zoning Committee. Yeah, my name's Solomon, and I'm a member of Community Board Three, but I'm speaking as an individual. I support the rezoning process to build new housing which is essential for New York. Prioritizing subways and busways in Midtown would also reduce the need for parking lots and additional traffic from this new housing development, and would be a good addition to the plan. Buses are far too slow in Midtown, even though there's a lot of demand for them compared to most areas of North America. And so, the benefits of speeding up buses even a little bit are very large. I would also like the rezoning to include plans for

protected bike lanes on Fifth Avenue, as this is a great need in Midtown, and the lack of a bike lane on Fifth Avenue is dangerous for people biking. And the rezoning should also allow for car-free Broadway from Union Square to Columbus Circle which would prioritize pedestrians which-- and other people biking. This would make the area better in addition to the new housing which is the need for New Yorkers. It's extremely expensive. And it would accommodate the new residents. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Thank you. I have a question for Mr. Udis and Mr. Giambrone. The organizations you represent, what are the plans if this rezoning were to proceed for the buildings in your respective portfolios? Can you tell us if you envision keeping them as commercial buildings, converting them to residential, or rebuilding from scratch? Can you speak to any of those?

ANDREW UDIS: It depends on the building. Some of them are just not suited any longer-- or higher and better use really would be for residential use. I'm talking about buildings where the floor plates could be, you know, are under 2,000 square feet. They're five or six-story buildings. There's

a single elevator, and the type of demand that we see in the leasing market is just not there to justify keeping them, you know, as a commercial building. There are others that, you know, could go either way. It's-- they're not necessarily, you know, laid out so that they could be used residentially, but some of them depending on the, you know, the configuration of the floors and the windows and the elevators would be suitable for reuse as residential.

BRAD GIAMBRONE: We've explored some options. We don't have any immediate plans. It's a generational-owned real estate family. You know, we like to operate as we are. I think there's a lot of vacancy in the office and in the garment market. There are not a lot of tenants out there. So I think that the rezoning would help, you know, ease that pressure and, you know, make it a more dynamic neighborhood so it's not totally reliant upon office or, you know, garment-style tenants. But no immediate plans right now.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Did-- your hand? Okay. Thank you. Next, we'll be hearing from Louis Nunez [sp?], Luis Lajuerta [sp?], Tony Johnson, and Mariana Sprajc. And after this we'll hear from

Barbara Blair, George Calderado, Brendan Cheney, and Ray Xie. We'll start with Louis Nunez. Let's see. What about Luis Lajerta? Tony Johnson?

TONY JOHNSON: Hello. My name is Tony Johnson. I'm the owner of Pintler Costumes and Technologies, a costume and technology company that's been in the garment district for two years. I began my business in 22 uptown, because I didn't think Garment District affordable. Moving to the district because of the importance of the location for sourcing materials for my clients on Broadway and for my employee's transit options actually saved my start-up. I submitted a letter earlier this month covering all of this. However, what brings me here today is something I've been thinking about since writing that letter. What does this mixed-use space actually build? Who is the housing for? It would be amazing to have affordable housing that is obtainable for Garment District workers. Parents could spend more time with their kids and friends and less time on trains and buses. People who work and live in the same neighborhood will work harder to keep it safe and clean. I see the community pride living in Inwood that I want to see built up in this neighborhood that

encourages it to grow and thrive. Neighborhood local businesses and tourism can all play well in the mixed space proposed, but when I read the FAQs about the proposal, it reads as though it's just a boost-- to boost housing numbers on a page. My employees don't qualify for the 65 percent affordable housing and won't qualify for the 35 percent unaffordable housing proposed. If the proposal moves forward as-is, my employees will still need to commute up to three hours a day to visit a neighborhood they only view as trying to replace their jobs for overpriced housing. May I suggest that creating a housing program to provide housing within the Garment District for Garment District workers would really help make the proposal stronger for building the district as a fully-functioning mixed-use neighborhood. Thank you for your time.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Thank you.

Mariana Sprites [sp?].

MARIANA STRIKES: Hi. I'm Mariana Strikes [sp?]. I was born and have lived in New York City all my life. I'm an FIT grad in fashion design and have spent my career working with clothing, first, in the garment industry on Seventh Avenue, eventually

switching to costuming on Eighth Avenue. Currently, I'm an independent stitcher or tailor, and costumer for performance. I'm against the current proposal zoning changes to Midtown. Many affordable housing programs in New York City are only affordable if your household income is about or above 90K a year. Median income in NYC is 96, which means more than half of all residents can't afford these places. Less than 30 percent permanently affordable homes is lip service. I remember years ago how bustling Midtown South was. Garment racks everywhere, streets lined with trade stores. In those stores, anything you might need to create the vision in your mind. The Garment District is a shadow of that now, being forced to scatter across the City or outright shuttering because of insane rent hikes and regulations that support their being shuttered. And yet, it still is trying to stay. Changing the zoning would harm it irreparably and injury further New York standing of being an art and culture leader in the world. I'm here to tell you about the passion and drive it takes to make a career like that work. This was a career I worked hard for my entire life, starting in second grade when I began my portfolio so

the college I went to would know how serious I was to be part of one of the most glamorous, creative hubs internationally. Please protect the Garment District, its workers-- and its workers. Adopt better protections than the ones presented today. Help the makers like me in the industry I live in and love. Displacing a community to create a new one is counter-productive. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Thank you very much. Next, we'll hear from Barbara Blair. George Calderado, Brendan Cheney, and Ray Xie. After that we'll hear from Michelle Arbullo, Tova Peterson, Carla Bellisio, and Kenneth Fishel. If folks are not able to stay, you can submit your testimony in writing at landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov, landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. We'll start with Barbara Blair.

BARBARA BLAIR: Good afternoon, Council Members. My name is Barbara Blair. I'm the President of the Garment District Alliance, a Business Improvement District which is in the northwest quadrant of the MSMX proposal area. The Alliance strongly supports MSMX. The City needs housing, and the Garment District's future depends on it. For

many decades the Garment District has been a sacrifice zone. Lack of investment, outdated zoning regulations and an oversaturation of social service entities due to neglect on the City's fair share principles have suppressed economic development and impacted quality of life. Today, despite its central location as the gateway to New York City for millions of tourists and commuters, the Garment District falls well behind the rest of Midtown by every measure. Without residents the Garment District is wholly reliant on our commercial tenant sector, a vulnerability that proved untenable during the pandemic. Without a stable residential population, the district collapsed. Retailers had no customer base. Office buildings emptied, and our streets exploded with crime and anti-social activity. We are now faced with higher vacancies than ever with some buildings between 25 and 40 percent vacant. Tenants are leaving for better neighborhoods because of the deplorable social conditions on our streets. The future is grim unless the district is allowed to develop into a robust mixed-use community. MSMX presents an ideal opportunity for the City to create much-needed housing and improve the quality of life

and pedestrian experience in the Garment District.

The Garment District is the most transit-rich district in New York City and is in proximity to Midtown cultural attractions including theater, museums, Lincoln Center, Madison Square Garden, as well as walking distance to Flatiron, Bryant Park, Hudson Yards, 14th Street, and Meat Packing. These assets to be left on the table makes a mockery of sound planning. The reliance respectfully urges the Council to pass this initiative. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: George Calderaro?

GEORGE CALDERARO: I'm George Calderaro, a Board Member of the 29th Street Neighborhood Association among many other civic organizations. We live and work in Midtown South and support thoughtful residential conversion. However, our concern with this among many rezonings citywide is that it will result in the demolition of viable, historic Garment District and other buildings by short-sided so-called developers who dream of enriching themselves with even more massive towers that rezoning with up to 18 FAR will allow and which will often never get built. In Midtown South we have lost many large beautiful

historic buildings that are now years' old vacant lots. This includes the great Hotel Pennsylvania whose 2,000 rooms with bathrooms could have been housing, the Bankroft Building which has been a blockwide vacant lot since 2015-- that's 10 years-- the remarkable Caskell [sp?] Building on 32nd Street, the Demeris [sp?] Building on 33rd Street, among countless others. I urge the City Council to prevent such demolition of Midtown and citywide by developing and incorporating creative incentives to keep and adaptively reuse buildings, thereby avoiding blighted vacant lots and supporting environmental conservation. For example, to eliminate any tax or other benefits for demolishing buildings and develop penalties for doing so through tax-dodging land-banking as exemplified by Steve Roth from Varnado Realty who demolished the Hotel Pennsylvania after saying that, "This was not time for ground-up development." Like the Community Board, we urge protections against demolition such as means testing of developers before demolition permits are issued. The groups I represent support affordable housing and the invaluable garment industry as well as this

community we all home, all of which can be served through thoughtful implementation of this proposal.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

Brendan Cheney?

BRENDAN CHENEY: Sorry. Good afternoon.

My name is Brendan Cheney. I'm the Director of Policy and Operations at the New York Housing Conference. We are a nonprofit affordable housing advocacy organization. Thank you for the opportunity to testify about MSMX. As you know, New York City is facing a severe housing crisis. The City's vacancy rate is just 1.41 percent citywide, the lowest rate in 50 years. Over 850,000 households are rent-burdened, 500,000 of them are severely rent-burdened, and there are over 120,000 people staying in city shelters. To address the crisis, the city needs to add more housing supply, especially more subsidized affordable housing and we need to do it in every neighborhood in the city. Our New York City Housing Trackers shows affordable housing production across the City, and the data shows we are not building housing equitably across the City. Our 2025 report shows the same trend as our previous three reports. We're building in neighborhoods that have a higher

share of Black and Latino residents and neighborhoods with lower incomes, while neighborhoods with higher incomes and higher shares of white residents are adding less new housing. Rezoning like the one in MSMX will add more housing, including more affordable housing in a neighborhood that is very high-cost and has seen little new affordable housing. The neighborhood of the rezoning has seen only 300 new affordable units over the last 11 years, less than 30 new affordable units per year. To compare, other high-density neighborhoods produced 4,000 or more affordable units over that time. Several neighborhoods saw over 1,000 new affordable units just last year. Rezoning like MSMX are desperately needed. It will add affordable housing, particularly in a high-cost majority-white neighborhood with little new affordable housing recently added. It adds density which will allow for increase in housing supply in a neighborhood rich with transit and jobs. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Ray Xie?

RAY XIE: Good afternoon. My name is Ray Xie and I'm policy analyst at Citizens Housing and Planning Council. I'm presenting testimony on behalf

of our Executive Director Howard Slatkin. It is important to approve this rezoning. Housing in mixed-use development will help satisfy a deep need and reinvigorate these areas. Mixed-income housing development is the best way to bring the vast opportunity offered by these neighborhoods within reach of lower income New Yorkers. We cannot lose sight of the need for new housing and the removal of the arbitrary 12 FAR cap creates new opportunities, but realizing them isn't a matter of compiling the highest projected numbers for a single proposal. It's about establishing a replicable pattern to support further growth. Rezoning should not be cut back as a vague gesture of compromise or a poison pill for new housing, but they should remain anchored in sound planning considerations. Accordingly, we have recommended targeted changes to reconcile the proposed zoning with important planning policies. The city's highest density districts should be applied on sites where the highest density buildings are feasible and appropriate. The mid-blocks of the Chelsea and Flatiron neighborhoods and their small available footprints should not be zoned for higher density in the adjoining avenues. Site assemblage

and development is more challenging for commercial development than residential. For this reason, it's been longstanding policy that in commercial areas of the CBD the maximum commercial FAR should be at least as great as the maximum residential FAR. The zoning should recognize the difference in context between the northern two quadrants, quadrants Midtown South, and the southern two quadrants, Chelsea and Flatiron. Finally, to avoid confusion or perverse outcomes, historic districts should not be assigned residential FARs over 12 until such a time as state law permits. These issues can all be addressed with modifications to assign R10 equivalent districts to the southwest and southeast quadrants while retaining the proposed densities in the two northern quadrants. With these modifications, the logic of the zoning pattern could be extended to additional areas in Manhattan in the future, and this rezoning would still be a vigorously pro-housing action in which the lowest residential density equals the highest residential density permitted anywhere in the city today. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you very much. Just giving a 15 to 30 minute heads-up to the

folks online, we should be getting to your testimonies within 15 to 20 minutes. Our next panel is Michelle Arbulu, Tova Peterson, Carla Bellisio, and Kenneth Fishel. After that we'll hear from Shakira Crawford, Ngozi Okaro, Robert Price, and Isabel Vareca. Michelle Arbulu?

MICHELLE ARBULU: Hello. My name is Michelle Arbulu, and I am reading this statement on behalf of Joe Rose former Chair of the New York City Planning Commission and Director of Department of City Planning who could not be here today. Today, I intrigue the City Council to make urgently needed changes to the MSMX zoning proposal. Sadly, the Department of City Planning ignored the substantive comments submitted by a broad spectrum of informed participants and a public review process. This application demonstrates while City Council oversight is essential and why DCP and CPC dropped the ball on important policy action. We all want more housing to be built in New York City. So why if this plan's adopted and CPC is so flawed? It is flawed because it uses zoning to pay off developers to evict commercial tenants and demolish commercial buildings that house crucial industries. It is flawed because

it derives landmark buildings of the value of their surplus air rights, given away so much FAR to developers that they have no need to buy anything from landmarks. It is flawed because it encourages immense new buildings with no consideration of how the design of these buildings will impact light and air for existing and future residents and businesses. We are not anti-development or NYMBI [sp?]. We welcome new investment and housing development, but we want it done right. There is no need to choose over housing or jobs or historic preservation. With thoughtful planning, we can have it all. The City Council can revise its plan within scope to address its flaws without losing a single unit of the projected new housing. We are submitting extensive written materials to demonstrate how this can be done. DCP, REBNY and single-issue advocates have not spoken to the practical details of the proposal, only the broad notion of creating more housing opportunity which is not controversial. The Community Boards, the Business Improvement District, residents, CHPC, the garment industry, the historic preservation community, and many others have all worked hard to no avail in the public review process to get the Adams

administration to recognize the flaws. The plan can be improved. We are here today to plead with our elected officials to show you care and come to the rescue. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.
Tova Peterson?

TOVA PETERSON: Hello, Council Member.
I'm here today because the global, unique character of New York's theater and Garment District is at stake. What is New York most famous for? Finance, finance, and theater. I moved to New York 15 years ago to work at my dream job at Archer and Tailors, a tailoring shop on 35th Street, headed by a brilliant tailor, and an immigrant from Armenia, and the mostly-Ukrainian tailor team he trained. Many of you have seen our work on the leading men in Hamilton, Wicked and other incredible productions. The skills and knowledge held by my colleagues often wows me, as does that of the hundreds of other makers and vendors who make the district world renowned. We now form the only ecosystem of its kind in the world, and we are the backbone of Broadway, both metaphorically and geographically. By contrast, London, a once great city for theater and fashion has lost this cohesion.

Their film, costume and fashion makers are spread out all over the countryside with many of them working from home. London's designers have no central place to source fabrics and costumes, and now, with the current version of the Midtown South mixed-use plan, we are at risk of repeating that mistake and losing a vital part of what makes New York number one in theater and an anchor of our tourist industry. Our garment district is unique and it is irreplaceable. If it's slashed, as it would be under MSMX's proposed will, we will lose much more than just some shops. It would dismantle the global icon that is New York's Garment District. If instead, we listened to incorporate the proposals of Garment District professionals, we can find a new way forward that grows real estate in the district, but smartly in a way that preserves and even enriches the unique and vital character of the Garment District. Let's choose that path.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Thank you.

Carla Bellisio?

CARLA BELLISIO: Hi. I'm Carla Bellisio. I'm a third-generation Garment District worker. I come from a long line of Italian craftspeople and

when they emigrated to this city, they came to the Garment District to find work. My Nonna and my Great Aunt were milliners in the Garment District in the 1940s and my father worked as an errand boy as a cutter for years later in the same neighborhood. So, when I became a Broadway tailor, I was carrying on the family business. Part of my value as a freelance tailor is my efficiency and speed. I can pick up a costume at the stage door at 10:30 p.m. and have it back at that same stage door at 5:30 p.m. the following day when wardrobe is prepping costumes for a seven o'clock curtain. The success of my turnaround is reliant on my location. Being a 15-minute walk from pick-up and delivery makes me valuable. Being able to walk one block to color match fabric and one more block to have new buttons made using that fabric so I can complete the repair I've been hired to do in less than 24 hours makes this collection of businesses valuable to me. But it's getting harder and harder for me to do that work as businesses are being evicted from their spaces for conversion which is already happening. As written, the MSMX plan will displace even more of those businesses making my future value as a Broadway

tailor uncertain. The effect of the MSMX plan on existing businesses and the effect of displacement was not carefully studied or considered. Guessing what will happen and predicting where development might be will not protect me from being evicted. Broadway's famous catchphrase is "The show must go on." I'm the reason it can. Me and a few other hundred people just like who rely on this thriving network of businesses and craft people. Keep our show running. I urge you to follow the seven recommendations given by the New York Fashion Workforce Development Coalition as outlined in our letter to City Planning. Ding-dong, my time is done. Thank you so much for giving me this time.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you very much. Kenneth Fishel.

KENNETH FISHEL: Can you hear me? I'm Ken Fishel, the President of Renaissance Properties. I own a building at the corner of 40th Street and Eighth Avenue, directly opposite the Port Authority Terminal, directly opposite the New York Times building. It's a 20-story commercial building. Approximately 400 people are employed in this building, and we intend to continue to allow these

businesses to work and function in the building.

However, what's happened to the Garment District since COVID has been nothing short of devastation.

The street life in the district clears out at the end

of the day. My superintendent who is the security

guard for the building was beat up and taken to the

hospital. There is drug activity. There is

homelessness. There is lawlessness on the street,

and I'm sure I'm not the first person to tell you

this. I'm sure your constituents tell you this as

well. It becomes a dangerous area after hours, and

the reason it is so is because businesses go home and

it clears out. We need this area to support a 24/7

community. The area was originally rezoned under the

1961 zoning resolution. Gentleman, things have

changed in New York, in the world, since 1961. Every

single member of the City Council down to the very

last seat espouses that they want more housing,

moreover they want more affordable housing. Well,

now you have the opportunity to deliver. If not now,

when? If not here, where? Now is the time to act.

We can actually do something about housing, and I

urge you to pass this plan. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Question for you, Mr. Fishel.

KENNETH FISHEL: Yep.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: You stated that, that your building on 40th and Eighth, you intend to keep it as a commercial building and you do not intend to convert to residential? Why is that?

KENNETH FISHEL: You know, look, we rent our space. I will say that the spaces are not expensive spaces. They're really very reasonably low-price spaces compared to other buildings in New York City, but we do rent. Now, we have a lot of in and out. Businesses come, they last a few years, they go out, but the building makes money-- not a lot. It is not a hugely profitable building because of so much turnover, and we also have to give a lot of incentives for business to come there. A lot of businesses won't come to the Garment District. They don't want to be on that street, because honestly, people are scared. Just think about it. You have a 90-pound woman, 100-pound woman that at the end of the day wants to go home after hours, she's scared. I don't blame her. I'm scared. And it's--

CARLA BELLISIO: [interposing] I'll rent there.

KENNETH FISHEL: Come see me. I have space for you.

CARLA BELLISIO: I'm 120 pounds. I'll rent.

KENNETH FISHEL: I have space for you, my dear, okay. We have a broker that markets our spaces. We're on Co-star [sic]. We're on Loop-Net [sic]. We get a space-- I have a space right now; it's a beautiful space. It's a small space. It's an affordable space. I'm just looking for a business to rent to. It's been vacant for the last eight months. Can't find a tenant. Why?

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Maybe there's a tenant here. Thank you, sir.

KENNETH FISHEL: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Our next panel is Shakira Crawford [sp?], Ngozi Okaro, Robert Price, Isabel Vareca. Shakira Crawford? Ngozi Okaro?

NGOZI OKARO: Good afternoon and thank you, Council Member Bottcher. I'm Ngozi Okaro, Executive Director and Founder of Fashion Nonprofit Custom Collaborative. I'm a director of the Economic

Development Corporation and a founding member of the New York Fashion Workforce Development Coalition. I'm here today because the Garment District matters. For generations, garment jobs have been a pathway to economic independence, especially for women and immigrants. This was true when our grandparents worked in factories, and it's still true today. The Garment District in New York City is not just a place on the map, it's an engine of opportunity. At Custom Collaborative, we train low-income women, mostly Black, Brown and immigrant women, to build sustainable, creative, dignified careers in fashion. The Garment District is where our participants get their start. It's where they connect with mentors, secure their first clients, buy from local businesses, build their own small businesses and get jobs that lift up families and entire communities. Without serious changes, the MSMX rezoning will tear down what we are building and expanding from a 100-year foundation. In 2023, Custom Collaborative opened a 10,000 square foot training facility and headquarters on 35th Street. Last year, New York State invested more than \$1 million so we can buy specialized equipment and provide workspace. If this

community ecosystem is gutted, we don't just lose square footage, we lose jobs, we lose opportunity, and we lose a pipeline that has empowered people. We need to be expanding opportunities, not eliminating them. Yes, DCP met with Custom Collaborative and with the New York Fashion Workforce Development Coalition, and after we heard their presentation, we told them that we were against the plan, because it was insufficiently considered in terms of businesses and job loss. So, I ask you to hear what workforce and fashion business leaders are saying. Listen to the voices of the community across this city that depends on the Garment District for stability, growth, and a creative future.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Robert Price?

ROBERT PRICE: Hello. Thank you for having me here. I am Robert Price. I'm a member of the New York Fashion Workforce Development Coalition and I'm a fashion accessories designer. I am all for housing and revitalizing the neighborhood, but I don't think that fashion and the community of the Garment District has been carefully thought about. In my career, I've worked for some of the largest fashion brands, and different than a lot of the

people in this room, I don't run a factory. I don't have manufacturing. I don't sew. I don't do any of that. I'm a designer and I work with big brands and help them design products for their runways, products for their stores, things that go out into the greater world in so many different ways. And many of those things are manufactured overseas. However, the Garment district is truly an innovation center. It's a laboratory. It's a place where people could come up with new ideas. Like Jonathan said, go from block to block making things. And the fashion brands, the bigger brands, they take advantage of this. They use it in a positive way like what Katie Sue said about Marc Jacobs. When I was at Coach, I was constantly having runway bags made locally for the runway, having special products made when I was at Michael Kors for events, for red carpet things, and that's what the beauty of the Garment District is. It's really a place where people could go and create and a be a designer and do this work. And to lose that I think is not just hard for all the community members here but it's harder for the biggest fashion world, and they may not admit it, and they're not here testifying. But having worked for some of the

largest brands in New York City that are multi-billion-dollar brands, I know how much they rely on the Garment District. And if you look geographically at where the Garment District is and where all those big brand's offices are, they're a perfect circumference around the Garment District. So, please consider keeping fashion as an important part of this. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Isabel Vareca?

ISABEL VARELA: Thank you. Good afternoon. My name is Isabel Varela. I'm a business consultant, master tailor, and founder of Repurpose Your Life. I've worked in the Garment district for over 12 years and in the fashion industry for 27 years, not only tailoring and alterations for fashion designers in the Garment District, but also supporting small businesses-- many of them that are in here-- creative entrepreneurs, manufacturers and working with major fashion, film, and TV productions as a freelancer. I came to New York with \$100,000 in debt, the daughter of two immigrants with nothing but a dream, and the Garment District made that dream possible. Through the opportunities and relationships I built here, I paid off that debt and

created a life and career. The MSMX plan threatens to displace over 5,000 jobs and 779 small business, many immigrant and woman-owned; 73 percent are minority-led, and 43 percent are led by women. These are not numbers on papers. These are people who kept New York's creative soul alive for generations. I've worked with manufacturers who've been here for 30 years. If they pushed out tailors, freelancers, fashion designers-- this isn't-- and emergent artist, they will lose vital local resources. This isn't just a business loss, it's a cultural erasure. And let's not forget, fashion employs over 180,000 New Yorkers and brings in \$11 billion in wages. Broadway contributes to \$14.7 billion to our economy, and film and TV, \$64 billion, employing over 100,000 people. How many of you have seen a Broadway show? How many of you are wearing clothing and clothes altered and/or made by someone trained right here in the Garment District. My last question-- how many of you have ever been uprooted from something you build with blood, sweat, and tears? New York is at a crossroads and you must decide, will you make a strategic investment in one of the most defining industries, or let a short-term development erase decades of

creativity, culture and jobs. And please speak to the people actually in this industry, not just fashion tech leaders online. We're asking for vision, for partnership and for protection. Preserve the Garment District. Protect our people. We need clear, enforceable reforms, and we need a plan that helps everyone. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

Next, we'll hear for Naika Colas, Gabriella Galvin [sp?], Tessa Maffuca, and Michael Prunty. Following this panel, we'll hear from Christopher Leon Johnson, Logan Phares, Sophie Elrick, and Elizabeth Shelton. Naika Colas?

NAIKA COLAS: Hi, my name is Naika Colas. I'm the Assistant Professor at Fashion Design and Associate Director at Parson's School of Design, and Governance Board Member of the New York Fashion Workforce Development Coalition. We have over 300 members which are brands, manufacturing studios, faculty, students, and advocates. I'm here to speak in opposition to the plan. This proposed rezoning threatens the future of the Garment District, an ecosystem that has supported fashion designers, small businesses, and working families for generations. As

an educator and designer, I have witnessed firsthand how vital this district is, not just for the industry, but to New York City's culture and economic identity. Many of the manufacturing studios in the district are family-run businesses passed down through generations. These are spaces where I've developed samples, sourced materials, and collaborated closely with skilled garment workers. My students at parson's rely on the same spaces for hands-on learning, research, internships, and project development. Our curriculum benefits directly from access to nearby manufacturers who serve as partners, case study collaborators, and sources of invaluable knowledge and expertise. Fashion education in New York city is directly linked to the Garment District. The rezoning plan is projected to displace over 770 businesses and eliminate over more than 5,000 jobs. These numbers are not abstract. They represent livelihoods and future for fashion that is local, sustainable and inclusive. While affordable housing is mentioned as a benefit of this plan, we know that only a small percentage of new units would actually meet affordability criteria. I believe this statement is centering those who are transplants, not

necessarily those who are actually from New York City. Buildings are half-empty because they're not affordable. Residents who may qualify for affordable housing cannot afford to even shop for groceries in the neighborhood which is interesting. The plan would drastically alter the character and utility of the neighborhood, and the Garment District supports students, faculty, and entrepreneurs. We often mention just fashion designers, but I want us to also think about the students at the universities, especially the students at Parson's School of Design. We signed a petition. So, I urge you to rethink this plan and prioritization the preservation of this district. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

Gabriela Galvin? Tessa Maffuca [sp?]?

TESSA MAFFUCCI: Hi. My name is Tessa Maffucci. I teach in the Fashion Department at Pratt Institute, and I help to coordinate the New York Fashion Workforce Development Coalition along with Naikia and so many others who've spoken today. As a fashion professor I have a great love for the Garment District. I teach my students about how the district was purpose-built for fashion manufacturing. We take

walking tours to observe the wedding cake style set-backs, find fashion details hidden in the building's facades, and visit the remarkable studios that are producing couture level work. We talk about the role the Garment District played in labor history, and how American fashion started on Seventh Ave., launching the careers of icons like Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein, Donna Karan, Steven Burrows [sp?], Halston, Oscar de la Renta, and so many others. But as much as I love fashion history, it's the future of the Garment District that's really exciting. This is a vibrant ecosystem of makers who are blending traditional craftsmanship with advanced manufacturing and technology. The district is home to a community of hundreds of small businesses and thousands of highly-skilled and well-paid workers who are the hidden labor behind the Met Gala, New York Fashion Week, and Broadway. These shops are multigenerational sites of learning. They are women and immigrant-run businesses, and they support countless careers across all five boroughs. The central location of the district is essential. I'm here to ask you to reconsider the Midtown South mixed-use plan. The unintended consequences of this proposal are too

great for it to proceed as written. City Planning has not done due diligence to understand or listen to the impacts that this will have on our community. A better plan is possible, one that serves our housing need and protects and invests in our city's creative infrastructure. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.
Michael Prunty.

MICHAEL PRUNTY: Good afternoon, Council Members. I'm Michael Prunty, Senior Vice President in charge of property management and operations for Empire State Realty Trust. Thank you for letting me appear today to provide these comments. I want to express our strong support for Midtown South mixed-use rezoning proposal. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reposition a centrally-located transit-rich part of our city for the future by enabling urgently needed housing, supporting economic recovery, enhancing the public realm. Empire State Realty Trust owns 2.3 million square feet within the Garment District, and another four million square feet immediately adjacent to the district. We have seen massive decrease in leasing and tenancy with garment and showroom companies.

Over the past decade, our properties have seen garment companies go out of business or relocate out of the Garment District altogether. Today, our office spaces have been released to tenants in other industries, including finance, legal, technology, consumer products, and professional services. The district needs and our tenant's desire more residential in the area that will create a 24/7 live, work, play community that will bring better security, safety and lower crime. The MSMX plan is essential. MSMX will allow residential development in Midtown South including the Garment District where outdated manufacturing and commercial zoning has prevented housing for decades. The plan will enable office residential conversion for delivering housing, including affordable housing units through the use of 467M. to revitalize a struggling neighborhood with the reduction of obsolete office stock that is driving down the retail experience in a district due to lack of foot traffic. The Garment District currently has one of the lowest residential population in the City. A new residential population will bring stability, activate the streetscape, support local businesses, and improve public safety.

Vacancy rates in many buildings hover between 25 and 40 percent, and the neighborhood has struggled to recover post-pandemic. A neighborhood rezoning bring smore than zoning changes. It guarantees additional capital investment by a variety of city agencies to address quality of life concerns. Thank you for your leadership on this vital initiative. MSMX is smart, timely, and necessary steps to ensure the future of Midtown South. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Question for Mr. Prunty. You said you work for the organization that owns the Empire State Building. Did I-- you just said Empire State.

MICHAEL PRUNTY: That's correct. That's one of our properties.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Are you concerned about any buildings competing with the Empire State Building and the New York City skyline?

MICHAEL PRUNTY: No, sir.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Why is that?

MICHAEL PRUNTY: We're the most iconic building in the world.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Okay. I know that the Empire State Building Corp, that you've been

sensitive to that in the past to other buildings going up that might compete with the Empire State Building. City Planning, that's one of my big concerns. I mean, they've-- you know, swear up and down that there's very little chance of that happening, but to me, the Empire State Building is like the crown jewel of the skyline, and we can't have buildings right next to it competing with it. Your buildings that are in the proposed rezoning area, what's the vacancy rate of your commercial buildings in the MSMX zone?

MICHAEL PRUNTY: Our properties are under 10 percent.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: So, the vacancy rate is under 10 percent?

MICHAEL PRUNTY: Yeah. They're occupied 90 percent, so vacancy 10.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: I'm sorry?

MICHAEL PRUNTY: Occupancy 90 percent, vacancy 10.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: So, they're pretty strongly leased.

MICHAEL PRUNTY: Yes, sir.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: And what are your plans for these buildings?

MICHAEL PRUNTY: They're remaining commercial properties.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: So, why would you not-- if you could build taller, if you could convert to residential, why would you keep them commercial?

MICHAEL PRUNTY: Our properties are better situated for commercial operations tenancies. And that's our core business.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Why is-- Okay. So you're not in the residential business or are you?

MICHAEL PRUNTY: We have some residential properties, just under 800 units in New York City.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: But these properties, they're well-performing commercial properties, and I'm just trying to get straight what you're saying. They're well-performing commercial properties, and you intend to keep them as such, but your interest is more about the neighborhood and the quality of life in the neighborhood for your tenants, is that what you're saying?

MICHAEL PRUNTY: That's correct. Our company and our tenancies support the MSMX for what will bring, enhancements and opportunities to the Garment District, but also Midtown South.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: What makes your vacancy rate so much better than some of the other people we've heard from today who say that they have a high vacancy rate? Why are your buildings almost fully leased?

MICHAEL PRUNTY: I don't want to speak on behalf of my peers, but our properties we believe are well-leased, because they're modernized, amenitized [sic], close to mass transit, and the service we provide our tenants.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

MICHAEL PRUNTY: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Next, we're going to hear from Christopher Leon Johnson, Sophie Elrick, Elizabeth Shelton.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Can I go?

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Christopher Leon Johnson?

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah, hello, Chair Bottcher. My name is Christopher Leon Johnson.

I'm here to show my support for the Midtown South use plan. I think we need more deliverista hubs in the area. We need to fix the bike lanes in the area more. At the same time, we do need more homes in the district. Now, I'm asking for you the Chair as-- you're the Chair right now-- that you modify this use plan with Mr. Granodick [sp?] and the City Planning Board, just like how you did Western Rail Yards. I'm proud of you for doing that and listening to the concerns, the people saying that they didn't want that casino in Hudson-- at Hudson, and do the same thing for the Garment District, because I understand that the Garment District-- I've been there many times-- there's a lot of pre-war buildings that are owned that's in the Garment District, and what they want to do is knock that down and erect these so-called "unaffordable affordable housing" while leaving the people in the Garment District out. And that's not going to be right for the people-- that the 5,000 jobs and the 700 businesses that is in that district is not going to meet the supply and demand of 700 businesses and 5,000 employees. That's not going to work. You could say well, we could put-- we could dedicate a percentage of those mixed-use units

1 to people that used to live, that used to have their
2 businesses and stuff in the Garment District right
3 now, and shout out to everybody that works in the
4 Garment District and have businesses there, but
5 that's not going to be made possible with these
6 current developers and current property-- current
7 land developers. So, I'm saying as the Chair, Mr.
8 Bottcher, and the person that really leads Midtown on
9 the west side, that that's your district, to work
10 with these developers and work with Mr. Granodick to
11 amend that land use application and amend that plan,
12 and Mr. Salamanca and Kevin Riley, to except the
13 Garment District from the rezoning, exempt the
14 Garment District from this plan, because this is
15 going to hurt them the most. And I know you, bro,
16 you have a lot of friends in the Garment District.
17 You have a lot of friends in fashion and Hollywood
18 and Broadway, and I think they'll be hurt that if you
19 as the person that says you're the entertainment,
20 you're the entertainment politician, you're the
21 Broadway elected official, you're the Garment--
22 you're the fashion elected official. I know you are.
23 you're the fashion guy. You should be the Arts [sic]
24 Chair next term when Carlina leaves. You're going to
25

sell them down the river for these developers with that mixed-use plan for the Garment District. So, I'm saying, Mr. Bottcher, please--

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: [interposing]
Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: I know. Wait, wait. I'm saying, Mr. Bottcher. [inaudible] that you amend this plan for Garment District. I support this proposal, but please just do what you did for Hudson like the Western Rail Yards and exempt them, and amend this plan to make them exempt. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Next, we'll hear from Sophie Elrick.

SOPHIE ELRICK: Hi. My name is Sophie Elrick, and I'm an independent artist interning at Wing and Weft Gloves in the Garment District this summer. I also run my own independent business called Sofizzle [sp?] Scribbles where I specialize in illustration with the goal of becoming a tattoo artist and hopefully owning my own shop some day. At Wing and Weft I'm responsible for writing all text for the website, creating weekly social media content

and managing computer software such as Google sheets, and I also get to pop into shops throughout the district to pick up materials such as trim, fabric, and different swatches for upcoming projects. These tasks have exposed me to all the hidden gems that the Garment district has to offer, so I always look forward to the next shop I got to stop at. So, disclaimer, Sylvie [sp?] the shop cat was only one of the reasons why I decided to intern with Wing and Weft this summer. I grew up in Detroit, Michigan, and it has been my dream to work in Times Square since I was a kid, so that's why I'm here today. Wing and Weft stands out to me, because every glove they make has its own story, made in the heart of the City. Many other gloves are also named after real people that contribute to the Garment District. There's a glove tailored to every event from every day to the red carpet. It's craftsmanship, care and history all in one. This internship is my first real look at what it's like to operate a storefront, something I hope to do with my own business one day. I've been learning from skilled makers, preserving long-held traditions that are at risk of being lost because of the MSMX plan. Protecting these

manufacturing jobs means protecting opportunities and mentorship for makers like me. This plan threatens small manufacturers and artisans who keep the Garment District alive. Getting rid of local businesses could risk erasing the City's cultural and economic diversity. What I hope to gain from this internship goes beyond marketing and business skills. I want to carry these lessons forward as I transition into tattooing, blending tradition with my own creative path, as I go from the sewing machine to the tattoo machine. I urge the Council to reconsider the MSMX plan and stand with Wing and Weft Gloves to continue preserving the local businesses, makers and culture that make New York what it is today. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: By the way, when I came out to my mom, she said, Erik we've known since you were six years old. I said what od you mean? She said, when we go to your grandparent's house you would run up to your grandmother's bedroom in her drawer of gloves--

SOPHIE ELRICK: [interposing] Oh my gosh.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: and you'd spend hours putting on--

SOPHIE ELRICK: [interposing] Putting them on. I love that.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Next, we'll hear from Elizabeth Shelton.

ELIZABETH SHELTON: Hello, good afternoon. My name is Elizabeth Shelton. I am a native New Yorker who lives in Sunset Park, Brooklyn. I do not support this proposal. What makes New York, New York? What does Broadway mean to New York City? If you're doing a Broadway show and someone blows out their costume, you run to the Garment District. You get the zipper. You get the fabric, and you get it back in time so the next performance you're okay. When we did the movie remake of The Producers, I was constantly back and forth from our offices which we're a couple of blocks west into the Garment District, because we kept needing things, and we were supplementing the Broadway show with the movie version. Moving this-- these businesses to Sunset Park doesn't help. You can't run out of the theater and quickly get stuff from Sunset Park. The workers might be coming from the Bronx, Queens, New Jersey. It does not help. Sunset Park would be too far away for so many people, and the City has been bad at

protecting small businesses. Manufacturers have been forced to move out when light businesses have moved into their buildings and objected to the noise of the machinery involved, sometimes in making gloves and other things. You will be pushing manufacturing out of New York City. People in the rest of the country depend on us. When Star Wars skeleton crew could get their fabrics in LA, they called me and I ended up sourcing things from the Garment District to ship to LA. It's like every day I was shipping out more swatches. So, it's-- yes, we need housing, but it's versus the life of New York City industry workers. So, so much for the City of Yes. Thank you very much.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

Next, we'll hear from the next panel Logan Phares and Sabrina Ehrnstein. And this is our final in-person panel, and then we will go to the panel online. Miguel Torres, Laura Gurero [sp?], Hoga Gonzalez [sp?], Jacqueline Torres [sp?]. Logan Phares?

LOGAN PHARES: Thank you, Council Member Bottcher for the opportunity to testify in favor of the Midtown South mixed-use proposal. My name is Logan Phares, and I'm the Political Director at Open

New York. New York faces a severe housing shortage.

In February 2024, the New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey revealed that the rental vacancy rate

had fallen to 1.4 percent, the lowest point since

1968. Following last week's mayoral primary, it's

more clear than ever that New Yorkers' top priority

is affordability, and that they want their elected

officials to laser-focused on finding solutions to

the rising housing costs. As a city, we must take an

all-of-the-above approach to solving the crisis by

protecting tenants and creating the housing we need.

For far too long, the most well-resourced parts of

the city have been exempt from creating new homes,

driving up rents, and reinforcing longstanding

patterns of segregation. We've seen wealthy New

Yorkers use their influence and connections to keep

affordable housing from being built, most recently

exemplified by First Deputy Mayor Randy Mastro,

killing the Haven Green Project at the request of

nearby millionaire homeowners. The project would

have created 123 deeply affordable homes for low-

income seniors. Midtown South is an example of

neighborhood centrally located to transit and jobs

which has been off limits to new housing

opportunities for decades due to outdated zoning laws. It's impossible to uphold fair housing principles without every neighborhood being part of the solution. MSMX not only gives us the chance to create a more vibrant future for Midtown South, but it furthers the Council's fair housing goals, and will create an affordable housing requirement for the neighborhood that doesn't currently exist. We are excited to see that the proposal would allow for nearly 9,700 homes, including up to 2,900 much-needed income restricted homes. It is critical that the plan keeps the highest residential density possible, ideally 18 FAR across the project area. We don't have to choose between housing and garment industry jobs. The MSMX proposal can and should reinforce Midtown's historic fashion ecosystem. By finally requiring income restricted homes in the district, we can provide new opportunities for garment workers to live near where they work. We encourage the City to provide the necessary resources to uplift the garment industry without reducing the number of new homes. Thank you for the opportunity.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Thank you.

We're going to also call up Juliann Kroboth. Thank you. And now we'll hear from Sabrina Erhnstein.

SABRINA ERHNSTEIN: Hi. My name is Sabrina Erhnstein. I am a professional costume designer and technician and I'm here to represent the hope of young artists and students who follow me [sic] like myself in my footsteps working in living in New York City. As you've heard today, there is nowhere in this nation that is like the Garment District. It is one of the last standing examples of American-based textile, garment, and costume manufacturing. I urge you to follow the suggestions that are made by the New York Fashion Workforce Development Coalition in their letter in opposing the current plan. When I walk the streets of this zone, I meet my classmates from my BFA program at SUNY Purchase which is a New York State school and students from New York schools like the New School, the American Academy of Dramatic Arts, NYU, and so on and so forth. As I pick up supplies and drop off pieces for alterations I meet my coworkers, not just from Broadway shops which are an essential piece of the billion dollar economy here in New York, but also

theaters that underpin New York culture by creating completely free performances that inspire local, diverse, and often under-represented communities such as-- theaters such as the public and the classical theater of Harlem where I presently work as a costume coordinator. When a child sees a costume that is built in this district on a person that looks like them on stage, that gives them a vision of a future that this city needs. In the Garment District, I walk past buildings that were specifically built for the machinery that we use, floors that bear the weight of the industrial machinery and the surgeons [sic] and sewing machines, the textile manufacturing, and the examples of craft that you benefit from on the daily in your tv, your film, theater, fashion and the suits that you've worn today. I am not from New York. I came here because there is nowhere else in the country where I can do the work I do. Please protect the Garment District and the future of all New Yorkers by rejecting this proposal and working to bridge the needs of both our industry and an affordable New York City. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

Juliann Kroboth?

JULIANN KROBOTH: [off mic]

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Just try again.

JULIANN KROBOTH: Thank you. I have worked in and around the garment industry-- Garment District for 640 years. I work in costumes. I am a craftsperson. I dye, paint, and fabricate things that can't be made anywhere else. Our buildings are often classified as offices. The building I work in is most certainly not a typica office. Like my colleague down there, they are specifically built for manufacturing. Our floors are cement. You can sink heavy machinery and make a lot of noise and a lot of mess and I can clean it up. I can't do that in an office space. If I lose my space, my business is over, my 40 years working. I don't really have anywhere to go. I also am representing Paper Mill Playhouse which is a theater in New Jersey. Our shop, our costume shop which is adjacent to my personal shop is located on 36th Street in Manhattan in the center of the Garment District because we are close to rehearsal spaces. Our actors are often in other shows and we can get fittings. None of our employees are going to go out to New Jersey to make things. We can't get things to make things in New Jersey. We

keep our shop in New York. I was very late here because I had to run to 38th Street to drop off a heat press, then run up to a theater on 43rd Street for a fitting, and then back to my shop to drop off some stuff. Can't do that anywhere else. I get hired because people can run to me and get the product the same day. Working for Saturday Night Live, you can't work too far out. I get things on Wednesday. I need it delivered by Friday. It's because I can run around in my neighborhood. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.
We're now going to go to online testimony, but if there's anyone in the room who has-- would like to testify in-person who hasn't, please see the Sergeant at Arms. We're going to go to online testimony beginning with Jesse Bodine.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Going to start with Jesse Bodine and then go to Miguel Torres.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

JESSE BODINE: Good afternoon, everyone.
Hi. Good afternoon, Council Members. I am Jesse Bodine, the District Manager of Community Board Four. Over the last year and half, Manhattan Community

Board Four thoughtfully responded to the draft scope, draft environmental impact statement, and the Land Use application for Midtown South mixed-use plan.

After much discussion and consideration MCB4 voted to recommend denial of the proposed MSMX plan unless certain changes to the zoning text and approaches were adopted. MCB4 has always supported residential development throughout Midtown South. However, the proposed rezoning does not provide adequate production for the preservation of the built environment. The proposal provides a series of zoning bonuses that could be used in combination with each other, for some areas nearly doubling the allowable density, and the proposal has no overall height limits. MCB4 believes this proposal must be sharpened and modified to ensure protection to preserve the garment center while allowing development to proceed at the same time in a managed and balanced fashion. MCB4 requests City Council to examine the following items as potential additions of the final plan. Protections against demolition in favor of conversions and adaptive reuse, including a special permit process for any building over 12 FAR, including zoning requirements for light and air to

reach the street and sidewalk, strengthening the street wall requirements and eliminate any recessed walls from the sidewalk, eliminate plaza bonus to create sidewalk recesses and add to building heights, impose restriction to lot mergers transfers of development rights, landmarking significant buildings and incentivizing them, their conversion to housing using historic tax credits. Regarding landmarking, MCB4 has compiled a list of buildings identified in the MSMX DEIS and Hudson Yard DEIS. While some of these buildings have recently been calendared by the Landmarks Preservation Commission, we ask that City Council to make the calendaring of the outstanding buildings a condition of its approval of this proposal. MCB4 believes that there's room for building higher density building's housing on these blocks without harming the character of the--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you for your testimony. Time has expired.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you, Jesse. I do have a bone to pick with you Jesse. I was told you were out of CB4 hat, but I see two of them behind you.

JESSE BODINE: I don't know what you're talking about.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.
Next, we'll hear from Miguel Torres.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Okay, so we're going to go Laura-- Isabel Taube.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

ISABEL TAUBE: Good afternoon, Council Member Bottcher. My name is Isabel Taube and I'm a resident of the southeast quadrant. I am the president of my Co-op's Board, and I am before you today to represent the interest of the residents in my building at 22 West 26th Street. We have reviewed the MSMX zoning proposal in detail. We have been following the ULURP process from the beginning and have testified at the meetings held by CB5 and the CPC. We support the proposal's overarching goals of creating a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood and increasing affordable housing. However, while these goals are laudable, we feel strongly that the current proposal has been rushed in its details and the proposed set of zoning regulations does not take into consideration the existing residential conversions

like my building in the southeast quadrant and the negative impact that zoning changes will have on the habitability and access to light and air of the buildings as a result of new construction. My building commissioned a study from George James and Associates Zoning Simulation Firm, and with the proposed plan, our building could have three sides entirely enclosed with drastically less light and air and a building of 1,115 feet, only 20 feet behind us. We believe similar outcomes will occur throughout the southeast quadrant. We appeal to this subcommittee and to you to not to rush into passing this proposal without fully studying its environmental consequences, and we request that the City Council: one, not uphold City of Yes' rear yard requirement of only 20 feet, but keep the existing larger rear yard requirement of 30 feet per residential buildings and the height set-back requirements for facades in the southeast quadrant, and two, maintain the existing 10/12 FAR for commercial in the southeast quadrant, but allow residential at the same 10/12 FAR so that new developments are encouraged to use the air rights of the existing historic and landmarked buildings in the southeast quadrant. As CB5--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you for your testimony. Time has expired.

ISABEL TAUBE: and Flatiron BID have said, the southeast quadrant is different due to its extensive historic district, its landmarks and its already converted commercial and manufacturing buildings with small rear yards and lot [sic] lined windows. There already are lots of residents living in the area, and they have the reasonable right to expect that the habitability of their buildings and their access to light and air will be maintained. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Thank you. David Sigman?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

DAVID SIGMAN: Good afternoon. I'm David Sigman, a member of Manhattan Community Board Five Land Use Housing and Zoning Committee. I'm speaking today also as an office tenant and an owner of a business in the MSMX area for the past 28 years and a resident of District Three. We'd like to thank Council Members Bottcher and Powers, Borough President Levine and the City Planning Staff for their work with us in past months, and for your

thoughtful questions and answers at the start of today's session which overlap with many of our concerns. During February, March and April of this year, CB5 heard testimony from residents and business organizations in the MSMX zone, most of which lies in our district, because they wanted us to understand the unique characteristics of each of the four quadrants and just schmear R12 across Midtown South like cream cheese on a bagel. In addition, our hearing had highlighted concerns already mentioned today about the impact of 18 residential FARs on preservation of landmarks through transfers of development rights, reduction in value of the transit and covered pedestrian space [sic] zoning bonuses, and increased demolition of Garment Center loft buildings over conversion. CB5 strongly supports the goals of the MSMX plan, but felt that producing housing is one of a number of zoning, planning, and urban design components of a successful plan. CB5 voted unanimously to modestly adjust the City's proposed densities from 18 FAR R12 to 15 FAR R11 and not to 12 FAR as mentioned today in the mid-blocks of the northwest quadrant in order to preserve the Garment Center's existing built environment and in

the southeast quadrant to protect the landmarked buildings that are prevalent in that area. We felt that this was a middle path between the requests of our constituents and the proposed plan. The plan approved by CPC last month addresses none of these issues. While the EIS proposed--

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

DAVID SIGMAN: [inaudible] no mitigation measures, CB5 has identified elements of a point of agreement to cover very real concerns including lack of open space and pedestrian crowding for which we propose and expansion of Broadway vision through MSMX, public safety protections for existing residential and small business tenants, the need to preserve site 40 on 25th Street as the only location available for a school according to SCA, expansion of Bellevue emergency services to accommodate increased population in the area, and expedited review of the landmarked eligible buildings all in the service of creating a true 24-hour neighborhood in this industrial landscape. CB5--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you. Time has expired.

DAVID SIGMAN: Can I just finish this last point which has--

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: [interposing] sure.

DAVID SIGMAN: not been spoke about? CB5 also wants to highlight that the success of MSMX plan in creating new housing over the next decade will rely on three factors outside the program. First, the efficacy of the 485 tax abatement for projects larger than 99 units where the prevailing wage requirement increases construction costs by an estimated 20 percent. Second, the impact of MIH on the value of the 467M conversion abatement by increasing affordable units to 30 percent from 25 percent, plus the imminent reduction in the length of the abatement on July 1st, 2026, which combined reduced the value of the abatement by 35 percent and the reduction in applications for new hotels to nearly zero due to the special permit requirements. All of these require the action of our state representatives and City Council Members in order for MSMX to be a truly effective program. We urge the Council to continue today's dialogue to generate an

MSMX that leads with housing, but also resolves non-zoning concerns in a balanced way. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you. Next is Julie Chou.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

JULIE CHOU: Dear Council Member Bottcher, my name is Julie Chou, and I serve as the Vice Chair of Land Use, Housing and Zoning at Manhattan Community Board Five. I'm testifying on behalf of CB5 today. We appreciate your thoughtful and important questions during today's hearing. They touch on many of the key points in our prepared testimony. CB5 previously testified before CPC on our conditional resolution. We are equally disappointed that the Commission approved the MSMX rezoning without addressing any of our concerns. While we ultimately voted yes to support the urgent need for housing, our support was conditional. We unambiguously recommended a modified, lower-density approach to better align with existing infrastructure and ensure long-term livability. Importantly, CB5's resolution was adopted word-for-word by all 12 Manhattan Community Boards on the borough board's [sic] resolution. Yet, we are concerned that the

City's press release and DCP's presentation highlighted only our yes vote, admitting the critical conditions that the community put forward. The proposed MSMX rezoning establishes a precedent for the highest residential density every permitted in New York City without any open space mitigation, even after the DEIS identified a significant negative impact in a neighborhood already severely underserved by open space. We've also heard from stakeholders that this level of FAR is so high is disincentivize bonus programs that would otherwise deliver public improvements like transit upgrades, open space and preservation. To strike a better balance, CB5 recommends a lower FAR of 15 instead of 18 in the southeast quadrant to reflect the historic district to better align with the high number of 25 feet wide lot frontages and protect landmark air rights, a 15 FAR in the northwest mid-blocks to support adaptive reuse of our demolition. A 15 FAR is still a substantial increase especially in areas where residential use--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you. Time has expired.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.
Maulin Mehta?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: After Maulin Mehta we'll have Alex Spyropoulos, August Nastasi, and Austin Celestin. Is Maulin Mehta here? If not, we'll move forward with Alex Spyropoulos.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

ALEX SPYROPOULOS: Good afternoon, Council Member Bottcher. My name is Alex Spyropoulos and I am the Director of Government Relations for Tech:NYC, an organization representing more than 550 technology companies in New York. I'm here today to share Tech:NYC's support for the proposed Midtown South mixed-use plan. New York City's housing crisis deeply impacts our vitality, directly hindering businesses' ability to attract and retain the diverse talent they need to thrive. A 2024 report that we partnered with Street Easy on highlighted this. New Yorkers earning average wages could afford less than five percent of rentals and for entry-level tech workers with just 2.1 percent of studios or one-bedroom rentals available. If employees cannot afford to live here, companies cannot grow. This

plan is a strategic response transforming 42 blocks fo Midtown South by introducing mixed-use zoning in areas currently prohibiting housing. It will create approximately 9,700 new homes including up to 2,900 permanently affordable units through the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing. This plan directly tackles our affordability crisis and shortage of housing. By allowing New Yorkers to live closer to jobs and transit, it reduces commutes and boosts local small businesses to increase foot traffic. It is a critical step to inject new vitality into a vital economic center. The status quo is simply not an option. The Midtown South mixed-use plan is essential for more affordable, vibrant, and prosperous New York City. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: August Nastasi.

AUGUST NASTASI: Hey, good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is August Nastasi. I'm a 26-year-old lifelong New Yorker and a recent graduate of Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation where I earned my master's in Urban Planning. When I'm not working the zoning

world, I bartend on weekends at a small diver bar in the southwest corner of the Midtown South rezoning area, so I experience this neighborhood both professionally and personally. And that's why I'm here today, to share this perspective and express my personal support for this rezoning. This neighborhood has a rich industrial history, especially in garment manufacturing, a legacy that does not shape [inaudible] the City's identity. That history matters deeply, and the contributions of that committee should be honored, but cities are dynamic places. They evolve to meet the needs of people who live in them, and today, our most urgent need is housing. Midtown South is one of the most centrally-located transit-accessible areas in the City, yet housing has been prohibited here for decades. This is not just a zoning issue, it's a missed opportunity. In the middle of a housing crisis, it makes no sense to keep entire blocks of Manhattan off-limit to new homes. As someone who works in the area, I see how the lack of residential life affects street activity. Business has slowed down since the pandemic. There just aren't as many office workers coming for happy hour like there used to be, and on weekends the

streets can feel empty because there aren't people living nearby. More residents would mean consistent foot traffic, more energy on the streets, and more support for the small businesses like the one I work at. I urge the Council to support this rezoning while remaining sensitive to the neighborhood's history and mindful of the needs of future generations. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Austin

Celestin?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

AUSTIN CELESTIN: Hi, good afternoon. My name's Austin Celestin. I am a recent graduate from NYU's Wagner School of Public Service where I got my Master of Urban Planner-- Urban Planning, and I am a lifelong New Yorker. We passed-- the City Council passed City of Yes for a reason. The State Legislature amended the multiple dwellings law to allow higher densities for a reason, and this rezoning demonstrates the reason for both of those. If we cannot have this kind of high-density development in Midtown South, then pretty much we cannot have it anywhere else. This is exactly what this kind of plan and what these changes were

designed for. This is in line with what our next Mayor Zohran Mamdani identified as an area that should see increased zone capacity and 9,700 units of housing is something that we cannot slouch at. That's something that we needed 10 years ago. And as someone who used to regularly go to the area-- I took classes at American Composer's Orchestra on 8th Avenue and 35th Street throughout middle and high school. I can tell you that the area is rather lifeless on weekends. Many people don't come there except for a few tourists walking through or going to MSG or the Empire State Building, and it is one of the most transit-rich areas. It is desperately in need for affordable housing. The idea that it could not build housing as-of-right is preposterous. You basically have every subway line that goes through Manhattan that runs through that area. It aligns perfectly with the City's housing goals. It aligns with the transportation goals. Obviously, you do want to exercise as many options as possible. You don't want to just do new ground-up development. You want to adaptive reuse, office to residential conversion, exercise as many tools as possible to get housing off the ground, get housing built, and of

course, we want to preserve as many businesses as we can, but the top priority has to be housing when we have a housing shortage as severe as this one where we need possibly 900-- or about 890,000 units of housing by 2040. You need to do whatever it takes to get the housing built. The high density is welcome, and obviously would be--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you for your testimony. Time has expired.

AUSTIN CELESTIN: [inaudible]

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Maulin Mehta?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

MAULIN MEHTA: Can you hear me?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: We hear you. Go ahead.

MAULIN MEHTA: Alright. Good afternoon, Council Member Bottcher. My name is Maulin Mehta and I'm New York Director at Regional Plan Association. We've long advocated for more housing in central transit-rich areas like Midtown South, and thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of a proposal which makes real progress towards creating much needed housing including affordable housing opportunities in the neighborhood without many. As

RPA has enumerated, the region needs well over half a million new home, and this rezoning can be a major step towards addressing this need. While this rezoning is for residential density that has not been allowed for several decades, the recent lifting of the 12.0 FAR cap and the passage of City of Yes shows that both the city and state support this level of residential density in concept. There is no more appropriate place to map it than in the district which is within walking distance to virtually every major subway line, the busiest bus and rail stations in the country and the largest jobs hub in the western hemisphere. We support the proposal and offer a few specific considerations to strengthen its impact. One, we believe the rezoning could be more effective if wider streets in the neighborhood could also be considered, namely the 6th Avenue corridor and where appropriate, 5th, 7th, and 8th Avenues as well as Broadway. Two, we urge consideration of either changes to the covered pedestrian space design guidelines, or the creation of a new POPs category to facilitate a publicly accessible observation deck. London's public observation deck program could serve as a model for this. Three, this is perhaps the most

appropriate area in the City for additional hotel development, and we would like to ensure that the new zoning, in particular the new street wall requirements do not impeded the ability to construct hotels. Four, lastly, we're concerned about the possibilities for a rezoning that is intended to produce large quantities of mixed income housing to instead produce small quantities of luxury housing through loopholes in the MIH regulations. Regulations requiring integrated mixed income buildings can prevent this and need to be as strong as possible. We urge--

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

MAULIN MEHTA: [inaudible] to remove or modify the offsite and rental condo loopholes. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Thank you. Asha-Marie Singh?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

ASHA-MARIE SINGH: Hi, everybody. I am speaking on behalf of the Garment District and I'm opposing this MSMX plan to add residential buildings to the Garment District. A lot of people spoke and w

are all aware of the history of the Garment district and, you know, how it is a staple of New York City. I heard previously that mixed-use is the future of Midtown, and in fact that is actually diluting businesses that currently exist. We are an ecosystem that works together of small businesses. So, once you start to inject residential buildings, we're kind of dismantling the system. So, it'll be very hurtful to the businesses of the Garment District. I for one am a fashion industry and FIT alumni and my family business is in the garment manufacturing. We have been on 39th Street and 8th Avenue for the past 30 years. With that said, the future of the Garment District is not mixed-use. It is me. I am looking forward to continuing to work in the industry and keep the Garment District alive at the moment. With this mixed-use plan, it is definitely going to be more hurtful than beneficial to the area. I see why it is attractive to many people. Yes, there's great transit. It's in the heart of Manhattan. You know, there's high traffic as far as tourism. From 42nd Street to 34th Street, and yeah, it's a attractive because of people like us who worked hard to be there. So, I am opposing--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you for your testimony. Time has expired.

ASHA-MARIE SINGH: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Carisa Kelly--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Carisa Kelly?

CARISA KELLY: Hi, everybody. Carissa Kelly. I thank you, Council Members. I'm first speaking on behalf of the well-known costume designer, Kasia Walicka Maimone. If you've ever seen The Gilded Age, she has been designing it for three seasons. Over the last-- I am reading her words now. "Over the last 30 years, we have been watching the Garment District shrink from a vibrant manufacturing hub spread over many blocks to its current small number of streets. We have been watching disappearing jobs in manufacturing repairs. We have been witnessing vanishing sources. Garment District is in its location and its deeply-rooted skilled workforce is an incredibly crucial base for theater, film, and television costume production. The vanishing of it affects our daily process of creating costumes here in New York City. If we lose what is

barely remaining, our jobs will become impossible.”

Now, I am speaking on my behalf. My New York story

is tied to the Garment District and still is. My

name is Carisa Kelly and I am a costume designer,

member of IATSE Local 829 for over a decade, and

founder of the nonprofit the Rethread Project that

serves the costume industry. I first came to the

City to interview for grad school and a major part of

my short stay was to swatch for fabric from the

regional theater I worked for in the Garment

District. I could not believe my eyes. One store had

more of any type of fabric than the three fabric

stores back in Seattle. When I moved to the City at

the start of grad school to attend NYU Tisch’s Design

for Stage and Film, I learned how special and one-of-

a-kind the district really is. My education was the

Garment District where I discovered the generational

small businesses, the fabric stores, trim and button

stores, the 50 costume work rooms. Our history is

that of a garment. It is the U.S. history. It is

women’s history. It is labor history, and it deserves

to be highlighted and not put aside. We all want

housing and we feel a plan can achieve both.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you for your testimony. Time has expired.

CARISA KELLY: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Caroline Spitzer?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CAROLINE SPITZER: Hi. Thank you for your time today. My name is Caroline Spitzer. I'm a costume designer, associate costume designer, and member of Queens Community Board Two, but of course, speaking for myself, a different borough. I am a proud union member of IATSE Local 829 and I work in the Garment District. The special Garment District Center is the lifeblood of New York's fashion and costume industry, not just for the City, but for projects around the world. Designers come here specifically for the access to makers and materials concentrated in this area, boosting revenue at hotels, restaurants, museums. This hyper-local ecosystem supports thousands of businesses and jobs. Majority are owned or employ women, people of color, immigrants, and LGBTQ individuals. Did you know that there's an entire job in our industry referred to as a swatcher, a person whose job, whose sole

responsibility sourcing fabrics from the very district. They walk around the streets of this district and gather fabrics just like this that are blurry but hard to see, and this is a union job. Without these stores where people can walk into and source fabrics, this union job disappears. After sourcing the materials we have printed, dyed, embroidered at places like New York Embroidery Studio, International Pleating, manufactured into costumes at shops like Tri-Corn [sp?] Costumes, Wing and Weft, or Toryn Tailors [sp?], and so many other. All these businesses are located in the special Garment District Center. These are small businesses. Relocation likely means closures, and with that, the potential for job loss, exponential job loss. It's also counter intuitive to the expanded New York State's own tax credit that brings industry to our city. If we don't maintain the infrastructure to support it, how does that make sense? I'm not opposed to affordable housing, we need it, but why does it come at the expense of one of our city's most vital and unique industries. While, 3,000 affordable housing is honorable and important, it means the vast majority of housing produced will not be for the

working-class people and artist who call this district their creative home. I'm against the current MSMX plan that does not include real protections in place, real protections and applicable--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you for your testimony. Time has expired.

CAROLINE SPITZER: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Elizabeth-- or Willaim Schultz?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

WILLIAM SCHULTZ: Good afternoon, Chair and Council Member. I'm Bill Schultz, a native New Yorker. I live at 22 West 26th Street in the southeast quadrant and work from home. I support creating a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood, but I want to speak to the question that Mr. Bottcher raised earlier, that the current MSMX proposal needs major revisions for the southeast quadrant. Here's the problem: this proposal treats all four quadrants the same, but the southeast quadrant has historic districts that make it fundamentally different and not at all empty and lifeless as other quadrants were described earlier. This plan allows floor area transfers that could create buildings taller than the

Empire State Building looming over low-rise historic structures and competing with the actual Empire State Building. Let me give you a concrete example. My building was converted to a 12-floor residential building in the early 80s. half our units face a parking lot on 25th Street, and under this proposal that lot which CB5 said must become a school could instead become 100+ story tower. We're talking about a massive building just 20 feet from our windows, and think about what that means: residents losing light and air, living conditions severely degraded throughout the quadrant. This is an area that can't support such density, and we haven't even done a complete environmental impact assessment for this kind of massive development. Are there sufficient schools, playgrounds, medical services, affordable shopping-- what will the impact be on Madison Square Park? I'm asking for three specific changes. First, reduce the FAR limits to 12 or less in the southeast quadrant, especially mid-block. Second, keep the existing 30-foot rear yard requirements, and for converted buildings like mine, require 60 feet total set-back. And third, don't move forward without full evaluating the environmental impacts, and more

seriously consider in the CB5 adjustment recommendations, as David Sigman and Julie Chou noted. The southeast quadrant's historic character deserves protection. Please--

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

WILLIAM SCHULTZ: [inaudible] while preserving what makes our neighborhood special. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Elizabeth Denys?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

ELIZABETH DENYS: Hello, my name is Elizabeth Denys, and I live in Flatbush, Brooklyn. You might wonder why I'm here today. It's because I'm deeply concerned about the housing crisis in New York City and strongly support the Midtown South mixed-use plan, because it would help friends, families, and neighbors in the area and throughout the City who are struggling to keep up with the rising costs, skyrocketing rent costs, and finding more realistic housing options, and they're facing displacement. This is a really well-resourced vibrant 24/7 neighborhood with incredible access to jobs and

transit, and changing to a mixed-use manufacturing and residential zoning instead of just manufacturing will continue to provide opportunities for high-quality fashion manufacturing jobs. This project would map the first MIH districts in Midtown South, creating 2,900 desperately-needed income-restricted homes, homes that would be lifechanging for the nearly 3,000 lower and middle income families who would get to live there. It is critical that this plan includes the highest residential density possible, ideally 18 FAR throughout. Higher FAR means more homes, more income restricted homes, and again, every income restricted home that Council removes from this plan represents a family who will not get the literally lifechanging opportunity of affordable secure housing. Midtown South is part of the dense core of New York City, and if we can't build the densest housing there, where can we? How many of the nearly 3,000 lower and middle income families are we willing to leave behind if we make this rezoning smaller? How many income-restricted homes we will lose in future rezonings throughout the City, because a precedent is being set in the highest density area of New York that we can't build high-

density housing. New Yorkers literally cannot afford to wait for more housing, and our most vulnerable will continue to be displaced from both this area and the ripple effects throughout the city. I urge Council to support this important initiative and ensure that the Midtown South mixed-use plan includes the highest residential density possible. Make sure that as many families as possible can finally access stable housing they can afford. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Leif Allmeroth?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

LEIF ALLMEROTH: Good afternoon, Councilman Bottcher. My name is Leif Allmeroth. I'm a six-year westside resident who's watched members of our community move further out as rents soar. I'm worried that the affordability crisis is squeezing out the creativity and economic mobility that has made New York so special to us. Manhattan's rental vacancy is about one percent, among the tightest in the nation, and wait lists for subsidized units stretch for years. While rent continues to skyrocket due to supply outpacing demands, or demand outpacing supply, storefronts in our community are sitting dark. MSMD updates 1961-era manufacturing zoning to

unlock these desperately needed housing units. We know this works. When lower Manhattan's Financial District rezoned two decades ago, it's resident population more than doubled, breathing life into local businesses and streets with a new 24/7 population. Midtown South can repeat that success, adding homes next to jobs, using rent pressure citywide, and doing it without needing to build new transit. More residents mean more eyes on the streets, customers for local shops and restaurants, and funding for public realm upgrades like a pedestrianized Broadway that would inject vitality into such an important district. And finally, from a democracy angle, New York lost a congressional seat last cycle. Growing our population safeguards New York's voice in Washington. I respectfully urge a yes vote on the MSMX plan and swift negotiations so that shovels can be in the ground soon. Doing nothing means higher rents, darker streets, and a city that prices out the people who make it special. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I hope that the Council will support this important initiative.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Leo Guttman?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

LEO GUTTMANN: Oh, thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I'm Leo Guttman and I'm a resident of Long Island City, and I'm here to speak in favor of the Midtown South rezoning plan. I have-- well, I don't live in any of the quadrants. I have access an office just outside of the northwest quadrant and had friends lived in the northeast quadrant 'til recently who moved party for affordability reasons, and that affordability is the reason I, you know, want this plan to go through. The housing situation in New York is really out of control. It's very expensive, very hard to find an apartment. You know, the scarcity is really affecting quality of life for everyone, and this is really the spot if you're thinking about opportunities to use the new FAR limits that are allowed as of last year's plan, you know, through City of Yes and the state action. Access to both, you know, commuter rail terminals plus almost every subway line, lots of bus lines [sic], really just like an ideal location. All the jobs are here, and making the-- adding residential capacity to the area will make the neighborhood more vibrant. It will I think work in tandem with existing industry including

the Garment District to, you know, promote-- you know, keep that industry alive. Overall, I think that this plan should be supported in its current version, keeping the new 18 FAR limit wherever possible. That's all for me. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Phil Levin?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

PHIL LEVIN: Hi, my name is Phil, and I've lived in Manhattan for 10 years. I'm here tonight because my wife and I recently welcomed our second child, and we've watched with heartbreak as most of our friends with young children have been forced to leave the city, not because they don't love it here, but because the skyrocketing cost of housing has driven them away. That's why I'm strongly in favor of MSMX. This proposal's greatest strength is its density. maintaining the highest allowable density, specifically 18 FAR is crucial, because it allows us to build the maximum amount of housing, including affordable housing units. Only by embracing higher density can we make this neighborhood more affordable. This neighborhood already has the infrastructure, transit, and vibrant character to support a thriving 24/7 neighborhood.

The one missing piece is about housing. I urge you to fully support this plan so we can build the housing our community desperately needs, enabling families like mine to stay and grow here. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Roberto Silva?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

ROBERTO SILVA: Thank you. My name is Roberta Silva, and I am a fashion designer and sample developer working and living in Brooklyn, New York. During my first trip to New York City I took a walk through the Garment District. I immediately felt familiar with the area, as the small and large businesses welcomed all my questions and helped me with my purchases. They were excited to hear my story and how I was sneaking [sic] into fashion shows, even though at the time New York was becoming one of the main fashion capitals of the world. All of these stores, these family-run businesses were helpful and were excited for me as yet another potential immigrant with big dreams. The fashion business is one of the driving forces of New York City, and it has made it one of the biggest-- greatest cities in the world. The business that's in the Garment District [inaudible] generate jobs and

tax revenue. This area has been the place of [inaudible] and success not only of manufacturing designers, but of traders, suppliers, and distributors of the many, many goods that we need every day for our work. The Garment District also inspires other creators, creates partnerships and has seen many of us flourish as small business owners. There is no fashion capital of the world without the Garment District. Every time I go to the Garment District. Every time I go to the Garment District, I feel closer to the greater community, and the manufacturing community. I feel inspired to continue working, and personally I feel proud to be working and living in New York City. New York has always been characterized by change. This constant change in growth requires many elements of this infrastructure such as housing. We in the fashion and garment manufacturing community understand the need, but I am personally afraid that this development and the units created with the zoning change might result in luxury apartments and condos that do not address the core problems of the average New Yorker, keeping business and jobs in this area does. Therefore, I--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you so much. Your time has expired.

ROBERTO SILVA: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Jim Wright?

JIM WRIGHT: Good afternoon, Council Member Bottcher. Excuse me for speaking quickly. My name is Jim Wright, an architect and longtime resident of the southeast quadrant of MSMX. First, I strongly support the City's efforts to increase the quantity and affordability of the top housing stock in every neighborhood for [inaudible] the city's housing supply. Second, I support the broad planning goals of MSMX to support the growth of affordable housing in Midtown-- Manhattan's Midtown South neighborhoods while protecting and enhancing neighborhood character. However, DCP is prepared to rezone the remaining four large manufacturing districts in Midtown South in a monolithic way with insufficient consideration given to the different scales and context between the separate quadrants and their surrounding neighborhoods. Despite DCP's claims of extensive community engagement, just three months before ULURP certification, DCP significantly increased their proposed residential FAR caps from 25

percent in the southwest quadrant and 50 percent in the northwest, northeast, and southeast quadrants by applying the two newly created R11 and R12 residential zone districts with the highest allowable FAR in the city. These are powerful planning tools that need to be used with care, not a last-minute tactic to dramatically increase density without community input. Even though the MSMX DEIS states that the existing average built density in the southwest and southeast quadrants are FAR 8.3 and FAR 5.2 respectively, DCP has lumped these lower density quadrants below 34th Street to transition the Chelsea and Flatiron areas to the south with the higher density northwest and northeast quadrants north of 34th Street which more closely [inaudible] densities of Midtown core areas to the north. Considering the neighborhood differences, CB5 has recommended an R11 designation for the southeast quadrant, matching the proposed southwest quadrant FAR. By applying the recognized urban design principle of higher residential densities along wide north/south avenues, the lower densities on narrow mid-block streets to protect residential light and air which by the way currently exists in the contiguous southern Midtown

neighborhoods contrary to DCP's assertion. This modest modification would produce most of the housing units that DCP has projected while protecting existing scale and character of these neighborhoods. It would also enhance the value of transferable air rights from sites within the two historic districts which cover almost 50 percent of the southeast quadrant.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time is expired.

JIM WRIGHT: Thank you. I will submit detailed written comments.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Susan Tsu.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Susan Tsu?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

SUSAN TSU: sorry, I was un-- I was muted. I-- hello. Thank you. I'm a costume designer with 50 years shopping the Garment District, befriended countless shop owners and generations of their families. Designing in over 45 U.S. theaters and curating major costume exhibitions internationally. Most of you know me as the ancient costume designer of Godspell and as a teacher of 40+

years, the last 22 of which have been at Carnegie Mellon University. And I can tell you that the majority of young people who decide they want to study design have been influenced by the Broadway musicals in New York that they have seen. I ask the architects of the MSMX plan to consider that one of the reasons why the world comes to New York City is to experience the excitement of Broadway theater and the glamour of New York fashion. Please know that we designers are producing our best, most-inspiring work because we have the proximity, exceptional materials, and support of Garment District stores. No other city in the U.S. has what we do. Costume designers for theater, ballet, opera, dance, film, and television from the Atlantic to the Pacific shop here. What the designers, shopkeepers, and makers who have spoken in this room do brings tourists and \$15 billion worth of wealth to the City every year. Theater and fashion born in New York draws the curiosity of the rest of the world, but if we are to continue, we need our materials. And please don't wonder why we are so worked up when digital websites are out there. To this I ask, would you order your wedding gown online without having tried it on or

felt the fabric? We need to feel the fabric. Has anyone spoken with the capable proprietors of our fabric stores to ask what they need? 5,000 specialized workers will be scattered to an uncertain future. How can the tools you are looking at help them, really help them? Not only will you be forcing nearly 800 businesses essential to leave, please also consider that your decision will affect the production of costumes in the entire United States, not just New York. And the costume--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you. Your time has expired.

SUSAN TSU: [inaudible] under fire [sic]. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you. Peter Wai Chan?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

PETER WAI CHAN: Good afternoon, Council Members. My name is Peter Chan, and I have run Sunrise Studio in the Garment District for more than 20 years. I'm here today not just for myself, but for hundreds of small businesses and thousands of workers who make up the living fabrics of this district. As an immigrant from Hong Kong, I spent the last 40

years or so in garment industry. I make my living for myself and for my family. My clients include Donna Karan, Oscar de la Renta, [inaudible], The Rope [sic], and lately, Veronica Beard, and etcetera. Also, I have seen my workers and colleagues dedicate their lives to the Garment District to improve their livelihoods. The Garment District is not-- is more than just a collection of buildings. It's rare ecosystem where designers, panel makers, sewers, and supplies collaborate in real time, often within the same day to bring creative vision to life. You can't replicate that kind of innovation pipeline anywhere else in the country, and certainly not-- you scatter the components across the boroughs or upstate. The MSMX redevelopment plan threatens that very infrastructure. It would displace business like mine that have been the silent engine behind New York's fashion status for decades. New York City is the global fashion capital because of the Garment District. Without it, that identity is at risk. The MSMX plan doesn't just jeopardize jobs, it threatens the future of fashion in the city. As someone who also teaches and mentors young designers at the FIT, I see firsthand how vital it is for next generation

to have access to this environment. Where else can students sketch a design in the morning, pick up the fabric before lunch, and consult a sample making the afternoon? Council Members, we urge you to reconsider this [inaudible] support a version of development that protects and preserves the Garment district, and invest in New York City's creative infrastructure. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Tamas Szarvas?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

TAMAS SZARVAS: Can you hear me?

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Yes.

TAMAS SZARVAS: Good afternoon. My name is Tamas Szarvas and I serve on the Board of Managers of The Cass Gilbert, a 20-story landmark residential building at 130 West 30th Street. Let me begin by acknowledging that New York is experiencing a profound housing crisis. I support efforts to expand affordable and mixed-use housing, especially in well-connected neighborhoods like Midtown South, but as we build for the future, we must also protect the buildings and residents who have shaped these neighborhoods and made them livable, long before rezonings were proposed. The Cass Gilbert was

landmarked in 2001 and converted to a residential use in 2003. It sits mid-block in the southwest quadrant directly adjacent to site 33 identified by the DEIS and your zoning consultant as a likely redevelopment site. Under MSMX that site may now be built to 18 FAR as-of-right with no incentive to negotiate with adjacent landmarks or consider context. That development could block light and air to habitable bedrooms in our building and permanently obscure the eastern [sic] historic façade. This is not a hypothetical. This is what is under proposal for permitting. The New York landmark conservancy has warned that MSMX could encourage massive new construction and the demolition of historical buildings. The Manhattan Institute cautioned that blanket upzoning extinguishes transfer of development rights markets by giving every lot more FAR. Buildings like our landmark, residential mid-block are the exact type of structure that will be most vulnerable if these concerns aren't addressed. The result won't just be lost architecture. It'll be diminished livability for existing residents. We urge the Council to consider commitments whether it through points of agreements or other mechanisms to

preserve livability for existing residents, maintain meaningful incentives for developers to require--

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

TAMAS SZARVAS: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

Thomas Maguire?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

THOMAS MAGUIRE: The [inaudible] trade while spectacularly represented here today is not the only relative entity Broadway film and TV rely upon. Music recording is vital to everything. I'm going to read quickly a list of studios that have closed recently: Associated, Automated, [inaudible] Clinton [sp?], Counterpoint, Hits Factory, Level Head, Bureau Sound [sic], RPM, Record Plant, Right Track, Sony [sic], [inaudible] Moving Pictures, [inaudible] Battery, Daddy Sound [sic], Sound on Sound, BNB, Power Station which had to be purchased by Berkley as a colleague for instruction because they could not withstand the pressure from co-opting, residential co-opting, RCA, MSR, Skyline, Gold Star, and [inaudible] are just a short list of studios we've lost. We also lost on 48th Street, 45 [inaudible]

Guitars [sic], Manny's [sic], Sam Ed [sic], [inaudible], Alex Music [sic], New York Woodwind, Rudy's, Terminal, 48th Street Guitars, [inaudible] to buy instruments. All of our Broadway musicians came here to buy instruments. All those studios that I just mentioned are where those Broadway musicians went to record their studio albums, okay? We also lost a bunch of wide sound venues like 78 Below and [inaudible] Castaway. I don't the big list for you, but it is a big list. We lost Smart Audio, Audio Techniques, Audio by [inaudible] that supplied support services. I'd like to also say that I didn't hear anything today about AIR--

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

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Rachel Reichert?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

RACHEL REICHERT: [inaudible] Reichert, current owner of the Euroco Costumes. We're celebrating our 35th year in business this year. We make theatrical costumes for Broadway, TV and film. Thank you for listening to us all day. I hope you've got good [inaudible] there. And I appreciate all the

good questions that you asked earlier. I can tell that you are considering all of our needs, that the garment industry is bringing up today. Every job and internship I've ever had in this city has been off of Eighth Ave, between 35th and 40th. The neighborhood is my whole life. I don't live in it, but I also don't want to live that close to work. I don't need to reiterate what all of my colleagues have already said today about how important the ecosystem is and the infrastructure that's already here, but I would like to comment about how I'm in the Garment District almost every single day of the year. I work all the time. I leave after dark most days. It was incredibly scary in 2020 and 2021, and it is not anymore. It's a lot more recovered and vibrant than it was back then. There's rehearsal space across the street. There's always dancers out. There's shopping there's bars. I see lots of people having a good time every time I leave work at night. It's not scary anymore. None of us can pivot to work from home. We all have to be here every day. We just want to be able to still be here. So, really, I just hope that the rezoning--

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

RACHAEL REICHERT: Okay, thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Meyer Polanco?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Meyer Polanco?

MEYER POLANCO: Hi. Can you hear me?

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Yes.

MEYER POLANCO: Hello. My name is Meyer
Polanco, and I have lived in Manhattan for my entire
life. I'm here today to testify in support of the
Midtown South mixed-use plan because I love this city
and I'm scared that our inadequate supply of housing
will prevent me from living here in the future. This
plan creates up to 2,900 affordable homes and around
10,000 total units in one of the most desirable areas
in the City. There is no other neighborhood that has
more transit density or better access to job
opportunities than Midtown South. What doesn't make
sense is that despite all of these advantages, we've
essentially banned housing from being built here.
The current zoning regime reflects a vision of the
neighborhood that doesn't match the need of today's
New York. Like I said, we have one of the most

connected job-rich areas in the entire country and yet we stifle its potential by forcing people to live farther away and commute in, contributing to a dearth of retail activity and general liveliness in the area. By allowing more housing here, we're creating opportunities for people to live closer to where they work, reducing pressure on our roads and making life more affordable. The market rate units will help bring down rents citywide to increase supply while the income restricted units will directly serve working families who are being priced out of our city. I'm particularly excited about the potential to convert underutilized office buildings into homes. Creating opportunities to convert unproductive space into housing that our city desperately needs is a no-brainer that brings down our cost of living. Additionally, I would like to echo what some folks said earlier about the next to use R12 across this project. Midtown South is not a suitable location to use this powerful tool to create more housing where is [sic]. This plan represents smart growth in exactly the right place. Thank you for considering my testimony, and I urge you strongly to support this critical step towards a more affordable New York.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Michelle
Feinberg?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Michelle
Feinberg?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Zarith Edgehill
[sp?]?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Bobbi Barnett?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

BOBBI BARNETT: Hi, can you hear me?

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Yes.

BOBBI BARNETT: Wonderful. So, hi, my
name is Bobbi Barnett. I'm a lifelong New Yorker and
a Community Board member and a Manhattan resident
living near the southwest quadrant of the rezoning
area. I'm here today to testify in favor of the
Midtown South mixed-use plan as currently proposed.
As someone who spends a great deal of time walking
through Midtown at all hours, I look forward to being
able to have a true 24-hour neighborhood with safe
and thriving street life. I also look forward to
seeing more housing options available for myself, my

peers, and other New Yorkers here in the heart of Manhattan for years to come. I wanted to address a concern that I've heard about this project. I've attended a number of public meetings hosted by my local Community Board and heard concerns related to bulk and height within the proposed plan. While I understand why some of my neighbors are concerned, I do not share the concerns related to bulk and height in this already very transit and opportunity-rich area. I believe that the experience of being on the street as well as access to light and air in Midtown can be preserved through the proposed street wall requirements. I also believe that new housing can be added while preserving the view corridors of major landmarks that make walking around Midtown South so interesting and enjoyable. The primary purpose of this plan should be to add as much housing as feasible to increase housing opportunity, stem the growth of rising rents, and ensure a vibrant 24-hour street life in an area that is often dead after 8:00 p.m. I thank you for your time and your attention, and I hope that you vote to approve this plan in full. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Thank you.

Daniel Chandross?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

DANIEL CHANDROSS: Hello. My name is Daniel, and while I'm not a lifelong New Yorker, I have lived in Manhattan for years, and in fact, I moved here specifically for the transit and urban community that it brings. I'm here today because I'm a strong believer in the benefits of urbanization and building more dense housing. I'm excited about the possibility of new neighbors, friends, and businesses joining. I'm excited about being able to find cheaper housing without needing to compromise on my deal breakers [sic]. I'm excited about one day being able to live closer to my work in Chelsea instead of having to take multiple subways. I'm incredibly optimistic about the Midtown South mixed-use plan, because current zoning does not permit housing in one of the most transit-connected in the country. If we can't build with an FAR of 18 in Midtown South Manhattan, I don't understand where it was intended to be used. The world has been irreversibly changed after the pandemic, and more and more people are choosing to work from home instead of an office,

driving up housing demand and softening office demand. The plan streamlines the conversion of underutilized or vacant office buildings into residential units, creating these much needed homes. I want Midtown to feel alive 168 hours a week, and not just 40. New residents naturally attract more local retail services and amenities. These residential presence helps transform vacant retail spaces into active storefronts, including grocery stores, shops, restaurants, boosting the local economy for new and existing residents. The project also provides opportunities for people over parking development. Pedestrianizing plazas on Broadway for the millions of New Yorkers that traverse Midtown on foot. Finally, I urge the Council to consider the 10,000 people who may very well become our neighbors who are not able to speak here today. There are Americans in every state desperate for the immigration, LGBT and healthcare protection that New York state provides. Not to mention the almost 100,000 unhoused New Yorkers in New York City alone. We owe all of them a more housed, urban and abundant New York. Thanks everyone.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCER: Chad Purkey?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

CHAD PURKEY: Hello. Can you hear me?

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Yes.

CHAD PURKEY: Hi. Thank you, Council Member. On behalf of the Association for Better New York, ABNY, a nonprofit dedicated to the advancement of support in New York City. I'm speaking to express support for the proposed Midtown South mixed-use plan. This plan reflects a much-needed mixed-use approach that will create a number of benefits for the neighborhood and the entire city. This thoughtful plan introduces much needed balance and correction to the area zoning regulations which have been largely unchanged for over 50 years. While zoning rules have remained fixed, the area has seen dramatic changes, most notably the shifts in its commercial and industrial uses. On top of those global industry changes, the area has struggled more than other parts of the City to rebound post-pandemic, which in large part is due to the restrictive land use rules. To increase vibrancy in and a more 24/7 ecosystem, the proposed plan would unlock the ability for much needed housing to be added to this amenity-rich neighborhood,

complementing the area's existing commercial space used by makers and small businesses. The plan rightly leverages a variety of zoning tools, including new high-density districts and Mandatory Inclusionary Housing regulations to help create over 9,000 new homes, which nearly 3,000 of which will be permanently affordable. By allowing this variety of residential development in a transit-dense neighborhood and within the region's largest job center, the proposed plan will foster a healthier, more holistic neighborhood that will benefit local residents and workers. Because of all these considerations, we urge the Committee, Subcommittee, to support the Midtown South mixed-use plan. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Is Michelle
Feinberg on? Michelle Feinberg?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Zarith
Edgehill, Zarith Edgehill?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: For those
speaking, you have to accept the invitation that's
being sent to you via Zoom in order to testify.

We're going to go Sam Deutsch and after Sam we're going to have George Scheer, Daniel Kent, and Jessica Walker. Sam Deutsch?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: George Scheer?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

GEORGE SCHEER: Yes, hello. Can you hear me?

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Yes.

GEORGE SCHEER: Thank you, Council Member Bottcher. My name is George Scheer. I'm the Executive Director of the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, EFA, a nonprofit and owner of 323 West 39th Street where we've operated for nearly 35 years. EFA provides over 100 visual artist studios and is home to the country's oldest community print-making workshop. I support and strongly support the Midtown South mixed-use rezoning proposal. As a property owner for nearly 35 years we've seen how outdated zoning and rising vacancies and post-pandemic market shifts have weakened Midtown. Despite 100 percent occupancy and strong studio demand, our mortgage refinancing efforts have been difficult. Lenders are wary of commercial properties in the district.

Brokers report a 20-year low in rentable square footage, and appraisers are reducing property values. Our two top floors of our building's separately owned condos have remained vacant for over a year. The current conditions are untenable. At EFA we envision Midtown South one of New York's newest oldest cultural districts, a neighborhood reimagined through housing, business growth and cultural investment. From Broadway theaters to nonprofit art studios, design firms, the live/work artist spaces, this area already has the foundation of a thriving cultural block. With added residential density, the rezoning would not just revitalize, but reframe Midtown as a model for inclusive art and artisan-driven urban development. I urge the Council to seize this moment not only to advance affordable housing but to put policies in place that protect and strengthen cultural nonprofits like ours, as well small businesses and artisans. We are not just property owners and renters, we are the anchors of a thriving, creative economy. No one wants to live in a business district, but people do want to live in a vibrant cultural district, home to artists, designers, and creative industries whose work resonates in this city

and around the world. Creative industry is central to New York's identity and key to Midtown South's future. They generate value far beyond what they earn themselves, and it is up to the Council to protect that value, and in doing so, unlock the full economic and cultural potential of the district.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you.

GEORGE SCHEER: Thank you for your leadership in this moment.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Sam Deutsch?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

SAM DEUTSCH: My name is Sam Deutsch. I want to thank everyone here today. It's been a really interesting presentation. I'm here because I am commenting in favor of the proposed rezoning. I actually live in Chelsea just a few blocks from some of the area that will be affected by the proposed rezoning, and I love my neighborhood, and I think that this rezoning is a great opportunity to make it even better. Everybody else has talked extensively about the benefits of more people living in the neighborhood, more eyes on the street, more businesses, more foot traffic, all of the above, but my personal area of expertise is on climate issues,

and that's what makes me really excited about this project, specifically the fact that this is probably the most transit-rich part of the entire country, and as a result, residents in the Midtown South area and Chelsea and just broader lower Manhattan, right, have some of the lowest carbon emissions per capita of anybody in the country, and that's because we don't need cars to get around. The houses are very space efficient and retain heat very well, especially newer houses that are built to very high insulation standards and with efficient HVAC systems. So not to get too in the weeds, but the TLDR is that building thousands of homes here will create a massive reduction in carbon emissions for people who will be able to live here now, instead of many of whom would end up being priced out to places where they may need cars, many of whom might not even move to New York or live in New York or be-- many of whom would be displaced from New York otherwise, you know? Every New Yorker that can't afford the rent and is displaced to a place like a Texas, right, has much higher carbon emissions. So, not to belabor the point, but I think this is a great project--

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

GEORGE SCHEER: or great proposal, and I appreciate your time. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Daniel Kent?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

DANIEL KENT: Hello, everyone. Thank you, Council Member Bottcher. My name's Dan Kent. I'm the CEO of Lantern Organization. We're a nonprofit developer and operator of permanent supportive housing and affordable housing, and for the last 15 years our office has been right here in the northeast quadrant of the MSMX rezoning area. I've been working in this neighborhood for over a decade, and I'm here to express our strong support for the MSMX rezoning. First and foremost, we recognize the housing shortage as the principle cause of the homelessness crisis in New York City. This is an emergency. Our low rates of housing production in New York City have caused this crisis, and we urgently need to incentivize more housing development and higher density development. And I can think of few corners of New York City that are better suited for high-density development than Midtown South.

It's a high-dense area with a significant amount of public transportation access and there's also very easy access to greenspace such as Bryant Park and Central Park. So, we believe that this is a long overdue opportunity to increase the supply of housing. I urge you to maximize density and to move forward with an 18 FAR. I also urge caution. Please ensure that any affordability mandates for multi-family housing developments are properly calibrated. We need to ensure that while requiring affordability can secure rent-regulated units, you don't want those requirements to be so onerous that you render any multi-family development financially infeasible. So I do urge care and calibration in setting those affordability requirements.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Your time is expired.

DANIEL KENT: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Jessica Walker?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

JESSICA WALKER: Hello. I'm Jessica Walker. I'm the President of the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce. We represent businesses both large and small. We are very excited about this plan and we

hope you will have adopted wholesale. This is a transformational project. Coming out of COVID, everyone understands that we need to do something different in Midtown, and this is that project. The MSMX plan encourages diverse mixed-use neighborhoods by allowing homes and businesses to thrive alongside each other as they do in some of the adjacent areas. Specifically, the plan increases non-residential density to 15 FAR in the densest proportions of the plan area and maintains the existing 12 FAR in the lower density areas. This ensures room for business growth while delivering much-needed housing. It's a win/win. This creates a win/win. More housing options for New Yorkers and more growth opportunities and foot traffic for businesses. And as you know, Councilman, we continue to see elevated storefront vacancy in Manhattan. It's higher in our borough than in other boroughs right now. So, we really do need to be thoughtful about this. We hope you will accept this plan. We think it's a game-changer for New York City. So, we urge you support it. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

Daniel Cohen?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

DANIEL COHEN: Hi, my name is Daniel Cohen. As a resident of Manhattan, I strongly support the MSMX rezoning. We have a severe housing shortage. Rent in New York City is the highest in the entire country. We desperately need more housing and I cannot think of a better place for more housing than Midtown South. It has incredible access to jobs, transit, and economic opportunity, some of the best in the entire country. If we can't repeal housing bans in Midtown South, we can't do so anywhere. We desperately need to build more housing in order for rent to become affordable. Please pass the MSMX rezoning and repeal the housing ban.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.
Eddie Siegel?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

EDDIE SIEGEL: Hi there, Councilman. My name's Eddie Siegel. I'm calling from my office which is in the southwest quadrant to strongly support this rezoning. New York City, we're in a deep, dire housing affordability crisis, and the only way we will fix that is with more homes. MSMX is a great way to start making a small dent in making the City a

little more affordable for me, my coworkers, and everyone who lives or commutes to this neighborhood. With the changing ways we live and work post-pandemic and the nature of this being Midtown Manhattan, there is no better place for us to add many more homes. Having more neighbors will make this a much more pleasant neighborhood for everyone who lives and works here and help transform it from a cavalcade of cava's and fast casual lunch places that is dead after seven, to a livable 24/7 neighborhood. I look forward to welcoming my new neighbors, and I hope you support it. New Yorkers cannot afford to wait any longer. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Samir Lavingia?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

SAMIR LAVINGIA: Hi, my name's Samir Lavingia. I'm the Vice Chair of the Transportation Committee at Community Board Five and I'm also recently elected the Second Vice Chair. You know, I just want to give some background to the Community Board Five vote in favor of the Midtown South mixed-use plan. You know, you've heard many people say that we support 18 FAR on the avenues and a lower density in the mid-blocks, and while that is true, I

just want to bring it up that during that full board meeting, there was a amendment proposed from the floor to actually remove that provision so we would have supported 18 FAR everywhere. That vote failed by a single vote. So, it's basically a coinflip when it comes to the Community Board support of having lower density on the mid-blocks, and I'm 100 percent certain that if we had taken that vote today with our new members who joined just in May, we would have supported the 18 FAR throughout the rezoning. I personally am in support of the maximum amount of housing which means the maximum amount of FAR. My family is a family of renters, and every year we are at risk of being displaced. I don't know if I'll be able to continue living in New York for too much longer. And the other thing I want to say is that people really love living on the side streets. You know, living on an avenue, we put so much density there, and it's just stocked with cars right now-- choked with cars right now. And there's a reason people like living on the side streets, so it actually makes sense to put as much housing on the side streets, if not more than the avenues. Why are we putting everyone on the avenues where there's more

pollution and more noise. Thank you for taking the time to listen to all the testimony today, and I hope you will support the Midtown South mixed-use plan as I would encourage you to. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: MSquared?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

GRACE O'MEARA: Sorry, my name is Grace O'Meara. I'm not speaking on behalf of my employer, just myself. I'm here today to voice my support for the Midtown South rezoning. I know this area very well. I was a sweater designer in the Garment District for over a decade working for companies like Ralph Laruen and Tommy Hilfiger. In 2021 I left the fashion industry, because I was concerned that I could never afford to have a family in New York City on a designer's salary. My concern about affordability led me to my current career, affordable housing. I don't want anyone else to have to give up a creative career because they cannot afford to live in New York City, especially all the creative that came out today to testify. To do that, we must build more housing everywhere. Midtown South is the perfect location to build more housing. It is an area that would make a vibrant 24/7 district. I

believe that industry and housing can coexist in the Garment District. Local businesses would benefit from increased foot traffic. I'm thinking stores like B [sic] Center Two [sic], Pacific Trends, Elegant Fabric, and House of Spandex-- some of my favorites. We saw this happen in the Flower District where it used to only be industry, but then a lot of just consumers started coming and it really revitalized this part of Manhattan. I think that the Garment District has a ton of potential to have this happen. In addition, I would like to see this rezone and future rezonings prioritize apartments that have two bedrooms or more. It is difficult for families to stay in New York City, and our current housing incentives don't prioritize family-size housing. Thank you very much for listening today, and I appreciate it.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Rachel?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

RACHEL WILKERSON: My name is Rachel Wilkerson and I've lived in New York City for more than 10 years. I'm here today to support the MSMX plan. New York City is dealing with a dire housing crisis. Legalizing housing in a central part of

Manhattan would not only benefit the tens of thousands of New Yorkers who would be able to live closer to work, school, and transit, but it would have a ripple effect, setting a new standard for how we can better tackle this crisis going forward via common sense zoning changes and high-density. When I first moved to New York City after college I only stayed for a year, because working in fashion media I didn't make a living wage, and I didn't have rich parents. So, I was sharing a one-bedroom apartment with a roommate and functionally sleeping in the kitchen. Eventually, I had to move back home to Michigan, and it took me several years to be able to afford to come back. Things have only gotten less affordable since then. Who knows what kind of talent we're losing every year, because most creatives don't have a famous last name or a trust fund. As a homeowner, I won't directly benefit from this new housing in any way, but I'm here because I want all New Yorkers to have a safe and comfortable place to call home that doesn't cost their entire paycheck, because I believe that everyone deserves to spend less time in transit every day getting to work and more time with loved ones, engaging in their favorite

hobbies, and or just resting. I'm here because I know that New York's iconic cultural centers will wither and die if creatives around the world can no longer afford an apartment, and I'm here because I know that building more housing will go a long way toward bringing down market rates across the city which, again, benefits the vast majority of New Yorkers. housing should not be illegal in the center of New York City. I strongly encourage this committee to support this plan. Thank you for your time.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Sarah Doh?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

SARAH DOH: Oh, hello. Yes, so there's honestly nothing else left to say that everyone else hasn't before me, but I do want to come on and express my support for this plan. We're in a housing crisis. This plan will help us get out of it, and we need to make it happen. Thank you so much for your time, Councilman Bottcher.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you.

Geoffrey Thomas?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may--

GEOFFREY THOMAS: [interposing] Hi, thank you so much for having me. I signed up a little bit late. I was thinking, you know, the same as like the most reasonable thing in the world if you're going to, you know, upzone anywhere in the world, the first choice should be Midtown Manhattan. How is this-- you know, do people disagree? And a friend told me, you know, some people disagree, and so I joined late, but I appreciate you having me. Like I said, I think it's the most obvious place in the world to have more housing. I support, you know, as much density as possible. I think-- I support the Midtown South mixed-use plan and this whole-- and I want to make a special appeal to the folks who are concerned about what's happening at the national level. I think New York State is going to be-- is becoming already a place for people who are worried about policies in red states to move, and we-- I think if this is a thing that you care about, you know, personal appeal to the Council Members who share this opinion that I do, if this is a thing that you care about, I think it behooves you to make sure that as many as people as possible can move to New York as possible. So, I

support the plan. I support the highest possible density in FARs, and thank you so much for having me.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: James Power?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: James Power?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Garrett Armwood?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

JAMES POWER: Good evening. I'm Jim Power, Co-Chair of the Land Use Group at HSF Kramer, formerly known as Kramer Levin. For many years we have had clients calling up and asking what can be developed on a particular under-developed site in Midtown South, and for many years we have had to tell them that those sites are zoned manufacturing and cannot be developed for residential, and that was usually the end of the conversation. This proposed rezoning will change that and will allow for the revitalization of these blocks with the development of much-needed housing, including a substantial amount of affordable housing through the MIH mandatory affordable housing program. There is a great deal of excitement in the development in

affordable housing communities for this proposal, and we urge the Council to proceed to approve. Thank you very much.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Garrett Armwood?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

GARRETT ARMWOOD: Good evening, Council Member Bottcher, Subcommittee, members of the City Council. My name is Garrett Armwood and I serve as the head of Government Affairs for the SL Green Realty Corp, the largest commercial landlord in New York City. At SL Green we are deeply invested in the future of New York City. We live here. We work here, and we raise our families here. Our commitment to this city is both personal and professional. For over 25 years no other developer has been as uniquely focused on Manhattan's long-term vitality as we have. We have dedicated ourselves to ensuring that it remains a dynamic place to live, work, and play. Over that time we've actively contributed to New York City's recovery and transformation by pushing the boundaries of innovation in the workplace and by developing globally renowned experiential destinations. I'm here today to express our strong

support for the Midtown South mixed-use rezoning text amendment, the next critical step the City Council must take towards reimagining New York City's commercial neighborhoods into vibrant residential communities. In April of 2024, under the leadership of Governor Kathy Hochul, New York State took decisive action to accelerate office to residential conversions within Manhattan's Central Business District by creating the affordable housing from commercial conversions program, commonly known as Section 467M. building on that momentum, Mayor Eric Adams, New York City Planning Chair Dan Garodnick, and this council took another step forward when it passed the City of Yes for Housing Opportunity, a zoning text amendment that expanded the eligible building conversion timeline from 1961 or 1977 to 1991, significantly increasing the pool of buildings that can be converted to residential use. And it amended city zoning text to allow for office to residential conversions in any area where residential use is permitted. The zoning text amendment before you now, MSMX, is an opportunity for New York City to transform a centrally located, transit rich commercial district in Midtown into a vibrant

residential neighborhood by utilizing New York State's 467M tax incentive coupled with the flexibilities this body recently granted to facilitate office to residential conversions into market rate and affordable housing. We believe that this rezoning is essential for New York City to continue addressing its pressing--

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you. Your time has expired.

GARRETT ARMWOOD: [inaudible] and underutilized office spaces. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: If there are any members of the public who wish to testify regarding this proposal remotely, please press the raise hand button now, or if you're in-person, please identify yourself to one of the sergeants. We'll stand at ease for 30 seconds while we wait for someone to raise their hand if you haven't already. Thomas Maguire?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: JR McKenzie [sp?]?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: JR McKenzie?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

JR MCKECHNIE: Hi, can you guys hear me?

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Yes.

JR MCKECHNIE: Very good. Thank you.

Good afternoon. My name is JR McKechnie. I have lived in New York City my entire life. For the last 21 years I have worked in Midtown South on West 39th Street. I'm sorry? Hi? Can you guys hear me?

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Please continue.

JR MCKECHNIE: Okay. I'm sorry. Good afternoon. My name is JR McKechnie. I have lived in New York City my entire life. For the last [inaudible] Midtown South on West 39th Street. [inaudible] As General Counsel to G Holdings LLC. G Holdings own office, retail and hotel properties in and near the areas covered by the MSMX plan. I'm here to voice my and my employer's strong support for the plan. As we see it, the plan is likely to accomplish the goals it designed to reach, and I need not recount them, but I would like to emphasize several concrete beneficial outcomes G Holdings expects. First, the plan would allow property owners to reposition their properties away from, for example, office buildings with high vacancy rates to

1 residential. This would not only provide more
2 housing, but allow owners to better use their
3 properties, and correspondingly increase property tax
4 revenue for the City. Second, as residents of new
5 housing stock come flooding in, there will be more
6 eyes on the street at more times of each day. This
7 means more people to see and report to police illegal
8 or dangerous activity and conditions. Surely this
9 will make Midtown South safer and improve quality of
10 life for everyone living, working, or visiting there.
11 Third, all of these new residents represent new
12 customers for existing retail establishments, many of
13 which continue to struggle. They also likely will
14 attract new ones such as grocery stores to meet new
15 demand. That means increased sales tax and, again,
16 property tax revenue for New York City and New York
17 State. In conclusion, G Holdings believes the MSMX
18 plan will encourage vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods
19 in Midtown South and deliver--

20
21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank
22 you. Your time has expired.

23 JR MCKECHNIE: [inaudible] housing to the
24 heart of Manhattan. We ask you to also take into
25 consideration the other beneficial outcomes I have

described today and urge you to put the plan into effect. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: There being no other members of the public who wish to testify on LUs-- Tyler Baldwin?

SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Tyler Baldwin?

TYLER BALDWIN: Hello, can you hear me?

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Yes.

TYLER BALDWIN: Hi, I'd like to speak in support of the mixed-use plan. I believe any type of housing development is good for the city, as it will encourage economic development throughout the city. [inaudible] we have seen record low housing which caused rent to skyrocket, and I believe that any type of housing, particularly in Midtown East which is near transit hubs, would increase housing development. Thank you very much.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you. We're going to stand at ease for 30 seconds. There being no other members of the public who wish to testify on LUs 324 and 325 related to the MSMX neighborhood plan, the public hearing is now closed, and the item is laid over. That concludes today's

business. I'd like to thank the members of the public, my colleagues, Subcommittee Counsel, Land Use and other staff, and the Sergeants at Arms for participating in today's meeting. The meeting is hereby adjourned.

[gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date August 27, 2025