

Statement Congresswoman Nydia Velázquez

**City Council Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises Hearing on Innovation Queens Rezoning
October 19, 2022**

I want to be crystal clear: I am not against development, but pro- sound, balanced and fair community development. I have seen too many broken promises. There are valid, meaningful concerns being raised by residents and community groups in Astoria about this “Innovation Queens” rezoning application.

What assurances do we have that the project would not further drive-up rents and ultimately displace long-time community members, in favor of accelerating gentrification? None.

I have seen the effects of up zoning in my district in East New York/Cypress Hills and elsewhere. I have had multiple conversations with community residents, activists and stakeholders who are now struggling, and their views should not be cast aside and ignored in the interest of expediting an enormous private rezoning.

We should be engaging the community and ensure any path forward is fair, transparent, inclusive, and equitable. That has not happened here.

We should also be clear – this rezoning application is not adequate in providing affordable housing: a majority of the units will still be luxury and market-rate, and the amount of affordable housing is only the minimum required. Councilwoman Julie Won and others have called for at least 50% affordable housing as a minimum starting point. In response, there is an additional 15% affordable housing units now promised. But this 15% falls short and is misleading. Where is it coming from? It comes not from the pockets of the developers, but from the taxpayers.

Why should public tax dollars be invested to make a private developers’ project look better? Don’t mislead us here. Using *our* public tax dollars here shorts us elsewhere. HPD subsidy can be more effectively used for 100% affordable housing in area projects on publicly owned land - such as at Anabile Basin nearby. The developer can do more than the minimum Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) they are offering.

Let’s be clear, this rezoning proposal is not about maximizing affordable housing or jobs. It is about maximizing profits. What is innovative about marble and glass towers?

The site is a mixed-use area with light industry, including auto mechanics, food truck repair shops, machine shops, laundry services, food production facilities, building materials and finishing companies from tile suppliers to lumber, and wood workers. The people who work here are skilled and unskilled, local, and new immigrants, and rely on these local places to work. Where do they fit in the equation? Where will these workers go?

You would think proximity to large film studios where sets must continuously be built and rebuilt that there would be some thought to affordable light industrial workshop spaces where there can be entrepreneurs, workforce training, and jobs making things.

I recommend the developers go back and work with local communities and elected officials on real planning for the area. The city should play a central role going forward, and take a holistic view, broadly reexamine the economic environment, and commit to a long-term plan that embraces real jobs and affordable housing and offers equitable economic opportunity for residents and area small businesses.



Good Morning City Council Members,

My name is Dr. Anju J. Rupchandani, and I am the proud Executive Director of Zone 126, but more importantly a life-time resident of Astoria/Long Island City, Queens. My family immigrated here from Trinidad and Indonesia to the Bronx in the 70's and when the Bronx began to burn in the 80's my mother decided to move us to "the suburbs" also known as Astoria, Queens. My immigrant family struggled to keep the lights on, to pay the rent on time and often struggled to put food on the table, and my mother was crystal clear that education was going to be my vehicle to success. I am a product of the district # 30 public school system attending PS 70Q, IS 10Q, and William Cullen Bryant High School.

11 years ago, I started as the Director of Community Engagement for Zone 126 an innovative, community-based non-profit whose mission is to connect our community, our schools and our service providers in a shared vision for addressing educational issues in our schools and ending generational poverty. I worked all over the city of NYC for 12 years prior but there is just nothing like being home. What I have heard from residents is that we need deeply affordable housing, and access to programs and services that support children from cradle to college to career. Two years ago, I was asked to step into the role of Executive Director, and over the course of the past year I have had the privilege to be a member of Innovation LDC, a non-profit formed by a wide variety of stakeholders of the Astoria community, with a mission to negotiate and ultimately enter into a Community Benefits Agreement with the Developer of Innovation QNS. Innovation LDC is comprised of members, such as myself, who represent a holistic view of the community—our members herald from organizations including but not limited to: the Astoria Film, Jobs Plus Astoria, the Queens Gazette, variety Boys & Girls Club of Queens, NYCHA Astoria Houses, Ravenswood Houses, and Queensbridge Houses residents.

Together, for one year, we have been working to ensure this development brings tangible and meaningful benefits to our community. Since our inception, we devised subcommittees on housing, transportation, arts and culture, education, the environment and jobs. Each subcommittee worked to painstakingly formulate lists of comprehensive demands solely in an effort to benefit the community. I head up the subcommittee on education, and want to take this opportunity to highlight for you some of our education related asks that we have proposed to the Developer:

- **Educational Programming** (such as establishing a fund for on-site educational programs relating to construction, environment, arts and culture; providing a subsidized Day Care Center within the Project to be run by a local and/or MWBE group for children ages 0-2 years old; providing for a Greenhouse Educational Program, an Film Production/Arts/Entertainment program);
- **Workforce Development** (such as, providing a work force development program in coordination with the farmers market wherein monthly entrepreneur workshops and nutrition workshops may take place for local schools and the general public; providing at least 50 internship and apprenticeship opportunities for students and out-of-work adults,



which can provide an opportunity for an official certification in landscaping, urban gardening and food handling);

- **After School Programs** (such as: providing daily arts based after-school educational programming at the Community Center which would be open to the public; providing additional funding for after-school programs; and providing a bus that runs on a route from local schools to the community center to support after-school programming); and
- **Existing School Support** (such as: working with the City to provide bussing to PS 171Q, a school with greater capacity than students enrolled; working with DOE to allow for D75 student inclusion in general education classes; and working with DOE to provide the LYFE Program).

Over this year, each subcommittee has met with the developer's lawyers to review and negotiate our asks, and we are now in the process of preparing an initial draft of the Community Benefits Agreement.

As such, I am testifying today to offer my FULL SUPPORT for this development: this project has the potential to be great, and with the Council's approval, the community will be receiving the benefits that we have been working so hard for this past year. This is your chance to make a difference for the Astoria community and bring about a meaningful Community Benefits Agreement that will allow the community to thrive along with the project.

I am speaking from a unique perspective one of a lifetime resident of more than 35 years, that has deep, deep roots but also as a leader of an organization that is committed to three zip codes anchored by public housing.

I would be happy to continue the conversation if anyone has additional questions.

From: [Fabiana Silva](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Innovation Queens-Yes
Date: Friday, October 21, 2022 5:08:16 PM

Kevin C. Riley,

New York City Council

My name is Fabiana Silva and I live on the corner of Steinway and Broadway. I am an immigrant from Brazil. I came straight to Astoria when I left Brazil 17 years ago.

I decided to move to Astoria because a friend of mine told me it was a safe, economic place to live that was full of immigrants like me. Astoria has come my home.

I am writing to you today in support of Innovation Queens. I know how hard it is to move to a new country and a new city. I did not know English when I arrived. It was difficult to learn how to become a citizen. I didn't know where to get a job. I just knew I wanted to live in the United States.

Innovation Queens will provide services that would help many immigrants like myself. Partners like Jacob Riis will be able to provide English speaking classes and can help those in need with citizenships. They can also help with teaching people what they need to know to get a job. Innovation Queens will also help make jobs for lots of people. I would have wanted all of this when I moved to Astoria.

Also, Innovation Queens will build so many homes. So many affordable homes for people like myself. We need more apartments for all types of people. I want to stay in Astoria and I can only stay if more homes are built and more affordable homes are available. This project is good for the community and it is good for people like me. Please vote yes for Innovation Queens. We need the project, we need the homes, we need the jobs and we need help for immigrants. Vote yes!

Thank you,

Fabiana Silva

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Gleb Zhgun](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Cc: [District33](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for Innovation Queens
Date: Friday, October 21, 2022 12:24:45 PM

Good afternoon,

I wanted to write to urge you to support Innovation QNS.

It baffles me that a tortured years-long process is required to build housing a block away from a subway stop to replace parking lots and car repair shops. Not only should this project be green-lit immediately, we should revamp the process to make it easier to build housing in general. Housing is a human right, so let's treat the shortage of housing as an emergency that it is.

I know a lot of opponents of the project want the apartments to be more affordable. I agree, and in my opinion, the only way to make housing affordable is to have enough of it to go around. If we don't build any, and people keep getting born here and elsewhere and coming to New York to live, it will get more expensive.

When One45 was rejected, they put a truck depot in it's place. Let's not repeat this embarrassment ever again.

I appreciate your time, and hope that you will support housing.

Best regards,
Gleb Zhgun

Mr. Jamal Boudra
Astoria Boutique
33-08 31st Ave
Queens, NY 11106

To Chair Kevin Riley and Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises:

My name is Jamal Boudra and I am the owner of Astoria Boutique in Long Island City, Queens. I am speaking today in support of the Innovation QNS project because it will deliver desperately needed housing of all kinds, including over 1,100 affordable homes. These new homes will be available for the city's for extremely low-income New Yorkers. This \$2 billion investment will also create thousands of family-sustaining jobs, two acres of publicly accessible open space, and services and support for at-risk youth, recent immigrants, and small businesses.

Additionally, this project will benefit the neighborhood and the residents because it will generate ten times more permanent jobs than exist today, creating opportunities for workers at all skill levels to support their families with a wide variety of jobs.

Above all else, the Innovation QNS will create two acres of open space in the community, add 3,700 temporary construction jobs over 10 years and generate ten times more permanent jobs than exist today, creating opportunities for workers at all skill levels. This one project alone will more than triple the inventory of affordable housing created in the entire community district in the past 8 year!

I urge you to consider and approve this project for the betterment of our community.

Thank you,

Jamal Boudra
Astoria Boutique

From: [Jenny Karlsen](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Innovation QNS Testimony
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 8:40:54 AM

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this testimony in favor of the Innovation QNS project.

As a native New Yorker, tradeswoman and Astoria resident of the past sixteen years, it's undeniable that the neighborhood has seen some bountiful changes in the past two decades. I have witnessed friends and family priced out of their homes due to corporate greed, many beloved shops and restaurants go under because of exorbitant rent, and I anxiously anticipate the day (seemingly fast approaching) when I can no longer live in the neighborhood I've called home and raised my children in.

When first presented with the Innovation QNS project, my gut reaction was one of dread, disgust and "absolutely not!" I can't help but think of my fellow Astorians who are struggling to stay in our neighborhood, including myself. How on earth would more luxury apartments resolve our problems and help keep Astoria affordable for the middle class?

There's a simple answer, and an ugly truth. Innovation QNS won't help our situation. However, they are willing to provide 40% affordable housing, a plethora of outdoor space, and are committed to helping minority and women owned businesses. Not to mention, they are working with the unions, offering thousands of families consistent work throughout the building of the development. The ugly truth is that if Innovation QNS isn't approved, another developer will eventually swoop in and work on this area, as we have all witnessed take place in Astoria and LIC over the years, and I highly doubt we will be as fortunate with their concessions.

Unfortunately, change is inevitable. I believe that Innovation QNS is the best possible outcome for the direction that Astoria is heading, considering it will arrive at that destination with or without the various perks this project has to offer.

Thank you,
Jennifer Karlsen

From: [Jeremy Welsh-Loveman](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Comment in support of Application number C 220364 ZMQ (Innovation Queens Rezoning and LSGD)
Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2022 11:02:45 PM

Dear Subcommittee Chair Riley,

I want to comment in strong support of the Innovation Queens Rezoning proposal. I am a New York City resident and a recent resident of the Dutch Kills neighborhood and Queens Community Board 1. I believe this rezoning would be very good for housing affordability. I am a renter and would therefore appreciate the additional rental housing supply that this project would bring, as the additional supply will put downward pressure on rents. As anyone who has looked for an apartment recently knows, the competition for all kinds of apartments in NYC is fierce. We desperately need more housing to reduce this competition and provide competition for existing landlords.

Market rate rental construction has been [shown to reduce rents as higher income people are drawn into the new buildings](#), opening up space for other renters in existing units. While new, higher income residents might bring new amenities like restaurants, [the new housing can absorb the increase in demand](#), lowering rents overall. Astoria is already a sought after neighborhood, with good restaurants and entertainment and a short commute to NYC. No one will decide to live in Astoria just [because of this development, but this development will absorb demand to live in the area](#). As long as additional housing supply is allowed, newer, more expensive housing will also [filter down](#) to lower income tenants over time. While I, personally, might not be able to afford the market rate units in this building, I know that by taking some renters off the market these developments will open other apartments for me. This project would also create a substantial amount of new, rent restricted and rent stabilized units which the City desperately needs. This is an area of the City where little affordable housing has been produced in recent decades, it has to allow it's fair share. Allowing this development will provide hundreds of families with opportunities they would not have otherwise, providing them with safe and healthy places to live. I see no reason to reject this proposal, the opponents of this development cannot articulate a clear logic to how this development will hurt anyone, they are instead trafficking in conspiracy theories and hearsay.

This project provides a unique opportunity, through increased density, to also create green space in an area that definitely needs it. The current usage of those blocks is not friendly to pedestrians and contributes to a general Northern Boulevard area that is friendly only to cars. This project will also bring significant environmental benefits as it will allow more people to take mass transit and live in a walkable neighborhood.

Overall I think this rezoning will produce substantial benefits with no downsides, I hope the subcommittee supports it.

Thank you for your time,
Jeremy Welsh-Loveman

From: [Joel Dodge](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] YES Innovation QNS
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 9:11:06 AM

Rents are up 20% this year in Astoria. We need more housing. Don't let the noisy NIMBY minority dictate housing policy for our entire neighborhood and city. The Innovation QNS rezoning deserves to pass.

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Joel Dodge

Public Interest Attorney & Policy Advisor | Director, Columbia Law School | Chair, American Constitution Society New York Lawyer Chapter

[LinkedIn](#)

From: [Kate Van Tassel](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Innovation Queens Support
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 12:01:50 PM

Good morning,

I am a resident of Sunnyside, a coop owner, and a city planner by training. I strongly, strongly encourage the committee to approve the Innovation Queens project. Councilmember Won says she represents the community in opposing it, but she does not represent me if she opposes the project.

The project includes a significant amount of affordable housing and would be an amazing addition to a blighted area. I run through those blocks as a runner on training runs all the time - the project would definitely be an improvement.

Thank you very much for your consideration and all the hard work you do.
Kate Van Tassel

My name is Kimba Wiggins and I live on Block B of the Innovations QNS project, and my friend Marino Frost has his business & nonprofit organization on Block A, Mission Of Love & Stardust Studio. We are the only business involved that actually LIVE & WORK within the project's 5 block radius. I am in FULL SUPPORT of the Innovation QNS project because I believe that the project will bring much needed revenue to the area, as well as affordable housing for the economically disadvantaged. They will not destroy the very things that make our area great, but will bring life back to an area that was the hardest hit by the Coronavirus pandemic. Out of all the politicians and nonprofit organizations that claim they are for their constituents and support them, why didn't any of them (including Councilwoman Julie Won) come to any of us? Not one EVER approached us and spoke to us like they claimed. Also, many of these protest organizations that came here today do not even live in Astoria, LIC nor have visited the 5 block project site, so how can they truly relate and understand what we are dealing with? They can't! Even the Community Board 1 leader isn't from Astoria or LIC. She lives 1 hr 45 minutes away so how can she truly relate to the Innovation QNS project if she's not local? She also expressed concerns about not being able to find parking. That is ironic to me, considering that we have a serious issue with lack of parking that BedRock Realty & Innovation QNS has addressed. BedRock Realty came to us respectfully, they are nice people who took our concerns into consideration and made sure that we were taken care of rightfully. I believe that Innovation QNS will bring our area back to life, and restore an area that was the hardest hit by the pandemic & years of economic decline. Thank you.



The New York City Council
Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
Public Hearing

October 19, 2022

Testimony from Long Island City Partnership

Good afternoon, my name is Charles Yu, Senior Director of Business Assistance at the Long Island City Partnership. I am here to speak in support of the Innovation QNS project, which we think will benefit our community.

The Long Island City Partnership (LICP) advocates for economic development that benefits the industrial, commercial, tech, cultural, tourism, and residential sectors of Long Island City (LIC). Our mission is to attract new businesses to LIC, retain those already here, welcome new residents and visitors, and promote a vibrant and authentic mixed-use community. We manage the LIC Business Improvement District (LIC BID).

Our neighborhood has emerged as a vibrant mixed-use community, which has proven to be an important attribute that enables us to better withstand and recover from the pandemic compared to other areas. The proposed development will reinforce and add to this strength by delivering several much-needed benefits that the community at large has been requesting for a long time. People are moving to this great neighborhood, as the latest Census has shown, but space is becoming more limited.

Responding to the feedback from some of the most robust community engagement that we have seen around developments, the proposed project will now create approximately 1,100 permanently affordable units on city blocks that could be better utilized. 500 of those units will be available at 30% AMI, which is about \$40,000 a year for a family of four. More than 2 acres of public open space with greeneries, playgrounds, performance space and a dog park for the community and a 60,000 square-foot community hub for organizations with deep local roots to expand their much-needed services will also be delivered to our community.

The project will create many jobs and career pathways during construction and permanently for local job seekers. Existing small businesses, many of which are part of the dynamic fabric of this neighborhood, will benefit, too, when new residents and visitors spend locally.

If this project does not move forward, it will be a real missed opportunity to expand access to affordable housing; create more public open space and community space; hire local job seekers who are ready, willing and able to work in their community; and bring more customers to neighborhood businesses. For these reasons, we hope City Council will give a strong consideration to support the Innovation QNS project put forth by this proposal.

Marino Frost
[REDACTED]
Long Island City, NY 11101

October 19, 2022

To:
The City Council's zoning subcommittee

MARINO FROST STATEMENT REGARDING INNOVATION QNS PROJECT

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Marino Frost. I am the only person in this story who has everything at stake here. I've been living as a tenant at the ground zero, the block A, since April 1, 1992, which is more than 30 years. I built my recording studio there (which is my source of income), my apartment is there, and I run a beautiful artistic non-profit organization Mission Of Love from there, accompanied by many nice souls.

When I heard about this project that supposed to demolish literally ALL I have (my residence, my studio, my income and, the worst of all, to prevent me from my future artistic and Mission Of Love work), I was simply crushed! Without my recording studio I wouldn't have neither the tools, nor the rooms to do my work by myself, let alone with others who come there on a daily basis.

It immediately became the worst problem I've ever had in my life without any comparison! Even death in family can't be compared with that. Sickness and death are also parts of life, but this situation was NOT!

None of the PAID PROTECTORS of the community called, and no one offered me any help! None of these local non-profit organizations, not anybody from a Community Board, or any other organization, not any politician, not my Council woman Julie Won! NO ONE! No one cared about me and others, while now all of them act as the "saviors of the community"! What a pathetic joke!

I walked around like a zombie in a trance. Suddenly, three weeks later my phone rang! Who is calling? The developers! Two top executives! Nice and polite people who asked me if I want to meet with them. I invited them to visit me at my recording studio. Who showed up? Four top executives who run the company. They were great! They offered me to relocate my business, my apartment, Mission Of Love non-profit org... We reached an agreement and now all of us are happy! They are good people, not some dragons who walk over the dead bodies as some people around might think. So, my enemies became my best friends! I love them dearly! What is wrong with that?

There are numerous benefits that this project can bring to the whole community very soon, and even more in the future!

I don't know anybody in these five blocks who is against this project, everybody I know here supports it! Julie Won, if you truly advocate on behalf of your constituents, you should ask us who live at ground zero what WE stand for, and vote YES!

Very few know that before these current developers emerged, there was another corporation that planned a similar project on the same ground, but in top secrecy. Fortunately, they failed. If we don't approve these people who are nice and caring, new developers will come who won't be nice, open and caring, and who might succeed behind our backs! So, why not to approve these guys?

It is easy to destroy, but how many can create? What moves the world forward towards progress is love and construction, not hate and destruction!

Sincerely,
Marino Frost
President of Mission of Love, Inc.

Mr. Mark West
Mark A. West Jr. Museum & Center for the Arts
contact@mrkwestmuseum.org
(212) 470 -1834

To Chair Kevin Riley and Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises:

My name is Mark West. I speak in support of the Innovation QNS rezoning as it will expand on the culture and arts brought to Astoria.

I founded the Mark A. West Jr. Museum, also known locally as House of Mark West, as a non-profit cultural art institution, gallery and creative hub to provide greater opportunities for artists and creatives from marginalized communities. Expanding the neighboring Kaufman Arts District and building on existing cultural assets like the Museum of the Moving Image and the Frank Sinatra School of the Arts will provide more opportunities for our community to experience art. I see the 250,000 square feet of space for small businesses and nonprofits in the creative industries as a major asset to entrepreneurs like myself.

I believe that this space provides an opportunity to promote underrepresented culture through visibility and elevate young artists from the surrounding community.

I support this rezoning project and ask that it be approved.

Thank you,

Mark A. West Jr. Museum
Founder

From: [Margaret Schneider](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vote NO on Innovation QNS
Date: Friday, October 21, 2022 4:47:19 PM

Dear Council,
This is important! Please read this.

As a concerned member of the Astoria/Long Island City community, I am urging you to oppose the Innovation QNS rezoning. This massive high-end luxury development will irreparably harm our most vulnerable communities and destroy the rich diversity of a place that so many working class and immigrant New Yorkers have called home.

Council Member Julie Won has been clear in her demand for a minimum of 55% truly affordable housing to meet the needs of an area where nearly 50% of the population is low to very low income according to the City's own data. It is also a historically redlined neighborhood, perpetuating the patterns of gentrification. This neighborhood-sized rezoning should not be treated as a conventional zoning where a bare minimum of 25% affordable MIH units is required.

Silverstein Properties, Kaufman, and BedRock Real Estate Partners are billionaire developers who are refusing to provide more than 25% affordability. Their recent posturing about increasing the affordable housing to 40% is just that: posturing. They will only build it if they get taxpayer subsidies, and they won't share the details. They would keep their high profit margin; subsidies should not go to billionaires! Furthermore, Housing Preservation and Development does not fund projects that are not 100% affordable: there is no guarantee that this additional 15% will be subsidized.

Moreover, from what I'm reading, the units marked "affordable" would STILL increase the low end of rental unit pricing in this area—an "affordable" studio apartment in that development would still cost more than many of us pay for far larger spaces right now. That pricing may be "affordable" relative to other units in the development, but it will immediately push up prices in this neighborhood. None of us can afford what that will do to our rents and to the area.

This development will displace the surrounding working-class and immigrant residents who are already getting harassed and seeing their communities displaced. Our small businesses will never be able to afford the high-end retail rents. In addition, it will open the floodgates for more speculation and likelihood of more out-of-scale rezonings with little to stop landlords from applying for demolition of their rent-stabilized buildings.

Please: Vote NO or publicly oppose Innovation QNS. We're counting on you.

Best,
MJ Schneider

From: [Naheed Akhtar](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for innovation Queens
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 5:33:04 PM

My name is Mohammad Zulifqar. I'm Asian Pakistani Muslim living 5 Blocks of Project. " innovation Queens ". Almost 33 Years to live A Block 2nd Floo at Astoria. Me and my family fully supporting this project. Thank you.

Ms. Claudia Coger
Astoria Blvd
Astoria, NY 11102

To Chair Kevin Riley and Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises:

My name is Claudia Coger and I have been a resident of Astoria Houses for over 60 years and am the former President of the Astoria Houses Resident Association. I am a tireless advocate for social welfare, education, and tenants' rights in the Astoria Community. As an advocate for my community, I speak today in support of the Innovation QNS project because it will bring new investment, resources, and affordable housing options to our neighborhood.

For the past two years, Innovation QNS has proven to be a true community partner and has shown a vested interest in our neighborhood. This is beyond a simple promise for affordable housing in a new building. The Innovation QNS team has been on the ground, talking to residents, hearing our opinions, and lending support when we were most in need. Whether it was food distributions, holiday gifts for the children, turkeys for Thanksgiving... When we needed support, Innovation QNS was there for us.

I look forward to continued conversations with the development team as to how this project can benefit the residents of Astoria Houses who live around the corner from the proposed project. I am excited for the new programming and partnerships this project will bring. I have faith this team will do right by our community and know this will be a fruitful partnership.

Please accept this testimony as my support for the rezoning. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important request.

Best Regards,

Claudia Coger
Resident of Astoria Houses

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October 18, 2022

New York Building Congress Testimony in support of the Innovation Queens Project

Good afternoon. My name is Kate Cunningham, and I am the Director of Government and External Relations at the New York Building Congress. I will be testifying on behalf of our President & CEO, Carlo A. Scissura. The New York Building Congress is a membership organization committed to promoting the growth and success of the building industry in New York City. We represent the interests of over 550 constituent organizations comprising more than 250,000 skilled tradespeople and professionals and are here today to testify in support of the Innovation QNS project.

At the height of the pandemic, unemployment, , reached 30 percent in Astoria. The Innovation QNS project will create 5,400 much needed jobs for the community, including 3,700 jobs during construction and 1,700 permanent jobs, most of which will be well-paying union jobs. That is 10 times the number of jobs currently available in the immediate area. Additionally, this development would spark \$50 million in new spending to existing small businesses nearby.

The project will also bring in a wide range of community services and amenities that Astoria needs – including a major Community Innovation Hub where nonprofit organizations such as HANAC, The Floating Hospital, The LGBTQ Network and many more can expand their services into Astoria.

The development's open space component will be a welcome addition to the neighborhood. Queens Community District 1 is 51st out of the city's 59 community districts in terms of access to parks. Some 42 percent of residents are not within walking distance of the public open space. Innovation QNS will add over 2 acres of public open space to the neighborhood, accounting for more than a quarter of the project site.

The project will also help to alleviate the upward pressure on housing costs. Our city is facing a severe housing crisis as a result of decades of underproduction. Studies indicate we need to build a quarter of a million new homes to meet the demand of current and future New Yorkers and achieve a healthy market. Despite this, we still permit the construction of fewer new homes per capita than almost every other major city in the United States. The undersupply of homes has led to skyrocketing rents, especially in lower-income

communities of color and immigrant communities like Astoria, where median asking rent has increased by nearly 20 percent in the last year alone.

The Innovation QNS project will build 2,845 new units of housing for an estimated 8,000 New Yorkers. 1,100 of those homes, or 40 percent, will be permanently affordable and senior apartments, more than 500 of which will be reserved for extremely low-income New Yorkers who make less than 30 percent of the Area Median Income. That is five times the amount of deeply affordable homes Queens Community Board 1 has added since 2014.

Finally, the entirety of the project lies within a quarter mile of a subway station that can reach midtown Manhattan in under 20 minutes, maximizing existing public infrastructure. Increasing development like this near transit will reduce car dependency, increase subway ridership, and lower our collective carbon footprint.

This development is a historic project that will bring thousands of new jobs and homes to Astoria for a diversity of New Yorkers. For those reasons, I urge you to support the Innovation QNS project. Thank you.

Reverend Hassan Clark
Center of Hope International
38-49 12th St
Long Island City, NY 11101

To Chair Kevin Riley and Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises:

My name is Reverend Hassan Clark and I am the Senior Associate Pastor at the Center of Hope International. I am in support of the Innovation QNS project. This development will bring a construction trade school, a movie production house and training center. I believe that adding these resources along with the affordable housing that it will bring is very exciting.

I strongly believe that this project is a step in the right direction working with reliable non-profit partners and community leaders to expand economic opportunities for the residents of Long Island City.

Please accept this testimony as my support for the rezoning. Thank you!

Best Regards,

Rev Hassan Clark
Senior Associate Pastor, Center of Hope International

Pastor Corwin S. Mason
Community Church of Astoria
14-42 Broadway
Long Island City, NY 11106

To Chair Kevin Riley and Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises:

My name is Pastor Corwin S. Mason, and I am the senior Pastor of the Community Church of Astoria. As an advocate for my community, I'm always looking for projects that will bring truly affordable options to our residents. New affordable housing in Western Queens is not a desire but rather a need. Many NYCHA residents are living in substandard conditions where they are constantly overlooked and grossly underserved. Affordable housing is incredibly limited, leaving many residents with no way out of the NYCHA cycle.

I am writing today to express my support for Innovation QNS. While 1100+ new affordable units will not benefit every resident in need, it is a glimpse of hope for thousands of Astoria residents seeking new affordable housing. I'm also excited about the innovation in business and workforce development that will be a very important part of this project. Community wealth building is vitally important in underserved communities.

I strongly believe that this project is a step in the right direction working with reliable non-profit partners. In addition to the affordable housing component, these community partnerships truly make this project worthwhile.

Please accept this testimony as my support for the rezoning. Thank you!

Best Regards,

Pastor Corwin S. Mason
Pastor of the Community Church of Astoria

Ms. Phoebe Collier
41-16 12t Street Apt 3D
Long Island City, NY 11101

To Chair Kevin Riley and Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises:

Greetings. My name is Phoebe Collier, I am a resident of Queensbridge Houses. Like many residents of public housing, the sound of new affordable housing is music to my ears. The Innovation QNS Project will deliver desperately needed housing of all kinds, including over 1,100 affordable homes, where virtually no housing exists today. Not Only will it provide high-quality affordable housing but services like a free and reduced medical clinic run by The Floating Hospital, after-school programs and immigration services provided by Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement, career development training and small business incubation with the Queens Public Library and Urban Upbound, among other community services.

Additionally, this project will provide 3,700 temporary construction jobs over 10 years. It will also generate ten times more permanent jobs than exist today, creating opportunities for workers at all skill levels to support their families with a wide variety of jobs. The developer has committed to working with the community to hire locally and use MWBE suppliers and contractors.

I am in favor of this project because Innovation QNS will deliver more affordable housing than any other recent rezoning in New York City. This is a huge win for our community!

Sincerely,

Phoebe Collier
Queensbridge Resident



QUEENS PUBLIC LIBRARY

October 18, 2022

Kevin C. Riley, Chair
Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
New York City Council

On behalf of the Queens Public Library, I provide the following written testimony in advance of the Subcommittee's October 19, 2022 hearing on the proposed Innovation QNS development. Queens Public Library's mission is to transform lives by cultivating personal and intellectual growth and by building strong communities. The Library has 66 locations—including branch libraries, a Central Library, and adult learning and technology centers—serving communities in all parts of Queens.

During the past year, the Library has been in discussions with the developers of Innovation QNS, as well as with the Department of City Planning, concerning the impacts the proposed development could have upon the delivery of Library services in the vicinity and how a Library presence within the proposed development may help mitigate those impacts. As a result of these discussions, the developers have committed to contact the Library at least 6 months prior to obtaining a building permit for the final building within the Proposed Development, in order to identify one of, or some combination of, the following mitigation measures:

- (1) Funding or provision of improvements and maintenance to the Library's Broadway branch facility that would support the branch's programming and services year-round, such as improvements to the branch's garden to provide space for public gatherings and community enjoyment.
- (2) Provision of space within the Proposed Development for the Library, the size and location of which would be determined in coordination with the Library. The Library would require this space to be fully built-out and equipped.
- (3) Support for the Library for the continued operation of a space within the Proposed Development. The Library would require the space to be provided rent-free.

Discussions about these mitigation measures are ongoing, and the Library looks forward to working with the community and elected officials to meet the growing and evolving needs of the communities we serve as the project goes through public review.

Sincerely,

Nick H. Buron
Chief Librarian, Senior Vice President

Testimony of Seth Bornstein

Executive Director, Queens Economic Development Corporation

October 19, 2022

Good afternoon. My name is Seth Bornstein and I am the Executive Director of the Queens Economic Development Corporation. I have been involved in neighborhood development in Queens since 1979 having in the nonprofit, government or academic sectors.

I believe Innovation Queens is an important project –other speakers have discussed why they believe it is beneficial, so rather than repeat what has been already said, it is with four decades of experience I'd like share some a with you. My first project in 1979 was to attract a quality drug store to Southeast Queens. It's hard to believe today, but four decades ago it was virtually impossible to attract to developers to Queens. Working with a community-based organization a plan was hatched to assemble five plots of land, relocate tenants living in substandard housing, find a developer, engage an architect – and – find local businesses – including a drug store – to tenant the 16,000 square foot shopping center we envisioned. It took eight years and we were getting very close – the exception was we could not find locally owned businesses. Only national chains would commit to renting in the center. This caused a schism in the community. One side agreed to moving ahead with national chains, the other side was not going to budge – including an elected who would not agree to a crucial zoning change. We knew if there was no compromise the project would die – and with it a much-needed drug store, the hope of local employment and new businesses that would pay taxes.

After a very late-night session in this building a deal was struck whereby the national chain would be admitted but every effort would be made to attract local business in the smaller stores. When the project was completed two years later the local economy tanked but we opened the shopping center – with the national drug store and just one locally based business. Despite the desire for local business the project was resounding success. It took vacant and underutilized pieces of land and replaced it with needed services that gave local people jobs, created a tax base and was a catalyst for other development nearby. And the elected who was most opposed to the development took full credit.

I know that the scale of small shopping center pales in comparison to Innovation Queens – but the concept is similar. Striking a compromise is the only way we can see results. To do nothing is to do a disservice and not progressive but regressive. I remember the streets around what's now Kaufman Astoria Studios – hulking abandoned structures no one wanted. My late mentor Claire Shulman struck one of the best deals in the city's history when she got the Feds to sell it to us. Kaufman's investment gave Queens a new industry that has grown remarkably with thousands of jobs. It has been a catalyst for incredible growth that serves the community. Urban spaces need to change and grow. Developing a mixed income community with 1,100 **permanently** affordable homes will be an extraordinary accomplishment. We know that building developments for just one income level, whether high income or low income does not make for a quality urban environment. Queens is home to some incredible well-planned developments that have stood the test of time – Innovation Queens with its mix of housing, community facilities, retail and much needed green space can be the next one.

It is an opportunity not to be squandered.

Rev. Bobby Moore
Astoria Baptist Church
31-17 21st Street
Long Island City, NY 11101

To Chair Kevin Riley and Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises:

Thank you for allowing me to speak today. I am Rev. Bobby Moore, the Overseer of the Astoria Baptist Church located at 31-17 21st Street in Long Island City, and I would like to express my unwavering support for Innovation QNS.

Innovation QNS is more than just a development project, it is bringing together the existing community - building on rather than replacing all the things that already make our area great. This project will bring in new locally owned shops and restaurants that complement rather than compete with what's already here. This project will expand on our bustling and thriving community.

Innovation QNS's approach is different as they have sought out the opinions and needs of the existing residents early on. Given the current economic climate, it is so important that housing is made affordable to not drive out the residents who call Astoria home. This project offers over 1100+ affordable apartments.

I look forward to welcoming Innovation QNS to the community and hope you will consider this rezoning.

Sincerely,

Rev. Bobby Moore
Astoria Baptist Church

October 18, 2022

Kevin C. Riley, Chair
Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
New York City Council

On behalf of the Steinway BID, and as a long-time local business owner with a storefront on Steinway Street, I want to offer full support of Innovation QNS.

Innovation QNS is exactly what is needed. Steinway Street was struggling even before the pandemic, with too many empty storefronts. A development project that will bring more people, who will live and work near or on Steinway Street, will bring new patrons to our existing businesses. That's a good thing.

Steinway Street is one of Queens' most important shopping corridors. Innovation QNS helps grow this shopping destination by building an exciting new project. It's replacing parking lots and empty buildings with new parks and things like the Community Innovation Hub. Innovation QNS is giving people who live here today a reason to come to this part of Steinway Street again.

Innovation QNS will also join our BID and help us in our ongoing efforts to improve our area. That's important.

Plus, Innovation QNS is now proposing over 1100 affordable apartments, with hundreds of units priced at rents for people earning \$28,000 per year. That's a lot of new homes that can help a lot of people stay in this neighborhood.

The Innovation QNS team started talking to the BID and businesses on Steinway years ago. They asked us what we thought would help the neighborhood and took our opinions seriously. It helps that Kaufman Astoria Studios has been a good neighbor for decades and that the Studio has brought good, family sustaining jobs to Astoria. Their involvement gives us confidence that the Innovation QNS team will create the same kind of good economic activity.

The Steinway BID and its local businesses hope the City Council votes to approve Innovation QNS.

Thank you,

Richie Plush
Owner Plush Paints and
Member of the Steinway BID

From: [shane sauder](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Innovations Qns
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 9:13:34 PM

This city desperately needs more housing. Approving a project like this should be a no brainer. I hope this project sails through will approvals.

Sincerely
Shane

From: [Spencer Allegaert](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support for INNOVATION QNS
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 5:40:11 PM

Hi there,

I am writing in support of the 500 deeply affordable, 600 affordable and 1600 market rate apartments that are being proposed as part of the innovation QNS project. I believe NYC needs as much housing as possible to help fight off the current housing crisis, especially affordable housing that will both help vulnerable community members AND alleviate the pressures on gentrifying communities.

I live in Williamsburg, not far from Astoria. And rents here are skyrocketing, not because there is too much development (there's very little) but because we aren't building enough. And it's forcing higher income earners to go to places where they can find apartments, like Astoria, which will raise rents and displace more people

If we want a better city, one that provides housing for ALL then the city council should approve the project with the committed 40% AH component.

Please do not succumb to NIMBYs who want to stop badly needed housing.

Thank you,

Spencer Allegaert
11206

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Spencer Allegaert
862-596-9875

From: [Stephen Eyerly](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Innovation QNS Written Testimony
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 11:08:13 PM

To whom it may concern,

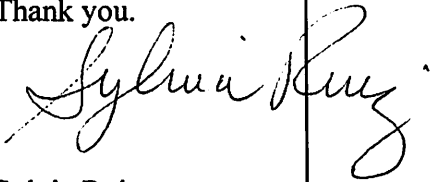
I write to you the following written testimony about the Innovation Queens Rezoning hearing for the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. As a resident and registered voter of councilmember Julie Won's Long Island City district, who lives within a 15 minute walk of the proposed location, I would like to express my complete support behind the project and the rezoning, regardless of how many affordable units there end up being for the project. My current neighborhood where I live and where this project would go can be characterized at the moment as a neighborhood of industrial blight, with more auto body shops than actual restaurants and public places for people to gather. This project would bring much needed public space along with restaurants and shops to my neighborhood. It would also bring much needed new housing to the neighborhood. I currently feel trapped in my apartment as there are no viable alternatives for me to move to. This project would increase the housing supply, increase competition among landlords, and give renters like myself more leverage and options when deciding where to live within the neighborhood. I would have loved to have testified in person today, but unfortunately my obligations at my full time job prevented me from doing so. Just something to keep in mind when trying to determine how representative of the community the in person testimony from today truly was. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Stephen Eyerly


Long Island City, NY 11101

My name is Sylvia Ruiz (79) and I currently live in an affordable housing building in Astoria with my husband (76). The experience of being able to live in a safe environment has given me and my husband stability, peace of mind and comfort in our retirement age. I support deeply the Innovation QNS project because it will bring jobs, and housing opportunities in the current housing crisis. Housing should be a right for all and not a privilege of some. Many seniors are in need of affordable housing.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sylvia Ruiz". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Sylvia Ruiz

From: [TAMAR LAVY](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 9:45:59 AM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

We are better than this. Our neighbors and friends deserve dignified lives. People over profits!

I urge you to vote No on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with InnovationQNS.

Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

I have lived in Astoria for over 5 years and now live in neighboring Woodside for 5 years.

Respectfully submitted,
Tammy

A community psychiatrist who witnesses the mental health tragedies associated with housing concerns and economic hardships every day. Our fellow NYers are suffering!

TAMAR LAVY
tammylavy@gmail.com


Woodside, New York 11377

From: [Tara Woebbe-Alcaraz](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] No to Innovation QNS Rezoning
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 4:36:05 PM

To Whom it May Concern,

As a concerned member of the Astoria/Western Queens community, I am urging you to oppose the Innovation QNS rezoning. This massive high-end luxury development will irreparably harm our most vulnerable communities and destroy the rich diversity of a place that so many working class and immigrant New Yorkers have called home.

Council Member Julie Won has been clear in her demand for a minimum of 55% truly affordable housing to meet the needs of an area where nearly 50% of the population is low to very low income according to the City's own data. It is also a historically redlined neighborhood, perpetuating the patterns of gentrification.

This neighborhood-sized rezoning should not be treated as a conventional zoning where a bare minimum of 25% affordable MIH units is required.

Silverstein Properties, Kaufman, and BedRock Real Estate Partners are billionaire developers who are refusing to provide more than 25% affordability. Their recent posturing about increasing the affordable housing to 40% is just that: posturing. They will only build it if they get taxpayer subsidies, and they won't share the details. They would keep their high profit margin; subsidies should not go to billionaires!

Furthermore, Housing Preservation and Development does not fund projects that are not 100% affordable: there is no guarantee that this additional 15% will be subsidized. This development will displace the surrounding working-class and immigrant residents who are already getting harassed and seeing their communities displaced.

Our small businesses will never be able to afford the high-end retail rents. In addition, it will open the floodgates for more speculation and likelihood of more out-of-scale rezonings with little to stop landlords from applying for demolition of their rent-stabilized buildings.

Please keep the fabric of our community in tact by keeping this a neighborhood for the people, and not corporations.

Respectfully,
Tara Alcaráz

--

Tara C. Woebbe-Alcaraz



From: [Tara Belmont](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL]
Date: Friday, October 21, 2022 6:04:34 PM

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Members:

I urge you to vote no on Innovation QNS. Hundreds of diverse community members rallied at City Hall on Wednesday and later testified to be clear in its demands – we will not be erased. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments – at minimum of 55% – at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with Innovation QNS.

We live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote no on Innovation QNS.

Sincerely,
Tara Belmont



Astoria, NY, 11106

--

Tara Belmont-914.299.8716.

From: [Tasfia Uddin](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 12:46:56 PM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote no on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with InnovationQNS.

Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

Tasfia Uddin

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Queens, New York 11106

From: [Tasnim Ahmed](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 8:03:33 PM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote no on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with InnovationQNS.

Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

Tasnim Ahmed
Astoria NY 11106

Tasnim Ahmed

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Astoria, New York 11106

From: [Teresa Ridley](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 6:19:21 PM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote no on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of TRULY affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with InnovationQNS.

Developers also need to consider the effects of ever-rising property taxes on middle-income co-ops in Astoria—co-ops that are not new or luxury but are still being taxed at higher rates because of luxury co-ops and developments like InnovationQNS. It's not just rising rents that are pushing residents out of Astoria and Long Island!

Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

Teresa Ridley

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Long Island City, New York 11106

From: [Teresa Scott](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 10:20:28 AM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote no on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with InnovationQNS.

Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

Teresa Scott

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Far Rockaway, New York 11691

From: [Thom Beemer](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] NO
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 10:05:39 AM

No to innovation qns and more luxury housing that raises rents for our community while displacing people. --

www.thombeemer.com

From: tommuccioli@gmail.com
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] NO Innovation QNS
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 7:58:30 AM

City Council,

I am a constituent in Julie Won's district residing at 51-01 39th Avenue. I oppose the proposed development. No school is being built, the affordability levels are tbd. There's been little transparency, community engagement. Folks from every level of government including the councilmember and congresswoman have come out against the project. That should be enough for the council to vote no.

Thomas Muccioli
[REDACTED]
Sunnyside, NY 11104

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Thomas Vasiliu](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 1:31:22 PM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote no on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with InnovationQNS.

Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

Thomas Vasiliu

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Astoria, New York 11102

From: [Tiffany Joy Butler](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Friday, October 21, 2022 8:25:47 PM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote no on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with InnovationQNS.

Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

Tiffany Joy Butler

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Queens, New York 11373

From: tbarsamian@aol.com
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Tony Barsamian Testimony:
Date: Thursday, October 20, 2022 12:20:11 AM

"Zoning Subcommittee Meeting" on: Oct 19, 2022

Testimony:

My name is Tony Barsamian, and I have lived and worked in Queens for more than 44 years and my office is around the block from the development location. I am an active member of the community. I am the publisher of the Queens Gazette, and I dutifully serve as the Chair of both the Steinway BID aka Steinway Astoria Partnership and Innovation LDC. Innovation LDC a non-profit formed by a wide variety of stakeholders of the Astoria community, with a mission to negotiate and ultimately enter into a Community Benefits Agreement with the Developer of Innovation QNS. Innovation LDC is comprised of members representing a holistic viewpoint of the community—our members herald from organizations including but not limited to: The Astoria Film Festival, Jobs-Plus Astoria, Zone 126, Variety Boys and Girls Club, Astoria Houses, Queensbridge Houses and Ravenswood Houses.

Together, for one year, we have been working to ensure this development brings tangible and meaningful benefits to our community. Since our inception, we devised subcommittees on housing, transportation, arts and culture, education, the environment and jobs. Each subcommittee worked to painstakingly formulate lists of comprehensive demands solely in an effort to benefit the community. Our asks range from:

- **workforce development programs** (such as green jobs training, apprenticeships, local hiring measures, the establishment of various funds for the local hiring and training and opportunities for NYCHA residents, MWBEs and disabled workers).
- **to sustainability and resiliency measures** (such as sustainable building design, measures to reduce the heat island effect, using renewable energy sources to the extent possible and mitigating air pollution during construction, establishing waste reduction and management systems, flood resiliency measures, and providing accessible public open space).
- **to a variety of educational programming and services** (such as day care facilities, greenhouse educational programs, film production/arts/entertainment programs, after-school programs, and support for existing schools).
- **to affordable housing development and existing housing support** (such as increasing the affordable housing provided to 50% affordable at below 60% AMI, funding contributions to local housing CLTs, Astoria Houses, Queensbridge and Ravenswood Houses tenant associations).
- **to transportation demands** (such as the establishment of free shuttle bus service to run along Steinway Street for the purpose of boosting business); and more.

Over this year, each subcommittee has met with the developer's lawyers to review and negotiate our asks, and we are now in the process of preparing an initial draft of the Community Benefits Agreement.

As such, I am testifying today to offer my support for this development: this project has the potential to be great, and with the Council's approval, the community will be receiving the benefits that we have been working so hard for this past year. This is your chance to make a difference for the Astoria community and bring about a meaningful Community Benefits Agreement that will allow the community to thrive along with the project.

Thank you for your time and attention; I would be happy to submit my written testimony or answer any questions you may have.

From: [Onindita Sarker Onadi](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] NO INNOVATION QNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 11:59:20 AM

My name is Tuly Zebunnesa. I have been living in Astoria for the past 12 years. This area has issues with high rents. The developers did not reach out to us. I do not want a mega-development here that will displace my people. This would increase our rent through speculation and area gentrification. No one in this area can afford to live in a 3000\$ studio apartment. Immigrant Bangalis are already struggling. I demand that the City Council members vote no to the Innovation Queens rezoning application.

From: [Tyler Herald](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vote NO on Innovation QNS
Date: Friday, October 21, 2022 10:41:40 AM

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Members:

I urge you to vote no on Innovation QNS. Hundreds of diverse community members rallied at City Hall on Wednesday and later testified to be clear in its demands - we will not be erased. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

This housing is not for us. It is not affordable for the folks who live here. \$3000+ studios are not affordable. They're not affordable for me. They're not affordable for my neighbors. They're not affordable to the many working class folks who came to emotionally testify before you on Wednesday. The vast, incredibly large majority of the housing units we are looking at here, no matter how we slice and dice it, are luxury, market rate units. We need housing that works for us.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with Innovation QNS.

We live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria. Our communities are all connected and the idea that the largest development in Queens that is heavily luxury won't affect the rest of the area is an intentional blind spot. In addition to completely out of scale and out of touch buildings on five blocks, we know this is also about more than those five blocks.

I attended the entire hearing on Wednesday before giving my testimony later that evening. It was incredibly disturbing to hear the recent immigrants being pushed into our city weaponized as a tool in this issue. Developers in this hearing admitted that this is a long development process that will happen over many years. The statement that this multi year long project is a solution to an immediate issue is completely unrealistic and just not true. It was incredibly saddening to me to hear even elected officials using this rhetoric. If we want to talk about supporting immigrants we should look to the immigrants and the many people of color who testified Wednesday worried about their livelihood in this neighborhood.

We also see the weaponization of other working class people when we see folks talk about unions and jobs. I don't think I heard a single person testify that they don't support union jobs. I heard several people who came out against Innovation QNS acknowledge they are union members. Someone's temporary job is not worth more than a lifetime of displacement for someone else. We must find a way to meet our needs. We cannot and we should not have to choose between the two.

We are New York City. We pride ourselves on our leadership for the rest of the country. It's no secret housing and affordability are a huge issue in our city. Let's work to create real solutions on those things. Luxury apartments are not solutions for an affordability crisis. Let's find another way.

Vote no on Innovation QNS.

Sincerely,

Tyler Herald
Woodside, Queens

From: [Ulfatun Ridika](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 12:06:57 PM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote no on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with InnovationQNS.

I have been a resident in Astoria my whole life. In the past 22 years of my life I've seen Astoria go through many phases. Some beneficial for the community and some not. I believe that by allowing the innovation Queens rezoning developers in our community, it will be the downfall of the existing community. If we allow these developers to come in and gentrify our neighborhoods, it'll lead to the displacement of thousand of immigrant families leaving them with no where to turn to. Many people already hve trouble affording rent in the neighborhood and if developers come in and gentrify our community then it'll drive out the existing community.

Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

Ulfatun Ridika

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Queens, New York 11106

From: [Vanessa Heller](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] VOTE NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 9:14:26 AM

Hi,

I've been in Astoria 18 years and have seen my neighborhood gentrify like I would never have imagined. I moved here for the community and multi-cultural feel... of families and working class folks. If I didn't have my rent stabilized apartment I would not be able to afford to be here.

Our neighborhood DOES NOT NEED MORE LUXURY. This will displace people and further impact the rapid gentrification of a working class neighborhood. Please VOTE NO... THIS IS NOT WHAT ASTORIA NEEDS ... this is not what Astoria represents.

PLEASE PLEASE consider the damaging effects of what this monster project will do to our loving home.

Thanks,
Vanessa Heller
Clinical Social Worker
Long time Astoria resident

From: [Vanessa Thill](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] NO on "InnovationQNS" - no more luxury! don't displace Astoria
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 3:38:38 AM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote no on InnovationQNS. I stand in solidarity with the New Yorkers who have been clear in their demands and showed up at City Council to testify. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with InnovationQNS.

Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

Vanessa Thill

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ny, New York 11205

From: [Wendy Lehmann](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vote NO to Innovation QNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 1:40:13 PM

Dear Land Use and Subcommittee Members:

I am writing to ask you to vote NO on Innovation QNS. My name is Wendy Lehmann and I have lived in Astoria since 2004 and love this neighborhood but I see my neighbors struggle with paying higher rents. I see people I've known for years have to leave.

This project does not meet the needs of our community and the vague details about affordability warrant a rejection. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. Astoria is filled with diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in a community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with Innovation QNS.

Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote no on Innovation QNS.

Sincerely,

Wendy
[REDACTED]
Astoria, NY 11105

[REDACTED]

Lehmann
[REDACTED]

--

Wendy Lehmann
[REDACTED]

From: [Whitney Toussaint](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 12:29:49 PM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote no on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with InnovationQNS.

Additionally, where are these potential residents going to be able to send their children to school? The school district represented here is already dealing with school construction extremely behind the need for the growing community. We have school buildings that are either overcrowded or under-enrolled depending on where these new buildings are being constructed. These developers are in it for profit and are not considering the needs of the community.

Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

Whitney Toussaint

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Long Island City, New York 11109

From: [Wichuda McConnell](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Vote NO or publicly oppose Innovation QNS
Date: Thursday, October 20, 2022 6:26:17 AM

To Whom It May Concern:

As a concerned member of the Astoria/Western Queens community, I am urging you to oppose the Innovation QNS rezoning. This massive high-end luxury development will irreparably harm our most vulnerable communities and destroy the rich diversity of a place that so many working class and immigrant New Yorkers have called home. Council Member Julie Won has been clear in her demand for a minimum of 55% truly affordable housing to meet the needs of an area where nearly 50% of the population is low to very low income according to the City's own data. It is also a historically redlined neighborhood, perpetuating the patterns of gentrification. This neighborhood-sized rezoning should not be treated as a conventional zoning where a bare minimum of 25% affordable MIH units is required. Silverstein Properties, Kaufman, and BedRock Real Estate Partners are billionaire developers who are refusing to provide more than 25% affordability. Their recent posturing about increasing the affordable housing to 40% is just that: posturing. They will only build it if they get taxpayer subsidies, and they won't share the details. They would keep their high profit margin; subsidies should not go to billionaires! Furthermore, Housing Preservation and Development does not fund projects that are not 100% affordable: there is no guarantee that this additional 15% will be subsidized. This development will displace the surrounding working-class and immigrant residents who are already getting harassed and seeing their communities displaced. Our small businesses will never be able to afford the high-end retail rents. In addition, it will open the floodgates for more speculation and likelihood of more out-of-scale rezonings with little to stop landlords from applying for demolition of their rent-stabilized buildings. Vote NO or publicly oppose Innovation QNS.

Wichuda McConnell
Astoria resident

Testimony Will Mora
Date October 19, 2022
Subject Opposition to Innovation Queens Project
Committee Zoning and Franchise Committee

Good afternoon. My name is Will Mora. I am asking for the Council to follow Council Member Julie Won's lead and vote NO on Innovation Queens. We elected her to represent us and that is exactly what she is doing. I ask that you follow her lead.

The current project is not for us. This project will only push families like mine out of our community. We are already facing market pressures to move with many of our landlords looking to get rid of the rent stabilized apartments in the area. This project will only exasperate the displacement of immigrant families. **If the developers can't commit to 55% affordability with strong tenant protections, we ask that this project be rejected.**

The developers have failed to include the community, specially the Latinx community that live in the affected area. The renderings of the website showing luxury logos makes it very clear to us: This project is not for us. Do you think our black and brown bodies will be welcomed once the luxury housing has been built? This is a majority women and minority lead body. I don't need to spell out the racism that plagues our nation.

When it comes to jobs, this is another area where the developers and organized labor are fooling our community. This project will be built on the backs of non-union workers. This project is not going to be built 100% union. This is an open shop project. A model that is terrible for our community.

Again, follow the lead of our Council Member and VOTE NO on Innovation Queens unless the project is 55% affordable, has strong tenant protections and they do right by the workers tasked to build the housing.

From: [William Warren](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 10:37:32 AM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Forward suspect email to phish@oti.nyc.gov as an attachment (Click the More button, then forward as attachment).

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Good afternoon,

I write to you in between the cries of my newborn child, and as a longtime resident and activist in Queens - to say that I stand with my community AGAINST Innovation Queens.

My wife and I moved from Long Island City to Astoria in search of affordability after our one bedroom skyrocketed to \$2800+ during COVID. You see, there are no laws truly preventing this from happening in this city, yet we as taxpayers and constituents keep being told the only solution is to build even more luxury buildings. Currently there are hundreds of thousands of vacant units in nyc and no legislation to make sure we can afford to live in them. Enter Innovation Queens, a development that the community has now rejected multiple times, citing struggles like my own of constantly being pushed out of neighborhoods because of luxury developments like this that push up rents with their \$3k studios and \$4k 1bedrooms as examples of what other large companies can get away with charging. The developers have also undergone extremely aggressive PR tactics, and I request that you ask yourself why. What do they gain from getting a giant luxury development with the bare minimum number of affordable units required by law. What could be worth all the effort?

Immense profit.

What is more important to you? Their profit, or New Yorkers being able to stay in our homes? The answer to this question will help the people who vote you in know how to act next election. Innovation Queens doesn't vote, but we do.

Sincerely,

Paul Warren

William Warren
wpw208@gmail.com
2561 48TH ST, FI 2
Long Island City, New York 11103

From: [William Warren](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 10:37:32 AM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Good afternoon,

I write to you in between the cries of my newborn child, and as a longtime resident and activist in Queens - to say that I stand with my community AGAINST Innovation Queens.

My wife and I moved from Long Island City to Astoria in search of affordability after our one bedroom skyrocketed to \$2800+ during COVID. You see, there are no laws truly preventing this from happening in this city, yet we as taxpayers and constituents keep being told the only solution is to build even more luxury buildings. Currently there are hundreds of thousands of vacant units in nyc and no legislation to make sure we can afford to live in them. Enter Innovation Queens, a development that the community has now rejected multiple times, citing struggles like my own of constantly being pushed out of neighborhoods because of luxury developments like this that push up rents with their \$3k studios and \$4k 1bedrooms as examples of what other large companies can get away with charging. The developers have also undergone extremely aggressive PR tactics, and I request that you ask yourself why. What do they gain from getting a giant luxury development with the bare minimum number of affordable units required by law. What could be worth all the effort?

Immense profit.

What is more important to you? Their profit, or New Yorkers being able to stay in our homes? The answer to this question will help the people who vote you in know how to act next election. Innovation Queens doesn't vote, but we do.

Sincerely,

Paul Warren

William Warren
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Long Island City, New York 11103

From: [William Meehan](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Support InnovationQNS
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 10:18:25 PM

To the Land Use Committee:

Please vote to approve InnovationQNS. This project would provide thousands of new apartments, only a few blocks from the M/R trains, on land that is currently parking lots and auto shops. This project is especially important because of the 500 apartments at 30% AMI(!), which would be transformational in terms of who could afford to live in new housing in Astoria. The current zoning only allows low-density manufacturing; this is not only an inappropriate use so close to the subway, but it means that denying the application would result in hundreds of low-income families losing out on income-restricted units within a 15-minute commute of Midtown. Your vote to support InnovationQNS will help those families.

Thank you,
William Meehan

From: [William Norton](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] NO Innovation QNS
Date: Tuesday, October 18, 2022 8:41:33 PM

NO
NO
NO
NO

William Norton

From: [Yamina Touahri](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 1:43:30 PM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote no on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with InnovationQNS.

Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

Yamina Touahri

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Astoria , New York 11102

From: [Yasmine Elebisy](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 1:46:51 PM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote no on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

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Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

my name is yasmine, I live in Woodside and family that love all around queens/astoria. you can't wipe us away people will be without homes. Please consider this.

Yasmine Elebisy

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Roosevelt, New York 11575

From: yukino.oshimizu
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 12:23:01 PM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote no on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

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Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

yukino oshimizu
tenoritiger.mishiri@gmail.com


Astoria, New York 11106

From: [Zainab Almehti](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 12:56:01 PM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote no on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

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Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

Thank you,
Zainab
Brooklyn, NY

Zainab Almehti

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Brooklyn , New York 11217

Testimony Zakaria Mahmoudi
Date October 19, 2022
Subject Opposition to Innovation Queens Project
Committee Zoning and Franchise Committee

Good afternoon. My name is Zakaria Mahmoudi. I live in the affected area and I am asking for the Council to follow Council Member Julie Won's lead and vote NO on Innovation Queens. We elected her to represent us and that is exactly what she is doing. I ask that you follow her lead.

The current project is not for us. This project will only push families like mine out of our community. We are already facing market pressures to move with many of our landlords looking to get rid of the rent stabilized apartments in the area. This project will only exasperate the displacement of immigrant families. **If the developers can't commit to 55% affordability with strong tenant protections, we ask that this project be rejected.**

The developers have failed to include the community, specially the Latinx community that live in the affected area. The renderings of the website showing luxury logos makes it very clear to us: This project is not for us. Do you think our black and brown bodies will be welcomed once the luxury housing has been built? This is a majority women and minority lead body. I don't need to spell out the racism that plagues our nation.

When it comes to jobs, this is another area where the developers and organized labor are fooling our community. This project will be built on the backs of non-union workers. This project is not going to be built 100% union. This is an open shop project. A model that is terrible for our community.

Again, follow the lead of our Council Member and VOTE NO on Innovation Queens unless the project is 55% affordable, has strong tenant protections and they do right by the workers tasked to build the housing.

From: [Zeehan Wazed](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] City Council Public Hearing on Innovation QNS - 10/19
Date: Wednesday, October 19, 2022 12:52:03 PM

Dear City Council,

My name is Zeehan Wazed. I am an Astoria resident and full time artist. I wanted to share my statement in support of Innovation QNS but more specifically from a cultural standpoint.

I first got involved with IQ after making a comment on their website about the need and dearth of arts in Queens. Soon after, I was contacted and commissioned to paint a 200 foot long mural on Steinway. The mural was painted on the side of the P.C. Richards which was constantly getting tagged up by not just graffiti but gang signs according to the local residents. Over a 3 month process I collaborated with the partners of IQ to meticulously design and paint a vibrant mural which celebrated Astoria diverse community and also, ultimately, made the residents feel safer.

Since then I've been working with IQ in the hopes of bringing in more art to Queens. As of you may recall 5 ptz in LIC was a real Mecca for street art and hip hop, thus was a great loss at the hands of development. I truly believe IQ will not only help reverse that loss of culture but lift Queens to becoming an epicenter for the Arts laying foundation of opportunities for a new generation of artists to come.

Aside from being an artist, as a Bangladeshi immigrant, I've connected the partners of Innovation Queens to members of the South Asian community to help better fulfill their needs. IQ has been more than welcoming to as organizations such as South Asian Youth Action and Bengalis of New York. I had also recently acquainted them to local mosque president who is in support of the project. I believe these conversation are the beginnings of fostering an even more beautiful and diverse Astoria if this project is passed.

Thank you for time.
Best regards,
Zeehan Wazed



From: [Zoe Posner](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 10:04:30 AM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote no on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with InnovationQNS.

Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

Zoe Posner

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

New York, New York 10024

From: [Zuleica Valencia](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please vote NO on InnovationQNS
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 6:00:26 PM

NYCC Land Use Subcommittee,

Dear Land Use Subcommittee Council Member:

I urge you to vote NO on InnovationQNS. The community has been clear in its demands and showed up at City Council to testify proving that we won't be dismissed and that our voices need to be respected. We are not parking lots. We are not anti-housing. We are diverse working class, immigrants, small business owners, and residents who deeply feel the impact of gentrification in our community board district that is over 47% low to very low income, and majority people of color in the area in and surrounding the project site.

We as a community are demanding a majority of affordable apartments - at minimum of 55% - at levels that truly meet the needs of those who are most housing insecure. There's much at stake. This rezoning will lead to further speculation and rezonings that will push residents out. We see it happening already with InnovationQNS.

Please don't erase us: we live here and secondary displacement is real. We've seen it in Long Island City, and we are seeing it unfold in Astoria.

Vote NO on InnovationQNS.

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