

**737 Fourth Avenue Rezoning
February 22, 2021**

My name is Jackie Goldenberg. I'm a member of the Rise and Resist Elevator Action Group, and I'm pleased to Zoom with you.

As someone who will be 77 years old this summer, transit access is very important to me. The MTA's record is rather shameful. Only 1 in 4 subway stations have elevators.

The MTA faces several lawsuits in the same year (and for years) that the Americans With Disabilities Act turns 30. People with disabilities are told that they are second class citizens when subways lack elevators. If you've ever seen videos of them literally crawling up subway stairs, you will never forget those images.

But garden variety old people like me are also shut out of the subways. We are also told to stay home (even when there is not a pandemic).

So, on behalf of elderly New Yorkers, I congratulate private developers and governmental bodies that can open the way to more access.

The devil is in the details, arcane (at least to me) language about easements and zoning. But the big picture is this: Now is the time to break through bureaucratic inertia to respect the human and civil rights of all New Yorkers. Thank you.

From: [Joseph Hawthorne](#)
To: [info38](#); [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Rezoning on 737 4th avenue Brooklyn
Date: Wednesday, February 17, 2021 8:31:36 PM

Hello,

I am a resident of Carlos Menchaca's district and I am interested in attending the public hearing on this rezoning. How can I go about this?

If I cannot attend, though, I would like to make sure my written testimony is recorded. Here it is:

"I have lived in Sunset Park for 5 years and my family has been here for more than 40 years, however I am not connected with any campaigns or activist groups.

I am concerned about the lack of housing and I support building multi-unit developments, especially during COVID-19. In general, I think it would be a mistake to reject housing developments at a time like this.

HOWEVER, I am skeptical that these developers can only create 33 affordable housing units (which is below the 25% earlier promised). Apartments on these cross-streets are ideally situated near a train station, industry city, Park slope, sunset park AND the main entrance to a beautiful cemetery. Residents would have a view of New York Harbor and the Cemetery, which I assume would partially block the cemetery's view of the harbor. There are schools nearby as well as a police precinct, so it's important to understand that these are not just apartments in a nice neighborhood. This is an amazing location.

In my ideal world, I'd like to see 100% affordable housing. But if this area is going to be rezoned I think it's reasonable to ask for at least half the apartments to be affordable for working class families. The developers should have to demonstrate in more depth why they cannot meet a 50% percent threshold, and if they do this I would be more open to this development.

I think this is fairly common sense. If this apartment gets permission to build **over 100 market value apartments** that obstruct a landmark cemetery in a location that is getting more and more desirable, they need to do a better job explaining their need. And we need to acknowledge that market conditions now are much worse than they will be in 1-3 years when this project is complete."

Thank you,
Joe

From: [Josh Krinsky](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: 737 Fourth Avenue Project, Sunset Park
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 2:48:21 PM

Good afternoon,

I was unable to join the zoom today but wanted to give a testimony.

My name is Joshua Krinsky. I have been a New York City public school teacher and basketball coach for the past 15 years. I was born and raised in New York and have lived here my whole life.

I am in favor of this project and want to give my voice in its support. As a middle income New Yorker, I am very aware of the affordable housing crisis that exists. It is not just a concern for lower income New Yorkers (which of course it is) but for middle income as well. We are many of the essential workers that the city needs. The health care workers, nurses, teachers, youth workers, sanitation, FDNY, NYPD, and city employees, and we too need more housing. There is just not enough affordable housing here. As a teacher in service of this city, I should not be forced to move to the suburbs. I don't want to live in the suburbs, I want to live in the city where I grew up and work. We all need more housing that is not the high high end.

The plan for Fourth Avenue is a step in the right direction. It provides many more units of affordable housing, and housing overall that is not in the super high end market. There are guarantees of the number of units dedicated to lower income New Yorkers, and the developers seem to have made many concessions listening to the needs and demands of the community. At its simplest, this project brings more housing to the city on what is currently retail space of very little value. It is a net positive.

We cannot be a city that says no to new projects all the time. We need more housing. This project provides some, whereas now there is no housing at this location. We need many different solutions including government buying hotels and building new construction dedicated to this mission. We also need private development with community involvement like this project. We cannot say no.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Josh Krinsky

From: [Jessica Murray](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Support for 737 Fourth Avenue Rezoning
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 11:50:51 AM

Dear Land Use and Zoning Committee members,

I am writing in support of this project and recommend that you approve the zoning change. Totem proactively reached out to the Rise and Resist Elevator Action Group to let us know that they have committed to carving out an easement to the MTA as a concession for the zoning change. Easements are important to plan for because they save the MTA on construction costs when utilities and sidewalk space restrict where elevators can go. The 25th St. N/R station, which the building would be adjacent to, has a narrow sidewalk and platform, making this particular easement the ideal accessibility solution. With lower construction costs for the MTA, it might also be easier for the agency to prioritize an elevator at that location in the future. In the interim period, until an elevator can be installed, Totem has committed to working with local nonprofits and economic development groups to program the space, showcasing local entrepreneurs.

Totem's forward-thinking is refreshing when many buildings go up without those discussions, creating missed opportunities and further delaying public transit access to people with disabilities. Their extensive outreach with the community to understand the neighborhood's current and future needs is worthy of City Council approval.

Sincerely,

Jessica Murray

From: [Jennifer Van Dyck](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Support for 737 Fourth Avenue Rezoning
Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 7:12:23 PM
Attachments: [IMG_5397.PNG](#)

Hello Land Use -

I am a member of Rise and Resist's Elevator Action Group and want to state my support for 737 Fourth Avenue Rezoning.

Totem has proven to be an ally to the disability rights community. By reaching out to community organizations and examining the full impact a new building has on its neighborhood and the people who live in it and travel through it, they have shown themselves to be progressive in their thinking, paving the way for other developers to follow their example.

The easement they are planning at the 25th ST. N/R station will give the MTA the opportunity to prioritize installing a much needed elevator in that location in the future. Our subway system is severely lacking in accessible stations and every possible opportunity to build one is worthy of celebration.

It is also worth noting that Totem's outreach has been thorough and inclusive. This is rare. They are setting an example for how building and development can be a collaborative process rather than a my-way-or-the-highway approach.

Please take note and register my support for this project.

Thank you,
Jennifer Van Dyck

<https://www.riseandresist.org/eag>

ELEVATORS ARE FOR EVERYONE



From: [James Weiss](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Supporting an affordable housing proposal
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 10:23:10 AM

(Whoops - I meant for this to be addressed to City Council.... I'm a big fan of this proposal, so I forwarded my prior email to the Eric Adams team without alteration. Apologies!)

Members of City Council,

I would like to voice my support for the rezoning at 737 4th Avenue in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

I am a 20 year resident of New York City, both in Manhattan and Brooklyn.

I care a lot about affordable housing. It's nearly impossible to find an affordable home in New York - which deprives all of us of economic and social opportunity.

The 737 4th Avenue plan is for a great-looking apartment building with 35 apartments for low-income people, and it won't cost the city anything build. That's great.

The project is also an opportunity to displace a bad neighbor: a corporate Dunkin Donuts. Dunkin's wage policies are terrible, and their food is terribly unhealthful - exactly what lower-income neighborhoods don't need. That's even better.

I can't support this enough, and I hope there's more of these to come.

All the best,
James

James Weiss
email: jimweiss96@gmail.com
mobile: +1 215 300 0928

From: [Jennifer M. Wertz](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: In favor of rezoning at 737 4th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11232
Date: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 1:12:50 PM

Dear Land Use Committee,

Please note that I am a local resident who lives 3 blocks from the proposed zone site and am strongly in favor of the rezoning at 737 4th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11232.

I've lived here for over a decade and welcome new development and rezoning that would make the area nicer for change. In my time here, I haven't seen a single development project or any rezoning that has impacted the neighborhood in a positive way. The 17th bait and switch hotel to shelter project is about to open in front of my children's elementary school at PS 172. The elementary school already has 1 shelter in front of it with almost 1,400 signatures of resident's who want it removed and better for the neighborhood. https://www.change.org/p/mayor-bill-deblasio-ban-shelters-from-across-the-street-of-ps-172-school?recruiter=1066860707&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=facebook&utm_campaign=psf_combo_share_abi&utm_term=petition_dashboard&recruited_by_id=7bad8600-71cf-11ea-8d4c-e576da1c0117&utm_content=fit-24197458-en-us%3A3

Not to mention there is a waterfront property housing a federal prison 1 block from this elementary school as well.

I'm begging you as a resident with children to move forward in favor of this rezoning and new development project. It is the nicest thing anyone has tried to do for this neighborhood in decades. It's about time that dunkin donuts parking lot turns into something beneficial to the community. To be honest with you, the process for this rezoning is way too long. Please approve this rezoning before we lose this opportunity that may not come around again for decades. We need this now more than ever. Please say YES! Thank you.

Best regards,
Jennifer Wertz

From: [Joseph Winterbotham](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: I oppose the zoning proposal for 737 4th Avenue
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 11:21:50 AM

To whom it may concern,

I'm a constituent in district 38, and live on 23rd st and 4th avenue. I oppose the zoning proposal for 737 4th Avenue (corner of 25th st). The vast majority of the apartments will be priced above the area median income, and to my knowledge, city council has not secured any real commitment from the developer that the ground floor will not be rented to larger retailers like Starbucks. We've seen multiple existing small businesses fall victim to the pandemic in the area. The problem is not lack of business spaces available in the community. I think we need to focus on helping existing small retailers in the area, or work on filling the existing retail space in the area, instead of selling out our community to predatory real estate developers.

Thank you,

Joseph Winterbotham

From: [Kenny Guan](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: 737 4th Ave Project
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 4:36:31 PM

To Whom It May Concern at the New York City Council:

I write to express my full support for the rezoning project at 737 4th Avenue in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

As a member of Community Board 7 and lifelong Sunset Park resident, this project represents exactly the type of building I want to see in My community. It turns a Dunkin Donuts parking lot, on top of a subway, into a beautiful apartment building with 35 affordable apartments for local people. And it costs the City nothing.

Wr can get rid of a dangerous Dunkin Donuts parking lot and bring in a wonderful neighborhood building. Dunkin barely pays people minimum wage, and their food is awful.

I want to thank the Totem development team for working with CB7 for nearly two years. They listened to our concerns and they responded wherever they could, every step of the way.

I hope the City Council will support growth and investment in neighborhoods like ours that need it. Not just Manhattan or rich neighborhoods that see new projects like this all the time.

The City Council needs to be doing more for Sunset Park. Saying yes to this project is a good start. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kenny Guan
745 58th St Brooklyn NY 11220
Kennyguanny@gmail.com
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Kyle Kantor](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: 737 4th Avenue Rezoning Testimony
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 9:57:56 AM

Hello,

I am a member of the Brooklyn Community Board 1. I don't believe a parking lot and corporate coffee chain serves the community better than 40 units of affordable housing. I think that we all want 100% affordable but math is math and especially at times like this when state and local budgets are constrained, I think that this is a good small win.

The developer seems to have been thoughtful from a hiring perspective with strong local partners who will be a pain in the butt with them if they get out of line.

Giving up valuable retail space for an MTA easement is a sacrifice will be a big help to the handicap community. I don't foresee Dunkin Donuts installing a handicap accessible elevator in their building.

There is a significant history of manufacturing in this area - I don't know if this site is contaminated at all, but I know they'll have to clean it up if they build residential here.

I urge the Councilman and Community Board to approve the project.

Thank you,

Kyle Kantor

From: [Olga Trofimenko](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Support for the 737 4th Avenue project
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 3:17:04 PM

Dear New York City Council:

I am writing to share my support for the rezoning at [737 4th Avenue in Sunset Park](#), Brooklyn. This project represents exactly the type of building we should be encouraging in NYC. It takes a parking lot, on top of a subway station, and transforms the land into a beautiful apartment building and scope for the neighborhood.

Further it creates deep affordable housing in a neighborhood experiencing one of NYC's most terrible housing crisis. Not to mention the commitments made to hire locally, provide neighborhood amenities like an easement for an MTA elevator and secure bike parking. And the building is remarkably able to provide all these public benefits without a dollar of public subsidy. It shows how we can harness the power of density and smart urban planning to deliver for neighborhoods.

As a City, I hope we look for opportunities to replicate the model this building represents over and over again. I can't support this enough, and I hope there's more of these to come.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Olga

Olga Trofimenko
[email: olunya25@gmail.com](mailto:olunya25@gmail.com)
mobile: [347-255-8955](tel:347-255-8955)

From: [Pierre Carras](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: 737 4th Ave Testimony
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 12:31:51 PM

Hi - I hope all is well on your end. I don't believe a parking lot and corporate coffee chain serves the community better than 40 units of affordable housing. 40 units of affordable housing would be a great win for this community.

The creation of a handicap-accessible elevator is also a major plus for the neighborhood; currently folks are forced to travel significant distances to access public transit on their own with current accessibility in place.

I urge City Council to approve the project.

Thank you,

Pierre Carras
(917) 855-1948
pierre.carras@gmail.com

From: [paul s. Ray](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Likely in support
Date: Sunday, February 21, 2021 1:20:47 PM

Dear Councilman Menchaca,

We support the proposal:

1. If the affordable apartments remain affordable as the initial tenants move out.
2. If the promise to rent the "elevator space to be" to artists/small manufacturer is a firm commitment.
3. If the commercial spaces on the ground floor reserve space for small retail businesses owned/operated by POC/Women and are not part of a chain.

Paul and Catherine Ray
459 59th Street

<http://paulstevenraysound.squarespace.com/>
<https://paulstevenray.bandcamp.com/releases>
<https://blueblackdream.bandcamp.com/releases>
<https://ninenine.bandcamp.com/>

From: [regina weiss](mailto:regina.weiss@green-wood.com)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#); [info38](#); [BK07 \(CB\)](#); [Luo Cai, Lisha](#); [Lucero, Lorena](#); info@green-wood.com; [Gabrielle Gatto](#); rmoylan@green-wood.com
Subject: Proposed rezoning of 737 4th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11232
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 11:19:59 AM

February 18, 2021

Re: Proposed rezoning of 737 4th Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11232

Comments of Ms. Regina Weiss, 208 29th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11232

I am a two-decade resident of this neighborhood and plan to remain here permanently. Should this rezoning be approved, there are several items that I would like to see incorporated into the agreement.

- First, the owner should be required to fully integrate the 33 affordable units into the building and those affordable units should fully reflect the size, number of rooms, and all features, appliances, and amenities of the market-rate units. In other words, the units should exist on the same floors and be of exactly the same type as the market-rate units so that lower-income residents are not segregated in a separate part of the building and are not living in units that are inferior in any way to those occupied by the market-rate residents.
- Second, the owner should agree that any amenities that are provided to market rate tenants at extra charge – such as a gym, club or roof deck access – will be provided to the tenants of the affordable units for free, subsidized by the fees paid by market-rate tenants.
- Third – a proportional number of the parking spaces to be built should be made available to tenants of the affordable units at a price that comports with the affordability requirements.
- Fourth, while providing space for the MTA to build a long-overdue elevator to make the 25th Street Subway Station accessible is a good step, it is not sufficient. I would like to see the developer *in addition* contribute to improvement of the surrounding neighborhood by funding the completion of the Green-Wood Cemetery Visitor Center located on the corner of 25th Street and 5th Avenue, one block away from the proposed building site. Construction has been halted on the visitor center for several years because the cemetery lacks the funds for the construction of heating, ventilation, visitor bathrooms and perhaps other necessities. The current site is a dangerous eye-soar and this National Historic Site needs and deserves a state-of-the-art visitor center. Green-Wood has provided and continues to provide an essential haven for neighborhood residents and huge numbers of visitors from outside the neighborhood during the ongoing pandemic. It is an essential cultural institution that will doubtless be an attractive draw for the market-rate residents the developer plans to house. I would like to see full funding to complete the Visitor Center negotiated into the rezoning agreement.

From: [sal.covarrubias](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Re: Another Rezoning, Another Public Hearing
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 11:25:50 AM

I support the rezoning proposal at 25th St/4th Ave as long as the project is not used to build another hotel. There are already too many in the neighborhood and they don't address the need for affordable housing. I also support the proposal only if the conditions of building the elevator access to the subway are adhered to by the developer.

From: [Shaina Emmanuel](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: 737 4th Avenue
Date: Friday, February 26, 2021 12:22:07 PM

Dear Subcommittee on Zoning for City Council,

I want to send my support for the 737 4th Avenue rezoning.

I was born and raised in Brooklyn and it is incredibly unfortunate that so many individuals believe affordable is synonymous with shabby. We all deserve nice things. This project builds both affordable housing, market rate housing, no studios, a commitment to 35% local and minority owned contracting. This is a no brainer. Using what is allowed and possible now, this is the type of project the City Council should approve. I normally do not weigh in on these matters as this is not my field of expertise. I work as a PA at NY Presbyterian-Columbia but I'm concerned about the direction my borough is going in. We've learned our lessons from 80s and 90s.

This is smart development. I want to see projects like this approved.

Thank you for your time.

Shaina Emmanuel PA-C
Emmanuelshaina@gmail.com

From: [Sasha Blair-Goldensohn](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Support the 737 Fourth Avenue Rezoning
Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 1:16:54 PM

Hello land use committee,

I am a founder of the Rise and Resist Elevator Action Group (bit.ly/E4E-NYC), a grassroots coalition pushing to make the subway system accessible to people with disabilities and the many other New Yorkers who need stair-free access. As a wheelchair user since 2009, I can attest to just how difficult city life is -- as a student, worker or parent -- when you can't use the subway.

Over these years, I've learned that part of the problem is MTA's high costs for building / maintaining stair-free access. Therefore, I support Totem's proposal for this rezoning, since they will provide a free right-of-way and thus substantially reduce MTA's cost to build an accessible subway entrance.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sasha Blair-Goldensohn

From: [Sander Hicks](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#); [Kevin Tang](#)
Subject: Dear Land Use Testimony Office
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 3:15:47 PM

Greetings Friends.

I have attended hearings on the question of the rezoning for 737 4th Ave, and have heard public comments both for and against.

I believe that the project is a net positive for the community, in that it supplies needed housing, both market rate and affordable.

I am a member of the Kings County Democratic Party County Committee.

I've lived in New York City since 1991. I first moved into the East Village to complete my undergraduate studies at the New School. I was fascinated by the land-use debates there at that time, around the Tompkins Square Park controversy.

Today I'm active in New Kings Democrats and DSA. I've worked a bit with the affordable housing working group within DSA, and on winning electoral campaigns, most recently Sunset Park housing activist State Assembly woman Marcella Mityanes.

I've done original research on the affordable housing success story of Singapore and published an article in the Red Hook Star Review on this topic. I've been a licensed contractor since 2013. I recently was outspoken against the rezoning at Industry City. I went to multiple public hearings both in person and online.

However, with the recent neighboring project with Totem Development, (737 4th Ave) I broke ranks and spoke out in favor of that project. While it was not perfect, I found 25% affordable housing to be something that the community would benefit from.

I think we have a great opportunity in front of us, here. With the economic and political crisis that we are drowning in, we need to take a stand for bold visions of affordable housing and develop a new procedure for democratic land use.

Sincerely,

Sander Hicks
Zen Space Makers, Inc.

--

Sander Hicks

Cell Phone: [929 285 8602](tel:9292858602)

From: [Victoria McEwan](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Support for the 737 4th Avenue project
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 3:25:00 PM

To Whom It May Concern at the New York City Council:

Hello - I write to express my full support for the rezoning project at [737 4th Avenue in Sunset Park](#), Brooklyn.

This project represents exactly the type of building I want to see in Brooklyn. It transforms a suburban Dunkin Donuts parking lot, on top of a subway station, and transforms the land into a beautiful apartment building with 35 apartments for low-income people, and it won't cost the city anything build.

The project is also an opportunity to get rid of a bad neighbor: a corporate Dunkin Donuts. Dunkin barely pays people minimum wage, and their food is terrible. Any excuse to get rid of them is a good one.

Further, this building will create deep affordable housing in a neighborhood that needs housing! As of this year, only 100 units or so of affordable housing have been built in Sunset Park over the last 10 years. We need to be saying yes to all projects that bring much needed housing to this neighborhood. And we should celebrate jobs and construction and investment at a time that NYC is teetering on edge of financial ruin. I hope the City Council will support growth and investment in neighborhoods that desperately need it. Not just Manhattan or rich neighborhoods that see new projects like this all the time.

The City Council needs to be doing more for Sunset Park. Saying yes to this project is finally a first step in the right direction. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Victoria McEwan

Email: victoriatmb@yahoo.com

mobile: 917-683-2728

From: [Annabel Schaenen](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Fwd: as discussed
Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 11:36:04 AM

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to voice support for the rezoning at 737 4th Avenue in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

I am a life-long New Yorker and current resident of Brooklyn that cares about the future of our City and the need to address the current affordability crisis. I also appreciate that the City needs to support growth in light of the current fiscal constraints in the face of the pandemic. Our City needs responsible development and this rezoning is an opportunity to generate 35 permanently affordable apartments for low-income residents without utilizing scarce City subsidy. This is an effective way to leverage private resources to generate new affordable housing and I look forward to seeing the City Council approve this project.

Thank you,

Annabel Schaenen

From: [Alice Walsh](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Rezoning of 737 Fourth Avenue, Brooklyn
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 11:42:55 AM

I vote NO on the rezoning of 737 Fourth Avenue. I am strongly opposed to the construction of a 14 story apartment building irregardless of the "give backs" the developers may provide. This historic and charming neighborhood of low scale buildings along Fourth Avenue as well as on the predominately residential side streets provides a welcome respite from the intense development of architecturally sterile high rise buildings in Park Slope, only 10 blocks away. We need LESS DENSITY, not more!

In addition this building would obstruct the amazing view of the harbor from Green-wood Cemetery. I am a volunteer and frequent visitor at Green-wood and the view of the New York City harbor from Green-wood is exceptional. To date, there is nothing that mars that landscape. In addition, during the 2020 COVID-19 shutdown Green-wood Cemetery expanded its hours to accommodate people seeking refuge from isolation and quarantine. Thousands came!!! We need more OPEN SPACE and not more housing that will not be affordable to the people in the area. Who are you kidding? This is a windfall for the developers. The proposed affordable units are not within the means of the current residents, no less the market rate rents. The construction of this building will cause displacement and gentrification.

Given the current economic environment where so many people have been negatively impacted by the pandemic the rezoning and development of this site into housing that few people in this neighborhood can afford is unconscionable.

Alice Walsh
452 54th Street
718 492-4697
apswalsh@yahoo.com

From: [Charlie Houlton-Vinyl](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Support of 737 4th Ave Development
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 1:20:48 PM

My name is Charlie Houlton-Vinyl, I was unable to testify in favor of the 737 4th Ave development this morning (2/22/2021). The reason why I am in favor of the project is because the development will bring desperately needed, deeply affordable transit oriented units to Sunset Park. Since 2014, 17,000 people have moved into the neighborhood, but only 949 new housing units were built, which means that the existing units are only becoming more and more expensive for local renting families due to their limited supply. The project will also allow the MTA to build an elevator for the 25th Street station, which will allow for countless residents of Sunset Park with physical disabilities to access the subway and thus expand their opportunities. Third, the development will provide space for a public bike parking facility, which will encourage the use of the sustainable transportation option throughout the neighborhood. As a whole, the existing lot which has a parking lot and dunkin donuts drive through is underutilized and makes the block dangerous for pedestrians. Housing, with ground floor retail, and a public bike parking facility will have a much greater community benefit than what currently exists.

Best,
Charlie

From: [Caylin Quatromoni](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Written Testimony - 737 Fourth Avenue Brooklyn - Rezoning
Date: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 3:25:39 PM
Attachments: [Written Testimony - Rezoning \(737 4th Ave\).pdf](#)

Good afternoon,

Attached please find my written testimony opposing the rezoning of 737 Fourth Avenue in Brooklyn.

Thank you,
Caylin Quatromoni

February 24, 2021

Dear Council Members:

I would like to submit written testimony in opposition to the rezoning of 737 4th Avenue (corner of 25th Street) for a 14-story residential building with ground floor retail space. I have lived in the district and Greenwood Heights/South Slope for the last 7 years and can safely say that I have seen the effects that designer residential complexes have had on my community and 4th Avenue. I oppose this rezoning on the basis of two key points: the current status of similar residential and retail buildings on 4th Avenue; and the City's obligation to provide affordable housing and essential amenities to communities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Fourth Avenue has become a thruway for luxury condominium and rental properties. In just the last 5 years, a series of new multi-story residential construction projects promised vast new resources and growth for our community by developers, but have amounted to empty storefronts and a labyrinth of construction. Currently, a small lighting store sits alone in the ground floor retail space of the 12-story complex "The Alexey" (635 4th Avenue). Most of the space has sat empty for the last 2 years since the completion of the project. At luxury condominium building, Arbor Eighteen (181 18th Street), commercial retail space consisting of half the city block sits empty, including the renovated office space to sell their luxury condominiums is now vacant at the corner of 19th and 5th Avenue.

The blocks between 23rd and 25th Street have seen hardships when it comes to food and retail businesses in the last few years, and most of those retail spaces sit vacant even with those who pass to the 25th Street Station for their commute. All this being presented shows no definitive proof that any newly developed commercial and residential space would guarantee a revitalization for businesses when a great deal of retail space on 4th Avenue and 5th Avenue between Prospect Avenue and 25th Street is unoccupied. Many great businesses already exist in our neighborhood and our focus should not only be on assisting them, but also the community members who support these businesses during these tumultuous times.

In 2019, "The Alexey" offered only 19 affordable housing units. These units were subject to a lottery out of 91 floorplans. The median monthly rent in the Greenwood Heights/South Slope neighborhood is \$2,500 ([source](#)), an excessive amount of money for a family of 3 in a 1-bedroom apartment. Currently, 'The Alexey' lists one of their available 1-bedroom apartments for \$3,300 on StreetEasy ([source](#)). This must not be our path forward. To understand the need for affordable housing must be the first step in establishing a safe and viable community for New York City residents. The proposed rezoning project would guarantee 33 affordable housing units out of 135 spaces. Is our community worth less than 25% of a building that is being presented to us as a

total investment in our neighborhood? The answer is no. Although similar buildings down the same avenue have given us far less, this plan does not go far enough to address the housing needs of our low-income community members who have already seen rent increases year over year for the last 5 years. The district's long-time battle between Industry City and members of our community should shed a great deal of light on the situation we found ourselves in now. When will the needs of our communities take precedence over the interests of corporate developers?

The priorities are clear: existing businesses need assistance and families need housing that is affordable. The ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic on our district alone should be enough to halt this rezoning effort, and to push through a project of this caliber when our community has seen businesses shutter, job loss and lives lost is unacceptable. Our community is vibrant and diverse, and the people who have called Greenwood Heights/South Slope home for years should be given more opportunity to speak on what our community needs. For the reasons in my appeal to you, I strongly oppose this rezoning, and hope a more collaborative solution can be found for our neighborhood that benefits our already existing local business and long-standing community members.

Thank you for your consideration,
Caylin Quatromoni
Greenwood Heights Resident

From: [Craiginnyc](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: 737 4th Avenue rezoning request - FOR
Date: Thursday, February 18, 2021 1:53:16 PM

I am writing to express my support for the rezoning request at 737 4th Avenue. I am a resident of the neighborhood (6 blocks away). I attended the Community Board 7 public hearing on this request, and after hearing the presentation of the development team as well as the testimony of citizens (both pro and con), I believe the request should be granted. The project would add much more value to the neighborhood than what is currently located on that lot, a Dunkin Donuts and a 4-unit strip shopping center which is half unoccupied. It would also provide needed benefits such as 33 affordable housing units and elevator access to the 25th Street subway station.

I urge the Council to approve the rezoning request.

Thank you,
Craig Rimby

From: [Daniel Korich](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Support for 737 Fourth Avenue Rezoning, Brooklyn, NY
Date: Friday, February 19, 2021 10:02:22 AM

Hello -

I am writing to voice my strong support for the rezoning at 737 Fourth Avenue in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

As a New Yorker who cares about affordable housing, I am concerned about the future of our city and its neighborhoods like Sunset Park. The pandemic has only exacerbated my concern. The government does not have the money, capability, or leadership required to socialize the development of housing for our fellow citizens.

We need to find alternative options that can actually develop affordable housing as soon as possible. This project is able to bring some of the housing this community needs right now in the form of a beautiful apartment building that will be home to much needed housing for our City and 35 apartments for low-income people.

Even better, these 35 homes will be permanently affordable and will not cost the City anything to build.

If we cannot approve this project, and approve it quickly, it will be an ominous sign for the future of our city. How can approving this project even be a question? We need to approve this project, and then say -- how fast can we do more of these?

Daniel Korich

From: [Dan Marks](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: 737 4th Avenue - letter of support
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 2:40:19 PM

To whom it may concern,

My name is Dan Marks and I've been a resident of Brooklyn for about 10 years. I also work in Brooklyn. I'm writing to express my support for the rezoning of 737 4th Avenue in Sunset Park. Brooklyn is in need of more housing and a project like this will not only provide more housing but also provide much needed affordable housing. A residential development with some commercial use on the ground floor would be a huge improvement over the current use, that of a Dunkin Donuts that is mostly empty parking lot. Considering residential zoning is directly across 24th street makes this make even more sense. Thank you for your time and consideration.

If you have any questions please let me know.

Thank you,
Dan Marks
dannymarks@gmail.com
718-644-5449

From: [Danno Murphy](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Cc: [Lassiter, Andrew](#)
Subject: Written Testimony for Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, February 22, 2021 - 737 FOURTH AVENUE REZONING – 200029 ZMK, 200030 ZRK
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 11:19:08 AM
Attachments: [Support Testimony 737 4 Ave REZONING – 200029 ZMK, 200030 ZRK 2 22 21.pdf](#)

Chairperson and Councilmembers

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I am testifying today in support of the application for a zoning map amendment to change the eastern side of Fourth Avenue between 24th and 25th streets from M1-1D to R8A/C2-4 zoning text amendment to designate the rezoning area a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area. My support is predicated on the several conditions listed out for the developer by Brooklyn Community Board Seven, of which I am a member, in their resolution to support the application.

I am in support of this application for a simple reason; like every other community district in New York City, though perhaps even more so, Brooklyn Board Seven is in desperate need of much more affordable housing. Mandatory Inclusionary Housing is currently one of the few tools in the city's land use process that allows for the creation of multiple units of affordable housing as residential property is developed.

I wish to stress that I believe MIH is a tool to address and mitigate this existential problem for Community Board Seven's families and individuals, and not a cure. Until such a time when we have a more suitable method to address the affordable housing problem at the scale it requires, we should use this tool and any others within our possession. This includes a survey of all publicly owned land - no matter the current use - within and adjacent to Brooklyn Community District Seven - with the goal of developing or converting them into 100% affordable housing.

Thanks again for the opportunity to speak.

Daniel A Murphy

Brooklyn, NY 11232

Chairperson and Councilmembers

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I am testifying today in support of the application for a zoning map amendment to change the eastern side of Fourth Avenue between 24th and 25th streets from M1-1D to R8A/C2-4 zoning text amendment to designate the rezoning area a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing (MIH) area. My support is predicated on the several conditions listed out for the developer by Brooklyn Community Board Seven, of which I am a member, in their resolution to support the application.

I am in support of this application for a simple reason; like every other community district in New York City, though perhaps even more so, Brooklyn Board Seven is in desperate need of much more affordable housing. Mandatory Inclusionary Housing is currently one of the few tools in the city's land use process that allows for the creation of multiple units of affordable housing as residential property is developed.

I wish to stress that I believe MIH is a tool to address and mitigate this existential problem for Community Board Seven's families and individuals, and not a cure. Until such a time when we have a more suitable method to address the affordable housing problem at the scale it requires, we should use this tool and any others within our possession. This includes a survey of all publicly owned land - no matter the current use - within and adjacent to Brooklyn Community District Seven - with the goal of developing or converting them into 100% affordable housing.

Thanks again for the opportunity to speak.

Daniel A Murphy

472 41st Street #4B

Brooklyn, NY 11232

From: [geuryd](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: 737 4th Avenue - written testimony
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 9:00:33 PM

As a new Yorker that grew up in Brooklyn, affordable housing seems to get harder to find as the years go by. especially when rent alone is around 50-40 percent of my income and i am not even a minimum wage worker,

so imagine someone that gets paid minimum wage. even if its just around 40 apartment that will be allocated for low income people it will definitely be needed and beneficial to a lot of people.

who would not want a permanent affordable housing mixed in with commercial spaces that wont cost the city any money. we should see a lot of projects like this all over Brooklyn instead of clustering low income people in one area like the housing projects.

thank you.
geury delacruz

From: [Isaac Esterman](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Re: Support for rezoning at 737 4th Avenue
Date: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 2:36:01 AM

Dear Councilmembers:

I am writing in support of the proposed rezoning of 737 4th Avenue in Brooklyn.

I write not just as someone who is somewhat familiar with the scope of the proposed redevelopment but also as someone who has lived in New York my entire life. I have experienced first hand some of the changes that have taken place in the City's real estate market over the past several decades.

New York is, and has always been, a city that welcomes newcomers of all kinds and relies on their creativity and energy for economic activity. Now, more than ever, smart growth and investment is necessary in our City that has been battered by the current pandemic.

It is no secret that housing in New York City is expensive - it is a barrier to living here and for those that live here it is a barrier to thriving. New York City is a great place to live - that greatness creates demand and that demand helps drive housing costs. But some of that cost is driven by scarcity of supply.

I understand the feeling that new development in a neighborhood like Sunset Park can lead to displacement of those who are already there but I am not a believer in that argument. In nearby Prospect Heights where I rent a one bedroom apartment rents have increased sharply over the past twenty years. Part of the reason for this increase no doubt comes from enforced scarcity of new housing stock, even as more people seek to live in the neighborhood - landmarking, zoning and few viable sites are constraining supply of housing even as demand increases. The result, predictably, is increased cost.

Sunset Park shares many characteristics of Prospect Heights including proximity to transit, similar distance from central business districts and a housing stock that is largely a mix of rowhouses and low-rise apartment buildings. Sunset Park is a beautiful neighborhood and is already experiencing the pressures of gentrification. Discouraging new development will not abate that pressure. However, creating new housing stock will help. Moreover, creating affordable housing stock that limits income levels of its residents will allow access to the neighborhood for people who might not have otherwise been able to live there.

My understanding is that the proposed project will create 135 apartments, 33 of which are reserved at below "market rate". To me, that sounds like much needed housing for 135 families, 33 of whom will be able to live in a neighborhood and apartment that they may not have otherwise been able to afford. Along with the jobs created in constructing and maintaining the property the benefits would seem to outweigh a downside.

I am not arguing in favor of unlimited development to be permitted in all corners of the city. But the proposed development is of a scale consistent with the surrounding area and provides a benefit to the surrounding community in the form of much needed housing and retail diversity.

The budgetary repercussions caused by the pandemic are sure to limit City funding for affordable housing development - I am strongly in favor of finding ways to leverage private capital to create affordable housing and this development would seem to do so.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Isaac Esterman
Brooklyn, NY

February 23, 2021

**City Council Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises Public Hearing
Testimony of John Fontillas, Brooklyn Community Board 7 Land Use Chair
737 4th Ave Development Rezoning – Application C200029ZMK / N200030ZRK**

My name is John Fontillas and I chair the Land Use Committee of Brooklyn Community Board 7.

At our November 18 meeting, the Board voted 26 to 15 to approve with conditions the proposed rezoning of 737 4th Ave. The vote concluded an open process of outreach to the Sunset Park community with two informational meetings on August 4 and October 5, and a Public Hearing on November 12 via Zoom. Each one of these sessions was attended by 75-100 community members.

I say this to point out it is rare when a developer engages the Board early in the land use process and is open to responding to community concerns. When Totem first came to the Board, CB7 had just completed a year-long study on increasing affordable housing in Sunset Park. Totem responded favorably committing to a range of affordability tiers appropriate to the neighborhood, including down to 30% AMI, larger 2 and 3-bedroom units to house families, and addressing other community concerns such as green infrastructure, transit improvements and marketing affordable units to the neighborhood.

This project will add 35 new units of permanently affordable housing to Sunset Park. It will also be a precedent for future rezonings in CB7 to meet or exceed the same levels of affordability. Harnessing the private market to provide a fair share of affordable units is an important tool to address the crisis in affordable housing.

As in any community, opinion on the project was not monolithic. Some community members believe any new development, public or private, must be 100% affordable because the crisis is so large. Some believe the MIH program provides too much profit to a developer in exchange for a minimum required number of affordable units.

Most critically, some are concerned market-rate development displaces lower income families who live nearby, many of them of color who will not find similarly affordable housing in the district. The Board agrees racial and ethnic economic disparity factors should be part of the land use analysis of future projects. By providing real data and measurements of social and economic conditions, the Community Board will have better insight to community impacts and we highly recommend the Council support legislation that will require this as part of ULURP.

In addition, city government must do more to bring about a solution to the crisis. Acquiring closed hotel properties for conversion, financing community land trust acquisitions, preserving existing Section 8 affordable units and supporting 100% affordable housing developments with increased public subsidy, are preferred strategies, that in concert with MIH, will help increase housing affordability.

We understand this one project cannot solve the crisis on its own. We need a variety of solutions, public and private, that address the housing crisis. The Board's vote endorsed the idea that rezoning this underutilized site will provide 35 disadvantaged families a place to call home. It is a small step in the right direction. We hope the Council agrees and we urge it to approve this application.