

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS,
RESILIENCY, AND DISPOSITIONS

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC
SITINGS, RESILIENCY, AND
DISPOSITIONS

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January 27, 2026
Start: 11:05 a.m.
Recess: 2:24 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - 8TH FLOOR - HEARING
ROOM 1

B E F O R E: Christopher Marte, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Alexa Avilés
Oswald Feliz
Kamillah M. Hanks
Chi A. Ossé

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Kayla Santosuosso
Crystal Hudson
Rita C. Joseph

A P P E A R A N C E S

Greg Vayngurt, Brooklyn Borough Director for
Government Affairs at New York City Economic
Development Corporation

Amy Jin, New York City Economic Development
Corporation

Eric Gardiner, New York City Economic
Development Corporation

Timothy Frye, New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Stephen Thomson, New York City Landmarks
Preservation Commission

Frampton Tilbert, Executive Director of the
Historic Districts Council

Janice Hamann, Beverley Square West Association

Sally Bowman, resident of Beverley Square West

Mary Louise Clemens, resident of Beverley Square
West

Sue Fishkin, resident of Beverley Square West

Lisa Dralto, resident of Beverley Square West

Lawrence Becker, self

Andrea Goldujn, New York Landmarks Conservancy

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

Dena Tasse-Winter, Village Preservation

Robin Redmond, Executive Director of Flatbush
Development Corporation

Joanne Oplustil, former President and Chief
Executive Officer of Canva

Christopher Leon Johnson, self

Jess Wachtler, Project Development Coordinator
for the New York City Parks Department

Colleen Alderson, Chief of Parklands and Real
Estate for the New York City Parks Department

Matt Drury, Chief of Citywide Legislative Affairs
for the New York City Parks Department

Alex Trezowski

Chris Grove, New York City Department of Citywide
Administrative Services

Shelton Getter, New York City Department of
Citywide Administrative Services

Tom Angotti, owner of Prospect Farm Community
Garden site

Emma James, Board Member of Prospect Farm

Cassandra Warney, Board of Directors of Prospect
Farm

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

Angela Pruitt, self

Thomas Hinchey, self

Rosamond Fletcher, Executive Director of the Fort
Greene Park Conservancy

Kai Lawrence, Environmental Programs Manager at
the Fort Greene Park Conservancy

Shashank Shamshabad, New York Building Congress

Randy Peers, President and Chief Executive
Officer of the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

Nadja Barlera, Local 79 member

Robert Tiburzi, LiUNA Local 79

Tierra Williams, Local 79 member

Sara Qureshi, SEIU 32BJ

Emily Anadu, founder of The Lay Out

Mohammad El-Haj Ahmad, Fort Green Tennis
Association

Annie Lee, Fort Greene Park Users and Pet Society

Spencer Heckwolf, self

Erik Nilsen, self

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

Annelise Raymond Alam, Carter Ledyard and Milburn

Christine Paglialunga, Chief Operating Officer
with the Downtown Brooklyn Partnership

Andrew Vladeck, self

Veronica Yurovsky, self

Sophia Matheney, Brooklyn Borough Planner at New
York City Housing Preservation and Development

Matthew Dunbar, Chief-of-Staff and Executive Vice
President of Habitat for Humanity of New York
City and Westchester County

Rick Fudge, Project Manager for Habitat for
Humanity of New York City and Westchester County

Idris Abdullah, Community Board 3

SUBCOMMITTEE ON LANDMARKS, PUBLIC SITINGS,
RESILIENCY AND DISPOSITIONS

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1
2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning. This is a
3 microphone check on the Subcommittee of Landmarks,
4 Public Sitings and Disposition. Today's date is
5 January 27, 2026, recorded in Hearing Room number 1,
6 recorded by Taisha Sherman.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning. Welcome
8 to the New York City Council hearing for the
9 Subcommittee on Landmarks, Public Sitings,
10 Resiliency, and Disposition.

11 Please silence all electronic devices,
12 and moving forward no one is to approach the dais
13 unless you have been called on.

14 If you wish to participate in today's
15 hearing, please fill out an appearance card with the
16 Sergeant-at-Arms.

17 Without further ado, Chair Marte, we are
18 ready to begin.

19 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Good morning,
20 everyone. Welcome to a meeting of Subcommittee on
21 Landmarks, Public Siting, Resiliency, and
22 Dispositions. I'm Council Member Christopher Marte,
23 and I am Chair of the Subcommittee. Before I begin, I
24 just want to thank Speaker Adams for bestowing me the
25 responsibility of this Subcommittee. The importance

1 of landmarks, our public land, and resiliency is
2 extremely important, not just recognizing our past
3 but also building for the future. I, as Chair, want
4 to continue to talk about what landmarks means to our
5 city and to who we are as New Yorkers. Most folks
6 don't know but only 3.9 percent of all city lots are
7 landmark and, over the past four years, there's been
8 a false narrative how landmark was the enemy of
9 affordable housing, how landmarks was the enemy of
10 development. Actually, from my experience, it's
11 landmarks that actually protect rent-stabilized units
12 and tenement buildings all throughout our city in
13 landmarks that help us recognize the phases of
14 development that our city went through through its
15 history. And so I'm excited to not only fight back
16 against this false narrative but to use this as an
17 opportunity to organize, to encourage not just
18 landmarking protecting who we are as people but also
19 fighting to make sure that public land is a public
20 good and for the public. And so, with that
21 responsibility, I begin our first hearing of this
22 term session. Thank you.

24 First, I want to remind everyone that
25 this meeting is being held in a hybrid format, and

1 quickly I want to recognize my Colleagues who are
2 here today, Council Member Rita Joseph, Council
3 Member Chi Ossé, Council Member Santosuosso, Council
4 Member Thomas Henry, and Council Member Hanks.
5

6 For members of the public who wish to
7 testify remotely, we ask that you first register
8 online, and you may do so by visiting
9 www.Council.nyc.gov/landuse to sign up and then sign
10 into the Zoom and remain signed in until you have
11 testified.

12 For anyone with us today in person and
13 wish to testify, if you have not already done so,
14 please see one of our Sergeants-at-Arms to fill out a
15 speaker card, and we will call your name at the
16 appropriate time.

17 For anyone wishing to submit written
18 testimony on the items being heard today, we ask that
19 you please send an email to
20 landusetestimony@Council.nyc.gov, including the LU
21 number and/or project name in the subject line of
22 your email. Video and audio testimony will not be
23 accepted.

24 I remind members of the public that this
25 is a governmental proceeding and that decorum shall

1
2 be observed at all times. As such, members of the
3 public shall remain silent unless and until called to
4 testify.

5 The witness table is reserved for the
6 people who wish to testify. No video recording or
7 photography is allowed from the witness table.
8 Further, members of the public may not present audio
9 or video recording as testimony but may submit
10 transcript of such recordings to the Sergeant for
11 inclusion in the hearing record.

12 On today's agenda, we have several
13 hearings. LU 1, prospect for acquisition for the
14 acquisition of a site for continual use as a
15 community garden; LUs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 for the
16 Constellation HPD Homeownership Project; LUs 7, 8, 9,
17 10, 11 for Seaside Park and Community Art Center, a
18 project by New York City DCAS and EDC seeking several
19 City approvals to improve and continue the use of
20 Seaside Park and Community Art Center in Coney
21 Island; LUs 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 for 395 Flatbush
22 Avenue Extension Redevelopment, a project by HPD in
23 conjunction with DOHMH and DCAS to facilitate the
24 development of a 72-story mixed-use building in
25 downtown Brooklyn; and a joint hearing for Pre-

1
2 considered LUs for the landmarking of Beverley Square
3 Historic District and Ditmas Park West Historic
4 District.

5 I now open a public hearing for LUs 7, 8,
6 9, 10, 11 for the Seaside Park and Community Art
7 Center special permits, an application by DCAS and
8 New York City Economic Development Corporation
9 seeking several approvals to facilitate the
10 improvement and continued use of Seaside Park and
11 Community Art Center located in Council Member
12 Santosuosso's District in Brooklyn. These actions
13 include a zoning text amendment to allow a larger
14 event venue as well as a zoning special permit to
15 allow an arena with up to 6,000 seats. Additionally,
16 this application is seeking the acquisition by the
17 City of a small portion of land to complete the site
18 and deposition of City-owned land.

19 Appearing today on this panel is Greg
20 Vayngurt. Did I say that correctly? Okay. Amy Jin
21 and Eric Gardiner.

22 Those wishing to testify remotely again
23 must register online by visiting the Council website
24 at Council.nyc.gov/landuse.

1
2 Panelists, please ensure that your
3 microphones are on. You can notice it by the red
4 light turning on.

5 Counsel, would you please administer the
6 affirmation?

7 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would
8 you please raise your right hand and state your name
9 for the record? Make sure the microphone is on.

10 AMY JIN: My name is Amy Jin.

11 ERIC GARDINER: Eric Gardiner.

12 GREG VAYNGURT: Greg Vayngurt.

13 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: And do you affirm
14 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
15 the truth in your testimony before this Subcommittee
16 and in answer to all Council Member questions?

17 AMY JIN: Yes.

18 ERIC GARDINER: Yes, I do.

19 GREG VAYNGURT: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Before you begin, I
21 want to recognize Council Member Feliz has joined us
22 online.

23 You may start.

24 And Council Member Avilés.
25

1
2 GREG VAYNGURT: All right. Thank you so
3 much, Chair. Good morning, everyone. Good morning,
4 Chair and fellow Committee Members. My name is Greg
5 Vayngurt. I am the Brooklyn Borough Director for
6 Government Affairs at EDC, and I'm joined by my
7 colleagues, Amy and Eric, and we're happy to be here
8 and talk about Seaside Park Community Arts Center
9 special permit. I'm also Coney Island resident so
10 this is important to me as well.

11 Quickly if you turn to slide two, just
12 the project overview, as you see, the applicants are
13 Seaside Park LLC, NYC EDC, and then NYC DCAS.

14 And then on slide three as you could see,
15 we have a photo of where the amphitheater as we like
16 to call it in Coney Island Seaside Park is located.
17 As you could see, it's surrounded by the world-famous
18 Riegelmann Boardwalk and the Landmark Childs Building
19 and not too far off you could see Maimonedes Park
20 where the Brooklyn Cyclones play.

21 A little bit of background on the
22 amphitheater. In 2013, then Brooklyn Borough
23 President Marty Markowitz allocated funds for site
24 acquisition of this amphitheater for outdoor
25 performing arts, public accessible open space, and

1 the restoration of the Landmark Childs Building. It
2 was to be a catalyst for continuing investment in
3 Coney Island as well as support the development goals
4 for the area. The original ULURP proposed in 2014 for
5 design included temporary attractable roof that could
6 be removed during the offseason. That roof proved
7 infeasible based on DOB requirements, so Safehold who
8 was the operator built a permanent roof. The current
9 10-year SP commenced June 2016 upon receipt of the
10 TCO. I'll pass over to my colleague, Amy, to talk
11 more about the land use action.

12
13 AMY JIN: Can we go to the next slide,
14 please? One more slide. Thank you.

15 So, before you today are several land use
16 actions, the first of which is a zoning text
17 amendment to ZR Section 74-182 and 131-16 and 131-60
18 to permit an arena in excess of 2,500 seats. The text
19 amendment effectively moves the special permit out of
20 the Coney Island Special District section of the
21 zoning resolution and moves it into the section of
22 the zoning resolution where all the other arena
23 special permits live. And then we're seeking a zoning
24 special permit per this new special permit, Zoning
25 Resolution Section 74-182, to allow an arena with a

1
2 maximum of 6,000 seats with waivers to signage,
3 parking, and loading requirements. We're also seeking
4 an acquisition by DCAS of a portion of lot 123. It's
5 outlined on the diagram in blue here. It is a remnant
6 of an older tax lot where a street was built through
7 the middle portion of it, and this is the remaining
8 portion that's adjacent to our site. And so EDC
9 currently owns it. We would like for the City to own
10 it so that the City can dispose of it together with
11 these facilities.

12 We are seeking the disposition of City-
13 owned property for all of the tax thought parcels
14 outlined in orange on the diagram. So, this includes
15 the historic Landmark Childs Building, the
16 amphitheater itself, and the adjacent open space to
17 the left, to the west of the amphitheater. This
18 disposition would be restricted to the conditions of
19 the special permit to facilitate the continued use
20 and operation of the complex for 10 years. And so at
21 the CPC, they restricted this disposition to 10 years
22 and approximately six months to coincide with an
23 expiration of the end of year 2036.

24 And then the last action is a disposition
25 of City-owned property for the Childs Building and

1 the adjacent open space so it's lot 130 and 123 on
2 the diagram here. As I mentioned the Childs Building
3 is a New York City landmark. You may be familiar, but
4 the Childs Building fell into disrepair for some time
5 before Safehold came in, restored the building, and
6 is now operating it, and so we're seeking this
7 disposition so that we are able, the City is able to
8 continue to tenant the Childs Building past the
9 useful life of the amphitheater in perpetuity so that
10 this sort of state of disrepair won't happen again.

11
12 Those are all the land-use actions
13 proposed for this project.

14 I'm going to pass the mic to my
15 colleague, Eric.

16 ERIC GARDINER: Hi. Good morning,
17 everyone. You can advance the next slide.

18 Just to provide a overview of the asset
19 itself and some site context, so the amphitheater was
20 built and landmarked and the Landmark Childs Building
21 was restored by Safehold. At the time, it was known
22 as iStar. DCP granted a special permit to operate the
23 amphitheater for 10 years in 2014. In terms of
24 current uses at both the amphitheater and the Childs
25 Building, the amphitheater is a 5,000-seat covered

1 open-air venue. It is currently leased to Safehold
2 and operated by Live Nation. It's hosted performances
3 from a wide variety of artists including Sting, the
4 Beach Boys, Ice-T, the Foo Fighters, Willie Nelson,
5 and everyone in between. There's also been community
6 events that have been hosted at the amphitheater
7 including film screenings, the Mermaid Parade Ball,
8 and the Pizza Zoo anniversary party.

10 The Childs Building itself is 56,000
11 square feet. It is a landmark historic building. It
12 also includes a rooftop space. It is leased to
13 Safehold currently and subleased to Live Nation and
14 has been operated as a restaurant by the subtenant.
15 Go to the next slide, please.

16 In January 6 of this year, EDC released
17 an RFP to find a new operator or consortium of
18 operators in the entertainment and food and beverage
19 industries that can bring innovative ideas to how to
20 make this asset perform even better and activate it
21 for the community. The goals include driving
22 increased foot traffic to the western half of the
23 boardwalk, continuing to improve how this asset
24 performs overall especially for the community, and to
25 also maintain and expand the amphitheater status as a

1
2 very unique New York City and entertainment venue. We
3 anticipate on selecting an award in spring of this
4 year.

5 GREG VAYNGURT: Thanks. Can we go to the
6 next slide, please?

7 So, through this ULURP process, obviously
8 you know the Community Board, so a few
9 recommendations that the Community Board had about
10 better activation of the site including free
11 community concerts, community event support, and very
12 important for them to continue so the space for
13 graduations. Next slide, please.

14 And then this our final slide, just one
15 more look at the proposed Development. So, the
16 approval of as-built Coney Island Amphitheater per a
17 new special permit with waivers for signage, parking,
18 and loading and then an enlarged project area to
19 include additional open space on the site as well as
20 portion of lot 123.

21 That concludes our presentation. Thank
22 you very much and open for any questions.

23 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Awesome. Thank you so
24 much.

2 My first question is how long is
3 estimated to take to complete the new park
4 improvements and additions?

5 ERIC GARDINER: Okay, sorry. Can you
6 repeat that question? Sorry.

7 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: How long do you
8 estimate once you get an applicant on board and
9 approve? How long would it take to, estimated like
10 would it be ready to open up this summer, next year?
11 What's the timeline for EDC, hopes for it be
12 completed.

13 ERIC GARDINER: Oh, for the overall site.
14 Not necessarily the park addition.

15 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Right.

16 ERIC GARDINER: So, we're hoping that we
17 can select an awardee that would be able to, you
18 know, at best start proffering programming maybe at
19 the end of the summer, early fall. We'd certainly
20 have a preference for that. But otherwise, we would
21 be looking for either a tenant for just the Childs
22 Building, a tenant or group of tenants for both
23 assets, or just a tenant for the amphitheater that
24 would be able to activate it as soon as possible.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: All right. And can you
3 briefly explain community engagement throughout this
4 process before you released the RFP?

5 ERIC GARDINER: Yeah, absolutely. So, we
6 appear before the Community Board multiple times and
7 were able to get a list of local arts organizations
8 that we included in the RFP, and we're going to show
9 a preference toward any respondent that has shown
10 evidence of engagement with those local arts
11 organizations in terms of the character of their
12 response.

13 GREG VAYNGURT: I could just also add we
14 also had multiple conversations with former Council
15 Member Justin Brannan as well as our current new
16 Council Member who was on Justin's staff as well as
17 some local businesses stakeholders around the area as
18 well as the other electeds. Me being a resident
19 there, I made sure everybody had understood what's
20 happening, how to say, and really understood like
21 what this next 10 years might look like for the
22 amphitheater.

23 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Great. And with that,
24 I'd like to recognize Council Member Santosuosso with
25 some questions.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Thank you,
3 Chair Marte, and good morning, everyone. I am Council
4 Member Kayla Santosuosso, representing the 47th
5 District in Brooklyn. I am here to discuss the
6 Seaside Park and Community Arts Center Special Permit
7 application in Coney Island in my District. As you've
8 just heard, this application involves multiple
9 actions including the proposed text amendment and
10 special permit relating to the 5,099-seat
11 amphitheater as well as the associated property
12 acquisition and dispositions needed to lease and
13 operate the site. I recognize this application
14 intends to bring the existing amphitheater into
15 compliance and to improve park infrastructure and
16 expand publicly accessible green space, which I
17 believe are important goals for the neighborhood and
18 for our District as a whole. I appreciate that the
19 applicants reflected recognition of the importance of
20 community input as demonstrated through EDC's request
21 for a proposal for new operation of the site. That
22 RFP includes various Community Board's
23 recommendations such as the use of workforce programs
24 and the continuation of six free events per year. I

1
2 look forward to hearing more on the aspects of the
3 proposed project which align with community goals.

4 And I just have a few questions. So,
5 first of all, I know you sort of touched on this, but
6 how did you respond to the Community Board's
7 recommendations? And how are those responses
8 reflected in the proposal, or more specifically in
9 the RFP? So, I know you touched on the arts outreach
10 and I know you've reached out to us. Anything else
11 you can share about any of the concerns that came up
12 during the Community Board's revision process?

13 ERIC GARDINER: Yeah. Absolutely. So,
14 included in the RFP is a requirement that any
15 respondent come with a plan for how local community
16 arts organizations as well as schools can continue to
17 use it for graduations, local community events, and
18 there will also continue to be the operating covenant
19 in the lease that will be signed with the new tenant
20 that will include a requirement for a certain number
21 of free community concerts throughout the year.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Anything
23 beyond use of the amphitheater, anything around, you
24 know, the impact on the surrounding community or

1 anything involving infrastructure, sound levels,
2 anything like that?
3

4 GREG VAYNGURT: So, yeah, I can take the
5 sound one. So, in terms of the sound levels, they'll
6 continue using a professional sound level meter to
7 continue making sure that sound levels are up to I
8 guess was the word up to accord with the rules and
9 regulations of the city. Also over since the
10 amphitheater has been operating, I spoke to operator
11 and there's been at most maybe a handful of
12 complaints over the years. So, continued to make sure
13 that there's no disruption as these events are
14 happening as well as obviously making sure the
15 community knows these events are happening as well so
16 nobody's caught off guard, right, like advance notice
17 and things like that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Given that,
19 will there be time cutoffs, will there be any, you
20 know, rules around what time concerts can go until in
21 the amphitheater, or any consideration for lateness
22 for the surrounding residents?

23 GREG VAYNGURT: Absolutely. I think we
24 don't want it going in into past like overnight
25 hours, and I don't think it has in the past as well.

1 I could double-check for you but I believe concerts
2 were done probably around the 10, 10:30 hour.
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Okay. And I
5 imagine that a lot of this will also be hammered out
6 with whoever is eventually selected for the RFP.

7 GREG VAYNGURT: Absolutely, yeah.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: And what
9 mechanisms will be utilized to ensure ongoing
10 communication with the surrounding community?

11 ERIC GARDINER: Yes. We anticipate having
12 a requirement of the lease be an annual report that
13 the tenant will have to produce outlining the summary
14 of operations and community engagement that they've
15 done throughout the year, and we'd like to have them
16 meet periodically with the Community Board as well.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Okay. And
18 then my last question, and I realize you don't have a
19 crystal ball, but I understand that this is continued
20 use and operation for 10 years as an amphitheater
21 until 2036. Do you surmise or have any thoughts about
22 what would happen at that point?

23 ERIC GARDINER: No. I mean, I think we
24 anticipate having as many or more concerts and events
25 and kind of further integration of the Community Arts

2 Center and the community itself throughout the 10-
3 year period and, at that point, we'll need to make a
4 decision. We'll hopefully have 10 years of record of
5 why it continues to be a vibrant cultural asset for
6 that part of the boardwalk.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Yeah. But
8 it's a landmark building so it stays the operation of
9 an amphitheater and the hope would that be that it
10 continued for that purpose, right?

11 AMY JIN: I just want to clarify the
12 Childs Building itself is landmark, but the
13 amphitheater is not.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Is not,
15 right?

16 AMY JIN: Right.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Okay. Got
18 it. Got it. All right. I think that's it for me.
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you. I would
21 like now to recognize any of my Colleagues, if anyone
22 has any questions or remarks.

23 I also want to recognize Council Member
24 Hudson for joining us.

1 Well, thank you. The applicant panel is
2 now excused. Thank you so much.

3 ERIC GARDINER: Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Counsel, are there any
5 members of the public who wish to testify on this
6 item?
7

8 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: I don't have
9 anybody. Was there anybody here for this application?
10 One moment.

11 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: I see no hands.

12 If there are any remote public
13 participants who wish to testify and have not already
14 done so, please press the raise hand button now. And
15 if you are here with us in person, please see one of
16 our Sergeants-at-Arms to fill out a speaker card.

17 No one online?

18 Okay. There being no other members of the
19 public who wish to testify regarding LUs 7, 8, 9, 10,
20 11 for the Seaside Park and Community Arts Special
21 Permit, the public hearing is now closed, and the
22 item are laid over.

23 I now open a joint public hearing for two
24 Pre-Considered Items, Beverley Square West Historic
25 District and Ditmas Park West Historic District.

1
2 These two applications are by Landmarks Preservation
3 Commission for the designation of historic districts
4 in these areas, both located in Council Member
5 Joseph's District in Brooklyn.

6 I would now like to recognize Council
7 Member Joseph with a few comments.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair
9 Marte. Good morning, and thank you, Chair Marte. I'm
10 here to express my strong support for the Beverley
11 Square West and Ditmas Park West Historic Districts.
12 These historic designations affirm that preservation
13 and progress can and must go hand-in-hand. We can
14 welcome growth and address our city housing crisis
15 while protecting the character, culture, and history
16 that define Flatbush. This process has sparked debate
17 in the community. Some of us have pushed for larger
18 boundaries for the Beverley Square West Historic
19 District, and I've heard from a few folks who don't
20 want these districts at all. With that in mind, I
21 want to thank LPC for the meticulous and thoughtful
22 approach to this process. The proposed historic
23 district will ultimately allow us to honor these
24 neighborhoods' architect, history, and identity
25 without seriously limiting our ability to add nearby

1 housing for future generation who wish to call these
2 beautiful neighborhoods home. This victory is a
3 result of decades sustained advocacy. I am incredibly
4 proud to have worked in lockstep with residents,
5 community leaders, preservation activists, and
6 historians who share commitment to safeguarding what
7 makes these neighborhoods special. This designation
8 is a testament to what we can accomplish when we
9 stand together as a community. I'm also proud to have
10 voted for City of Yes in promise of a little more
11 housing everywhere. There's not a day that goes by
12 that my office doesn't hear from someone facing
13 hardship over housing situation. I look forward to
14 working with the new Administration to welcome
15 desperately needed new housing to my District. We can
16 do our part for our future while still honoring our
17 past. As your Council Member, I remain deeply
18 committed to continuing the fight for preservation in
19 all its forms, not only for our buildings but for the
20 people, the stories, and the vibrancy that makes
21 District 40 home.

22
23 Thank you to everyone who helped make
24 this possible. Thank you, Chair. I yield.

2 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Great. Appearing today
3 on this panel is Stephen Thomson and Timothy Frye.

4 For those wishing to testify remotely,
5 please register online by visiting the Council
6 website at Council.nyc.gov/landuse. Panelists, please
7 ensure that your microphones are on.

8 Counsel, would you please administer the
9 affirmation?

10 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would
11 you please raise your right hand and state your name
12 for the record?

13 TIMOTHY FRYE: Timothy Frye.

14 STEPHEN THOMSON: Stephen Thomson.

15 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: And do you affirm
16 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
17 the truth in your testimony before this Subcommittee
18 and in answer to all Council Member questions?

19 TIMOTHY FRYE: I do.

20 STEPHEN THOMSON: I do.

21 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you, applicant
23 panelists.

1
2 For the viewing public, if you need an
3 accessible version of this presentation, please send
4 an email request to landusetestimony@Council.nyc.gov.

5 And now the applicant team may begin.

6 TIMOTHY FRYE: May I have the slide
7 presentation, please?

8 Okay. Good morning, Chair and Committee
9 Members. I'm Tim Frye, LPC staff, and today I'm
10 presenting the Beverley Square West and Ditmas Park
11 West Historic Districts designated on November 25th
12 of 2025, and these districts reflect a key moment in
13 Flatbush's transition from farmland to an early
14 suburban neighborhood. Next slide, please.

15 Both districts are located in historic
16 suburban Flatbush extending south from Prospect Park
17 towards Brooklyn College. This area already includes
18 several LPC-designated districts. Next slide, please.

19 Prospect Park South, which was designated
20 in 1979, Ditmas Park designated in 1981, and Fisk
21 Terrace Midwood Park designated in 2008. Beverley
22 Square West includes 118 houses built primarily
23 between 1894 and 1910. Ditmas Park West includes 127
24 houses largely built between 1902 and 1910. The
25 boundaries of these compact districts were determined

1 after extensive analysis of a much broader area and
2 include the most significant and intact buildings and
3 the most contiguous streetscapes. Through the
4 designation process, there were several non-
5 contributing buildings on the edges that were
6 removed. Next slide.

8 At its October 21, 2025, public hearing,
9 LPC heard substantial support for both historic
10 districts. 33 people spoke in favor of the Beverley
11 Square West Historic District and no one spoke in
12 opposition. For Ditmas Park West, 10 people spoke in
13 favor of designation and three people spoke in
14 opposition. We also received strong supportive
15 testimony including elected officials such as
16 Assembly Member Robert Carroll and Council Member
17 Rita Joseph as well as the Flatbush Development
18 Corporation, Prospect Park South Association, the New
19 York Landmarks Conservancy, Historic Districts
20 Council, and the Victorian Society of New York. Many
21 in favor of designation also encouraged the
22 Commission to consider expanding the proposed
23 boundaries. Next slide, please.

24 With that context, I'll start by focusing
25 on the Beverley Square West Historic District and its

1 development and its architectural character. Next
2 slide.

3
4 Development began in 1894 and was largely
5 complete within a decade. This rapid period of
6 development gives Beverley Square West remarkable
7 architectural cohesiveness, which is characterized by
8 Queen Anne, colonial revival, and shingle style
9 houses. Throughout the district, contiguous
10 streetscapes including original landscape features
11 remain generally intact, houses are set behind open
12 lawns forming a continuous belt of greenery, and
13 planting strips separate the sidewalks from the curbs
14 Next slide, please.

15 Now I'll turn to the Ditmas Park West
16 Historic District, which shares a development history
17 and architectural character. Next slide.

18 Ditmas Park West was a project of Lewis
19 Pounds and his manor realty company. In 1902, Pounds
20 purchased the former John Ditmas farm, which had
21 largely been farmed using the labor of enslaved
22 people into the 19th century. The property was
23 bisected by the Brighton Railroad and soon afterward
24 Pounds began developing the portion east of the
25 railroad line as Ditmas Park development and the

1
2 portion West as Ditmas Park West. As In Beverley
3 Square West, Ditmas Park West possesses strong
4 architectural and historic cohesiveness due to its
5 rapid development and uniform building type. All but
6 two of its houses were constructed between 1902 and
7 1910 with the remaining two built in the 1920s. as in
8 Beverley Square West, the district is defined by
9 intact contiguous streetscapes dominated by Queen
10 Anne, colonial revival, and shingle style houses.
11 Next slide.

12 And although both districts were impacted
13 by Brooklyn's population losses of the 1960s and
14 '70s, both benefited from the renewed interest in
15 historic neighborhoods that came with Brooklyn's
16 brownstone revival. Walking and house tours started
17 by the 1980s were crucial in increasing awareness of
18 these areas' rich architectural history and, since
19 that time, these districts which initially excluded
20 non-white families have become increasingly diverse
21 as African American families, families of East and
22 South Asian and Middle Eastern backgrounds have
23 purchased houses here. These districts also have a
24 substantial Jewish community, which first took root
25 by the 1930s. Next slide.

1 Turning to housing, we think it's
2
3 important to note the landmark designation does not
4 prevent development. It guides change to ensure
5 compatibility with neighborhood character and, as
6 shown on this slide, accessory dwelling units are
7 permitted on all properties in both districts, either
8 within an existing residential building or an
9 existing accessory structure such as a detached
10 garage. Housing growth including conversions and the
11 creation of ADUs can continue in both districts in
12 support of citywide housing initiatives under City of
13 Yes. LPC is also advancing new guidance and rules to
14 further streamline these types of approvals and
15 support housing growth and for designated buildings
16 and sites. Next slide.

17 So again, thank you for the opportunity
18 to present the Beverley Square West and Ditmas Park
19 West Historic Districts, and I'm happy to answer any
20 questions.

21 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Before I begin, I want
22 to recognize Council Member Hanif for joining us.

23 Just one question. Several people have
24 testified at both LPC public hearings in support of
25 the historic districts also expressed support for

1 expanding the boundaries of the historic districts.

2 For the record, can you explain how LPC decided where
3 to place the boundaries of the proposed historic
4 districts?
5

6 TIMOTHY FRYE: Sure. The boundaries are
7 based on over 20 years of survey of the broader area.
8 LPC's research department has consistently determined
9 that the districts as designated best represent
10 suburban Victorian Flatbush and are the most intact
11 streetscapes comparable to nearby historic districts.
12 Now that's not to say that there aren't high quality,
13 very intact buildings that are outside of the
14 district. However, the districts reflect the areas
15 where intact streetscapes remain the most consistent
16 and are comparable to nearby districts that LPC has
17 designated.

18 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Okay. I want to
19 recognize Council Member Rita Joseph who has a
20 question.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you, Chair
22 Marte. The boundaries that did not make it in, did
23 you give recommendations as to how they can become
24 landmarked in the future.

2 TIMOTHY FRYE: It's always good to go back
3 And like I said, we have an over 20-year history of
4 surveying the broader area. We certainly will go back
5 and resurvey those properties and consider them in
6 the future. However, with the agency's sort of
7 priorities of looking at designations equitably over
8 all five boroughs, I can't really predict whether the
9 Commission will bring that item up at a future date.
10 We will certainly be looking at other parts of the
11 city, but it's not to say that our time in this
12 neighborhood is ended. We will certainly be in the
13 neighborhood and be actively surveying as the years,
14 you know, to come.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Okay. I like to now
17 recognize any of my Colleagues if anyone has any
18 questions or remarks.

19 Seeing none, thank you. The applicant
20 panel is now excused.

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

23 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we have people
24 testifying in person and online.

2 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: In the first panel,
3 we'll have Frampton Tilbert, Sally Bowman, and Janice
4 Hamann.

5 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. Yeah. If
6 anyone's in the overflow room and is planning to
7 testify for this panel, please come to Room 1. You
8 guys may join the panel.

9 As a reminder if I or other Council
10 Members have questions, witnesses are asked to remain
11 online or stay seated here at the microphone after
12 their testimony until they are excused.

13 For those participating online, once you
14 or your group has been excused following any
15 questions, participants may continue to view the
16 livestream broadcast of this hearing on the Council
17 website.

18 Members of the public will be given two
19 minutes to speak. Please do not begin until the
20 Sergeant-at-Arms has started the clock.

21 We will now hear from the first panel.

22 FRAMPTON TILBERT: Good morning, Chair
23 Marte, Committee Members, and thank you to Council
24 Member Rita Joseph for being here today. I'm Frampton
25 Tilbert, Executive Director of the Historic Districts

1 Council, which is the citywide advocate for New
2 York's historic neighborhoods. We work to ensure the
3 preservation of significant neighborhoods, buildings
4 and public spaces, uphold the integrity of the
5 landmarks law, and further the preservation ethic. We
6 are not against development, and we believe growth
7 should be thoughtful, sensitive and aligned with
8 community consensus. Preservation is also sound
9 economic policy. In a report published by the
10 Landmarks Conservancy, historic districts make up
11 less than 5 percent of New York's land area. Yet,
12 they generate more than 800 million in economic
13 investment each year. They support approximately
14 9,000 jobs annually and provide over 500 million in
15 wages to New Yorkers. For more than two decades, HCC
16 has worked closely with the neighborhoods of
17 Victorian Flatbush to support historic efforts. The
18 designation of the Beverley Square West and Ditmas
19 Park West Historic Districts add important pieces to
20 the larger quo that defines Victorian Flatbush, one
21 of the largest and most intact Victorian residential
22 communities of Middle class housing in the country,
23 and affirms the significance of these neighborhoods
24 More than 90 percent of homeowners in the area
25

1 supported this designation, and the LPC had one of
2 those positive hearings in recent memory with over
3 100 individuals testifying in person or sending
4 letters in support of both historic districts. Not a
5 single person opposed the Beverley Square West
6 Historic District. Preservation is not the enemy of
7 progress. Development continues within historic
8 districts through adaptive reuse and new construction
9 that represents neighborhood scale and character. In
10 fact, historic designation often benefits development
11 by providing stability, prestige and long-term value.
12 A 2014 study by the National Bureau of Economic
13 Research found that historic district designation
14 increases property values both within and surrounding
15 designated areas, particularly in neighborhoods
16 outside Manhattan. Most importantly, designation
17 gives communities like Ditmas Park West and Beverley
18 Square West formal recognition of their (TIMER CHIME)
19 identity and history. Thank you.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: You may begin. Make
22 sure that the light is on.

23 JANICE HAMANN: Thank you for hearing us
24 today. I'm Janice Hamann from Beverley Square West
25 Association. And, of course, there's no argument. We

1
2 can all agree when LPC Designates an area, they've
3 studied it well, and we recognize the architectural
4 integrity of our homes, but I don't know if anyone
5 realizes what goes on inside the homes and we are not
6 strictly a neighborhood of one-family homes. We are
7 two- and three-family homes as well. And within these
8 homes, some of the one-family homes are multi-
9 generational, giving affordable housing to children,
10 grandchildren, swapping babysitting. We really
11 support affordability and social issues as well. Some
12 of the two-family homes are owned by elderly
13 homeowners renting to younger people who need
14 affordability in exchange for helping. My next-door
15 neighbor's was shoveled by his tenants because they
16 have great arrangements. I have a two-family house
17 where my daughter and son-in-law... it's a mother-
18 daughter type situation, and we support one another.
19 They're able to live in an affordable place. These
20 are not the only examples. We support affordability
21 as the neighborhood exists right now, and I want City
22 Council to understand that.

23 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Great. Thank you.

24 SALLY BOWMAN: Hi. Thank you so much for
25 having us here today. My name is Sally Bowman, and

1
2 I'm a resident of Beverley Square West. I want to
3 thank everyone here, and I want to thank Rita Joseph
4 again for all of your hard work. I really agree with
5 everything that's been said already so I'm not going
6 to repeat the parts of my testimony that talks about
7 the support our neighborhood has. I want to continue
8 with what Janice is talking about, you know, beyond
9 the architectural integrity, the value to that.
10 Really, I do want to address when we're talking about
11 what happens in the homes. And as they talked about,
12 the Landmark Preservation Committee today, with the
13 ADU's, on my block, and this is representative of
14 Beverley Square West and Ditmas Park West, almost all
15 the homes have garages which are now eligible to be
16 made into ADU's. My family is a two-family home.
17 Almost every house on my block is a two- or three-
18 family home. Over 60 percent have tenants. I have a
19 tenant, a woman and her niece. They have lived with
20 me for 24 years, and I, like many of my neighbors, I
21 have never raised her rent, and I am not a wealthy
22 person. I'm a single mother. I have spent my entire
23 career in the non-profit sector working in Flatbush
24 and in Brooklyn. I sent my children to PS139. I was
25 able to stay in my home because of my tenant because

1
2 I was able to rent rooms in my house, not as an
3 Airbnb, as just someone who is able to do that. My
4 next-door neighbor is 97 years old. She moved into
5 her house when she was 14 as a multi-generational
6 house. I should say when I moved in as well, I chose
7 to do so because my house was large enough to have my
8 extended family. My sister and her family lived with
9 us. It was what enabled me to stay in Brooklyn, to be
10 able to afford to stay in Brooklyn, so I think it's a
11 really important message to think about the fact that
12 I don't know what happens in other neighborhoods
13 (TIMER CHIME) but in our neighborhood we can support
14 both. So, thank you so much.

15 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

16 Are there any questions from the Council
17 for this panel?

18 Seeing no questions, this panel is
19 excused.

20 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry. What was
21 your name?

22 SALLY BOWMAN: Sally Bowman.

23 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

24 SALLY BOWMAN: Thank you.

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: The next individuals I
3 would like to call up for the panel are Mary Louise
4 Clemens, Lisa Dralto, and Sue Fishkin. She's
5 somewhere warm. We're all jealous in here.

6 SUE FISHKIN: I'm in the snow. I'm upstate
7 New York in 20 inches of snow.

8 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: We'll start first with
9 the people who are in person then we'll go to the
10 person in remote. So, you may begin and remember to
11 turn on the microphone when you speak.

12 MARY LOUISE CLEMENS: Hi. My name is Mary
13 Louise Clemens, and I'm a resident of Beverley Square
14 West. Again, I'd like to thank Rita Joseph for her
15 support and in this. We have worked tirelessly as a
16 community to make this landmarking happen. And I
17 think one thing to note about this, there's many,
18 many reasons why we want this to happen that other
19 people have already spoken to but in times like this
20 where people disagree on many, many things, virtually
21 nobody that lives in the neighborhood has disagreed
22 with this. We all support this, and I think that's a
23 unique thing to happen and that we should let nature
24 and people come together at a very difficult time.
25 That's it.

2 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

3 SUE FISHKIN: Hi. My name is Sue Fishkin.

4 I live at 317 Rugby Road, which had become an icon

5 for the neighborhood. We used to run a bed-and-

6 breakfast out of our home. I want to say that in

7 addition to housing, which of course is a very

8 important thing, our home is a two-family home and

9 we're trying to figure out now how to make it livable

10 for our youngest child and her fiancé in addition to

11 us. I want to say that the neighborhood itself has

12 its own life and, by denying the right of Beverley

13 Square West, or maybe it's not a right, but the

14 possibility of Beverley Square West gaining landmark

15 status, I just see a crumbling happening. This is a

16 neighborhood that is visited by people from all over

17 the country and all over the world, and the fact that

18 we are intact is one of the largest areas of

19 Victorian homes where people have really spent a lot

20 of money to update and make the homes as beautiful as

21 possible for the public should not be disregarded.

22 And I thank you for having us here and, Ms. Joseph, I

23 thank you so much for the support that you've given

24 our neighborhood.

1
2 LISA DRALTO: Yes. My name is Lisa Dralto.
3 I live at 260 Marlboro Road. I am on one of the
4 designated streets in Beverley Square West that's
5 being considered for landmarking, and I too want to
6 express my gratitude to Rita Joseph because she's
7 been a big advocate. I've lived in the neighborhood
8 for almost 25 years. I raised my children. They went
9 to public school. It was amazing to see the diversity
10 of the class at a school where Ms. Joseph had also
11 attended. And I'm just here to show my support and
12 also speak on behalf of our neighborhood. We did a
13 survey back in the springtime and, of the respondents
14 of which we had over 60 percent respondents, 95
15 percent supported landmarking. Over the years that
16 I've lived in the community, I've seen it become
17 safer. I've seen it become even more open to
18 community events where people from all over the city
19 come and attend music events on porches, plays that
20 happen in the street. We have visitors from all over
21 the world. When they get off the train, they cannot
22 believe what they're seeing, that they're in New York
23 City. It's a truly unique neighborhood. I've also
24 seen how the neighborhood has moved towards
25 preservation on its own, a trend that will continue

1 with landmarking. And I also want to acknowledge that
2 back in 2009, the neighborhood fought for upzoning so
3 that the commercial areas close by could also
4 increase housing density, and we've seen tremendous
5 increase in housing units go up in our area. We are
6 adjacent to that community so we to believe that we
7 can preserve both the neighborhood that's truly
8 historic, very unique, draws visitors from all over,
9 but also is supportive of additional housing. Thank
10 you.
11

12 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you. Any
13 questions?

14 All right. No questions. You may be
15 excused.

16 Up next, we have Lawrence Becker, and I
17 want to check if there's any more people in person
18 that wish to testify on this panel.

19 Yeah. Did you fill out?

20 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: What's your name?

21 I guess you can come up as well.

22 Great. You may begin. You have to press
23 the button. Perfect.

24 LAWRENCE BECKER: Okay. Thank you, Members
25 of the Committee. I'm very pleased to be able to

1
2 appear before you today in support of the Landmark
3 Preservation Commission's determination to include
4 Beverley Square West as landmarked. I do not want to
5 repeat anything everybody else has said. I just want
6 to point out that this will preserve an historic
7 neighborhood in our city, one that is actually one of
8 the first suburbs in New York City when the city was
9 being created. You'll note that the Landmark
10 Preservation staff said that most of the houses were
11 constructed between 1890 and 1910. City of New York
12 was incorporated in the late 1890s, and this was
13 really considered a suburb of New York City at the
14 time and preserving the Victorian houses in this
15 neighborhood will serve the city well and serve the
16 neighborhood well and the historic district, the
17 Victorian Association, the Landmark Preservation
18 Commission, and our Councilperson, Rita Joseph, who's
19 worked so hard for us and who I thank all agree, and
20 I hope you do too. Thank you very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

22 ANDREA GOLDUJN: Good morning, Chair Marte
23 and Commissioners. I'm Andrea Goldujn, speaking on
24 behalf of the New York Landmarks Conservancy. The
25 Conservancy is pleased to be here supporting

1 designation of these historic districts. Beverley
2 Square West and Ditmas Park West well represent the
3 history of Brooklyn at the start of the 20th century.
4 These neighborhoods replaced former farmland in just
5 10 years as transportation improvements opened up new
6 sections of the borough. These peaceful enclaves
7 boast a consistency of scale and styles that
8 certainly recommend them for designation. The two-
9 and three-story mostly wood-clad houses are on large
10 lots set back from the street with continuous open
11 front lawns. They were built in the Queen Anne and
12 colonial revival styles and featured Tudor and
13 shingle style details, all typical of early 20th
14 century. There have been some alterations or
15 additions since these communities were built, but
16 even these minor changes don't impinge on the overall
17 community. Altogether, they exhibit a distinct sense
18 of place. We applaud the actions of residents and
19 elected officials who energize the cause of
20 designating these districts. We understand that local
21 advocates have envisioned larger designations and
22 join others in the hope that the Landmarks Commission
23 will continue to evaluate that request and designate
24 more districts in the coming years. As you think
25

1 about this designation, there is a larger issue
2 hanging over us, the impact of historic districts on
3 New York City. At some point, you might hear that
4 historic districts are preventing new housing or that
5 there needs to be a moratorium on designations. As
6 you have also heard, note that historic districts
7 encompass less than 5 percent of land and lots. Many
8 are in the densest neighborhoods, and designation
9 helps limit the demolition of existing affordable
10 housing. There are many reasons why housing is so
11 expensive in this city, but the presence of historic
12 districts is such a small factor in that discussion.
13 The attached map shows that well. The districts have
14 proven to be a success route for the city,
15 revitalizing neighborhoods, protecting homes,
16 fighting climate (TIMER CHIME) change and celebrating
17 the building crafts. Preservation is also a strong
18 economic engine, creating jobs and encouraging
19 heritage tourism, all accomplished in this small land
20 space. We hope that more districts will do all of
21 this while continuing to tell New York's whole story.
22 Thank you.

23
24 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you, and this
25 panel may be excused.

1
2 Online, we have Dena Tasse-Winter, Robin
3 Redmond, Joanne Oplustil, and Dave Herman. We will
4 first start with Dena.

5 DENA TASSE-WINTER: Good morning. Thank
6 you. My name is Dena Tasse-Winter testifying on
7 behalf of Village Preservation, New York City's
8 largest neighborhood historic preservation
9 organization founded in 1980 to help preserve the
10 special history of Greenwich Village, the East
11 Village, and NoHo. We appreciate the opportunity to
12 testify this morning, and we want to especially thank
13 and congratulate Council Member Christopher Marte for
14 his appointment as Chair of this Subcommittee.
15 Council Member Marte has ably represented communities
16 of Lower Manhattan for over four years, and we could
17 not be happier to see him in this role. I'm speaking
18 today in support of the designation of both Beverley
19 Square West and Ditmas Park West historic districts
20 in Brooklyn. These historic districts are an
21 important part of New York City's heritage and
22 development, capturing the city's post consolidation
23 growth at the turn of the last century as generous
24 rambling homes and the latest architectural styles
25 were developed to accommodate the city's growing

1 population. These houses are some of the finest
2 examples of early 20th century residential
3 development in NYC and represent an important phase
4 of this city's growth. We are better for ensuring
5 their preservation. We hope to see the Landmarks
6 Preservation Commission undertake more designations
7 like these in all five boroughs in places where
8 important history can still be seen and has the
9 potential to shape our future and inform our
10 understanding of our past. In fact, these two
11 districts as discussed are truncated versions of the
12 districts which residents had initially proposed and
13 worked for years to see designated, and we hope the
14 Commission may consider including areas they left out
15 of these designations even as they also look across
16 the city at other worthy areas in neighborhoods that
17 are calling out for preservation. Under the prior
18 Administration, landmarks designations reached an
19 all-time low over the course of the 60-year existence
20 of the LPC. We hope that under this new
21 Administration and with the support of this
22 Committee, we will see that unfortunate trend
23 reversed and the full spectrum of our city's diverse
24 heritage and history preserved. Thank you so much.
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CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

Robin is up next.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

ROBIN REDMOND: Sorry. Good morning, and thank you for considering Beverley Square West and Ditmas Park West for landmarking. My name is Robin Redmond, and I'm the Executive Director of Flatbush Development Corporation, a community development organization proudly celebrating 50 years of preserving neighborhoods and strengthening Flatbush. First, I'd like to thank Council Member Rita Joseph for her support and for being such a staunch advocate for the landmarking of both Beverley Square West and Ditmas Park West, and I'd like to thank you Council Member Marte and your Committee Members for the opportunity to speak this morning. Victorian Flatbush is home to 11 neighborhood associations, five of which are already landmarked. Victorian Flatbush holds one of the largest concentrations of freestanding wood frame Victorian homes in the country. In 2012, FDC along with six undesignated neighborhood associations submitted a proposal we called Complete the Quilt, envisioning Victorian Flatbush as a beautiful quilt with a few missing

1 patches. Today, we're one step closer to completing
2 this quilt. Flatbush was designed as a commuter
3 suburb for middle class and officially became part of
4 Brooklyn in 1894. The developers of both
5 neighborhoods were Louis Pounds, John Salkins, and
6 T.B. Akerson intentionally created communities within
7 walking distance of Manhattan-bound trains. At the
8 October 21st 2025 Landmarks Preservation Council
9 public hearing, there was an overwhelming number of
10 testimonials submitted in support of landmarking both
11 neighborhoods. In total, 43 testified in support of
12 the proposed designation, and three were opposed. The
13 Commission also received 60 letters and emails in
14 support and two opposed. Clearly pride (TIMER CHIME)
15 of homeownership remains strong. But these are
16 neighborhoods...

17
18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you for your
19 testimony. Your time has expired.

20 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Up next, we have
21 Joanne.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

23 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Joanne.

24 JOANNE OPLUSTIL: Okay. Hi. Can you hear
25 me?

CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Yes. We can.

JOANNE OPLUSTIL: Okay. Thank you so much for having this hearing, and I want to thank the Committee and Councilwoman Rita Joseph for all her untiring work that she has done for her entire community. Up until a year and a half ago, I was the President and CEO of Canva for 46 years and Canva Housing Ventures for 20 years. Canva Housing Ventures is a supportive housing development non-profit agency. So, I am certainly very supportive any sort of supportive housing development. However, I think that that development should be on different corridors. I'm totally in favor of the designation of Ditmas Park West where I live and Beverley Square West. My parents moved to Marlborough Road with the six children in 1959 and, of the six children, three of us have lived in these Areas for a number of years. One of my sisters moved. My other sister's family is still there, I'm still there, and my daughter lives down the block from me. These are communities and we live as a community and we are not opposed to development, but we would like to preserve our neighborhoods and I think it's very important that we do and that the neighborhood is the beautiful

2 homes, but also the other areas with larger
3 buildings. That's a community and that's what we are
4 and I'd like it to continue that way so I'm very much
5 in support of these designations as well as the
6 continued appropriate development of supportive
7 housing for low-income and formerly homeless
8 families. So, thank you very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

10 David, you may now speak.

11 DAVE HERMAN: Hi. Thanks. Thank you for
12 considering Beverley Square West for landmarking. My
13 name is Dave Herman and I've been living on Beverley
14 Road for 25 years. First, I want to thank Rita, our
15 Councilman, for your help in protecting something
16 truly special. I fully support landmarking including
17 a wider landmarking of Beverley Square West, but this
18 neighborhood is a living, breathing piece of Brooklyn
19 history and I fell in love with it not for the houses
20 themselves for what they represent. And what they
21 represent is architectural value. The houses are
22 amazing. We're truly one-of-a-kind. You know, in
23 Europe you see, you know, they protect historical
24 districts. Here in New York, we don't always hold on
25 so tightly. We build, we tear down, we move on, but

1 this neighborhood is one of the rare places where you
2 can go and walk down the street and feel connected to
3 the past, to the city, to the rest of the country
4 because if you travel across America you'll find
5 neighborhoods like ours, small clusters of
6 Victorians, wood frame houses, all built on the
7 dream. And when New Yorkers walk these streets,
8 they're transported. For a moment, they're not in the
9 city of skyscrapers. They're in anywhere USA, and
10 that to me is part of what makes this City so
11 endlessly surprising but also this neighborhood. This
12 neighborhood, you know, is full of a history. It
13 tells a story. These homes were built in a wave of
14 optimism and the belief that regular families could
15 own a piece of beauty. That's the kind of history
16 that makes this neighborhood special, and we're not
17 just a corner Brooklyn. We're a living time capsule
18 of the American ambition, craftsmanship, and
19 community spirit. Community. The neighborhood isn't
20 just a place to live. It's a destination. People from
21 all over Brooklyn and the world come to walk these
22 streets. If you ever been here, for example on
23 Halloween, you'll see on that night literally
24 thousands upon thousands of children filling the
25

1 blocks, having experience that could only happen in
2 Brooklyn and only happen here. It's pure Brooklyn
3 magic and experience of community that makes lifelong
4 memories for kids and parents alike, and it's one of
5 the most diverse neighborhoods in the world. Finally,
6 I'd like to note that this community has met goals
7 over (TIMER CHIME) the past decade for additional
8 housing and affordable housing and that need was...

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you for your
11 testimony. Time has expired.

12 DAVE HERMAN: Designated building
13 corridors particularly on Coney Island and Cortelyou
14 Road.

15 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you, David.

16 That panel is now excused.

17 We have one more speaker, Christopher
18 Leon Johnson.

19 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah. Hello. My
20 name is Christopher Leon Johnson. I'm showing
21 opposition to this Land Use application, and I want
22 to make this clear that this Council Member, Rita
23 Joseph, is captive to Transportation Alternatives and
24 Open Plans and Open (INAUDIBLE) for All. I actually
25 went had a walking tour with Transportation

1
2 Alternatives, and there's a reason why that they
3 really want this Land Use application because they
4 want to put their little crappy open streets all over
5 the Victoria area of Flatbush, of Ditmas and
6 Beverley. So, we have a Council Member that need to
7 be on the record saying that she's captive to these
8 non-profits and these non-profits want this
9 development only for themselves. This is the same
10 Council Member, Rita Joseph, that will never pull a
11 finger to say that we'll push for redevelopment and
12 upzoning a Newkirk Plaza because she know what will
13 happen to those votes when she (INAUDIBLE) Brooklyn
14 Borough President, if Mr. Reynosa was to resign, from
15 the Brooklyn Borough President race and go for
16 Congress. This is a bad application for everybody.
17 This is going to ruin, really upzone a whole
18 neighborhood that she wants because she's captive and
19 it's feckless of her to allow this to happen. This is
20 a crappy application. It just be rejected. At least
21 if you have a spine, Rita Joseph, please make it for
22 the whole area. Not just keep it open to allow
23 developers to erect what they want to erect, but we
24 all know you going to allow it to happen because you
25 love Transportation Alternatives and that's what they

1 want and they hate parking and there's a lot of
2 parking get around that area. So, you know, I mean
3 this application should be rejected and I support the
4 neighborhood. I love that neighborhood I went there
5 one time with TransAlt and I see what's going on. So,
6 thank you so much and enjoy your day.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

9 If there are any remote public
10 participants who wish to testify and have not already
11 done so, please press the raise hand button now. And
12 if you are here with us in person, one last time,
13 please see the Sergeant-at-Arms to fill out a speaker
14 card.

15 There being no other members of the
16 public who wish to testify regarding these two Pre-
17 Considered LUs for Beverley Square West Historic
18 District and Ditmas Park West Historic District, the
19 public hearing is now closed, and the items are laid
20 over.

21 I now open a public hearing for LU 1 for
22 Prospect Farm Acquisition, an application by New York
23 City Department of Parks and Recreation and NYC
24 Department of Citywide Administrative Services for
25 the acquisition of property at 1194 Prospect Avenue

1 for the continued use of the site as a community
2 garden. This project is located in Brooklyn in
3 Council Member Hanif's District. I'd like to welcome
4 Council Member Hanif to make a brief statement.
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you, Chair
7 Marte, and good afternoon. I'm Council Member Shahana
8 Hanif. I represent Brooklyn. I'm here today regarding
9 the Prospect Farm Acquisition Application in my
10 District. This application seeks approval for the
11 City through the Parks Department to acquire a
12 privately owned lot that is currently operating as a
13 community garden. Prospect Farm is a vibrant
14 community space where neighbors come together around
15 a shared commitment to gardening, stewardship, and
16 community care. This acquisition would preserve the
17 site's use as a community garden while allowing Parks
18 to formally manage the space, making it eligible for
19 City programs such as Green Thumb and the critical
20 resources and capital support these programs can
21 provide. While I strongly support this project, I'm
22 going to use today's discussion to continue working
23 with Parks and the Department of Transportation. I'm
24 disappointed they're not here to ensure the garden is
25 adequately protected from potential impacts related

1
2 to nearby future construction, particularly the
3 planned reconstruction of the Seeley Street Bridge,
4 which is directly adjacent to this site. I look
5 forward to collaborating with both agencies to ensure
6 the community in the garden itself are minimally
7 impacted by this work.

8 Thank you, again, Chair Marte and to my
9 Colleagues on the Subcommittee. I look forward to
10 hearing from the applicant and the members of the
11 public. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Appearing today on
13 this panel is Jess Watchler (sic) ... sorry.

14 JESS WACHTLER: Wachtler.

15 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Wachtler from NYC
16 Parks. We also have Colleen Alderson and Matt Drury.

17 MATT DRURY: Drury.

18 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you for that.

19 Those wishing to testify remotely must
20 register online by visiting the Council website at
21 council.nyc.gov/landuse.

22 Panelists, please ensure that your
23 microphones are on.

24 Counsel, would you please administer the
25 affirmation?

SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would you please raise your right hand and state your name for the record, making sure the microphone is on?

COORDINATOR WACHTLER: Jess Wachtler.

CHIEF DRURY: Matt Drury.

CHIEF ALDERSON: Colleen Alderon.

SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: And do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this Subcommittee and in answer to all Council Member questions?

CHIEF DRURY: I do.

CHIEF ALDERSON: Yes.

COORDINATOR WACHTLER: I do.

CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you, applicant panelists.

For the viewing public, if you need an accessible version of this presentation, please send an email request to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

And now the applicant team may begin.

COORDINATOR WACHTLER: Thank you, Chair, Council Member Hanif, and the Committee.

Good morning. My name is Jess Wachtler, and I'm a Project Development Coordinator for the Parks Department. In attendance with me today are my

1
2 Parks colleagues, Colleen Alderson, Chief of
3 Parklands and Real Estate; and Matt Drury, Chief of
4 Citywide Legislative Affairs. We are joined virtually
5 by our DCAS colleagues and co-applicants Alex
6 Trezowski (phonetic), Chris Grove, and Shelton
7 Getter. Next slide, please.

8 Today, I'm presenting on ULURP
9 Application C 250304 PQK. Through this application,
10 the Parks Department proposes the City's purchase of
11 Brooklyn block 5267 lot 19, the project site, to
12 preserve its use as part of the Prospect Farm
13 Community Garden. This proposed action is a site
14 acquisition led by co-applicants, New York City Parks
15 and DCAS. Next slide, please.

16 The project site is located in Windsor
17 Terrace, Brooklyn Community Board 7. The 3,207 square
18 foot lot is sandwiched between Greenwood Cemetery,
19 which is to the west just out of frame, and Prospect
20 Park to the east. It is also a block to the east of
21 the Prospect Expressway. Next slide.

22 On this slide, our view of the project
23 site is rotated 90 degrees so we're looking west at
24 the site's frontage on Prospect Avenue. The site is
25 approximated by the red outline and makes up a

1 portion of the 15-year-old Prospect Farm Community
2 Garden. It is just to the south of Seeley Street
3 Bridge overpass. Next slide.

4
5 The image on the left was taken from
6 within the garden looking north at Seeley Street
7 Bridge standing amidst garden beds and other
8 plantings. In the second image, we're standing across
9 the street from the project site looking west at the
10 site's frontage on Prospect Avenue. Here you can see
11 the slope nature of the project site. Next slide.

12 The site and surrounding area are zoned
13 R5B, which permits an FAR of 1.5 and 2.0 for
14 qualifying residential sites and a maximum building
15 height of 35 feet and 50 feet for qualifying sites.
16 There are also C1-3 commercial overlays on Prospect
17 Avenue, which are outlined in blue on the map. Next
18 slide.

19 One-, two-, and multi-family buildings
20 symbolized in tan yellow and brown respectively make
21 up the predominant land use in the area. Next slide.

22 Looking more closely at the garden, I
23 want to draw your attention to lot 19 in red. This is
24 the site that Parks is proposing to acquire. We are
25 not seeking to map this parcel as park as community

1 gardens are considered an inconsistent use for mapped
2 parkland due to their more limited hours and
3 restrictive uses compared to a traditional park. So,
4 the proposed action today is just an acquisition
5 without any mapping. Please note the black dashed
6 line, which approximates the full extent of Prospect
7 Farms gardening operations. This extends beyond the
8 acquisition parcel. Included within the dashed line
9 is lot 118 shown in blue, which is under the
10 jurisdiction of the New York City Department of
11 Transportation, DOT. This lot is currently being used
12 as part of the garden. You can also see that the
13 garden extends into a portion of the mapped 100-foot
14 Prospect Avenue right-of-way shown in yellow. The
15 garden also extends into the privately owned lot to
16 the south, which has the same owners as the red area.
17
18 Next slide.

19 A little history on the project site. Tom
20 Angotti and Emma Matos-Ramos became the owners of the
21 site in 1996 and still own the property to this day
22 along with the residential property to the south.
23 When Tom and Emma originally acquired the property,
24 it was a dumping ground. Over many years they, along
25 with neighborhood volunteers, cleaned up the site and

1 surrounding areas and in 2010 Prospect Farm was
2 established. Next slide.

3
4 Today, Prospect Farm has approximately 40
5 members, and the unique element of the garden is its
6 communally run gardening beds of which there are 15,
7 some of which you can see in the image to the right.
8 Next slide.

9 There are also two native wildflower
10 planting areas. Produce grown in the garden is
11 distributed amongst garden members, and the garden
12 also hosts a food scrap drop-off twice a week which
13 is turned into compost used in the garden and given
14 away for free to the community. The image on the
15 right shows the garden's three bin composting system.
16 Next slide.

17 The garden also hosts at least three
18 public events each year, which you can see some of in
19 these photos. Next slide.

20 Prospect Farm is currently registered
21 with Green Thumb, the Parks Department program that
22 supports volunteer run community gardens across the
23 city. As a registered Green Thumb garden, Prospect
24 Farm has access to free gardening materials such as
25 soil, mulch, and wood chips. They also receive

2 technical assistance from Green Thumb staff. In
3 return, the garden must remain open to the public for
4 a minimum of 20 hours each week throughout the
5 growing season along with other requirements intended
6 to support public access. However, if the project
7 site were acquired by the City, Prospect Farm would
8 begin the process of entering into a license
9 agreement with the Parks Department administered
10 through our Green Thumb program. With licensed
11 status, Prospect Farm would be eligible to receive
12 labor and capital improvements from Green Thumb such
13 as raised garden beds, fencing, sheds, gazebos, or
14 internal water supply depending on the availability
15 of funding. As a licensed garden, Prospect Farm would
16 still be required to meet the same public access
17 requirements as before. Next slide.

18 Additionally, once City-owned and
19 assigned to the Parks Department, the project site
20 would be subject to Chapter 6 of the New York City
21 Parks rules found in Title 56 of the Rules of the
22 City of New York. Chapter 6 establishes procedures
23 that ensure community gardens are properly maintained
24 and safeguarded. These rules do not expire and cannot
25 be changed without a public rulemaking process. In

1 contrast, gardens on privately owned land enjoy no
2 such protections. Private owners may choose to sell
3 or change the use of their property at any time. Next
4 slide.

5
6 In Summary, we are proposing the purchase
7 of Brooklyn block 5267 lot 19 to preserve its use as
8 part of the Prospect Farm Community Garden.

9 Thank you, and I'll take any questions.

10 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Great. Thank you for
11 the presentation.

12 I would like to now recognize Council
13 Member Hanif who has a few questions.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you. Thank
15 you for joining us.

16 I primarily have questions for the
17 Department of Transportation so not sure if I want to
18 pass and come back, but I do have a few questions for
19 Parks.

20 Could you share the steps the Department
21 has already taken to help Prospect Farm protect the
22 perimeter and the vulnerable edges of the garden?

23 COORDINATOR WACHTLER: Yes. Thank you very
24 much for the question. So, we have been in contact
25 with the gardeners and we have had meetings with them

1 before we started the ULURP process. Both through
2 Green Thumb, they have a point of contact through
3 their engagement outreach coordinator and then also
4 through our Parklands and Real Estate Team, which is
5 dealing specifically with the acquisition. We have
6 spoken with the gardeners, and we've heard a lot of
7 these requests to protect the edges. One of those
8 meetings was with your office, and we have been
9 examining the possibility of... they asked for a letter
10 between DOT and Parks and we did bring that back to
11 DOT.

13 CHIEF DRURY: And I'll just jump in more
14 broadly and add that when it comes to gardens on non-
15 Parks property, on property that's not in our
16 jurisdiction, you know, gardens that are registered
17 with us, just broadly speaking, we're able to provide
18 those gardens with technical support, supplies,
19 things that nature, but when it comes to sort of
20 physical improvements, you know literal fencing, you
21 know things of other sort of capital or other
22 significant improvements, you know, we wouldn't be
23 able to kind of advance those kind of discussions
24 since it's, you know, private property but we do our
25 best obviously through outreach coordinators and the

1 relationships we built with the gardens over the
2 years, gardens that are registered with us, even if
3 they're not licensed, that is to say on Parks
4 property, you know, we still provide them with, you
5 know, pretty robust set of, you know, resources and
6 another other expertise.
7

8 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Got it. And then if
9 the site is acquired, what specific commitments can
10 Parks make to protecting the farm from impacts
11 related to the adjacent construction or other
12 infrastructure projects?

13 CHIEF DRURY: Yeah. I can broadly state
14 that, you know, if the acquisition is to move forward
15 and the property is to come over to our jurisdiction,
16 we work very, very closely with our fellow agencies
17 for any construction that's happening adjacent to
18 Parks property so we fully expect and in fact there
19 have been very positive interactions and coordination
20 with DOT as they are going through their design. The
21 project is not advanced enough to talk about details
22 at this point is my understanding. But we have a
23 strong record of history and, in fact, the Parks
24 Department has what we call an interagency division,
25 which provides construction permits to agencies or

2 private entities for that matter that are doing
3 construction adjacent to or in proximity to a park so
4 there is a whole process in place to kind of work
5 through those... (CROSS-TALK)

6 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Would you clarify
7 what that looks like?

8 CHIEF DRURY: A construction permit? I
9 mean it depends on the nature of the project but it
10 is a division within our capital team that, you know,
11 it's there's a page on our website where, you know
12 someone who's looking to advance construction
13 adjacent to a Parks property, you know, provides the
14 details and there's sort of a formulated interaction
15 where the agency actually issues a construction
16 permit if there's going to be impacts upon, you know,
17 property that's under Parks' jurisdiction. So, not
18 only is there a formalized process for it, but in
19 addition to that is a strong record of engagement and
20 cooperation with us and our sister agencies including
21 DOT in this case.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Understood. That's
23 very helpful to know. I think we all know that the
24 Seeley Bridge construction is what's causing a lot of
25 anxiety and the community wants to be a part of it.

1 We want to make sure that the design input is
2 gathered from community members, long-standing folks
3 who use the garden, who live in the area, and the
4 hope with today's hearing was to come out with a
5 memorandum of an agreement or an understanding that
6 DOT is very willing and open to doing the rigorous
7 comprehensive community engagement that we would like
8 to see.

10 CHIEF DRURY: Yeah. We understand and
11 appreciate that and it's, you know, I haven't been
12 directly involved in conversations. My understanding
13 is they have met with your team. I think they've
14 issued a letter sort of expressing sentiments along
15 these lines. At the risk of splitting hairs, you
16 know, a memo of understanding or a memo of agreement
17 between the two agencies, just from a legal
18 perspective is a little premature when we don't have
19 control or jurisdiction over the property, right,
20 because there's nothing to agree over yet, right? So,
21 I think this acquisition is frankly one of the
22 important steps that will help advance that
23 discussion forward while the project design on the
24 bridge also advances. So, we see the two as, you know
25 distinct and separate but obviously related.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Yeah. And just to
3 clarify the memorandum of agreement would... I know
4 that the designs not in it or we don't have a final
5 project but we hear from our community that the
6 community engagement piece is still very limited and
7 not as comprehensive as they would like, and so
8 having that in a written agreement so that we can go
9 back to DOT and say hey you all decided that there's
10 going to be a community engagement process during
11 this timeline as we're moving into the design phase
12 or construction phase and so that that's what my
13 understanding is of how the community wanted to Hold
14 our City agencies to account.

15 CHIEF DRURY: Sure. And we appreciate that
16 and we're happy to, you know, I think as the
17 conversation evolves, we're happy to participate in
18 that and, you know, we obviously can't speak to the
19 exact form or shape of DOT's engagement efforts. My
20 understanding is they, you know, they pride
21 themselves on as robust as possible in terms of that
22 engagement. We're happy to, you know, as a key
23 stakeholder. Obviously, if there's going to be
24 discussions about what the exact shape of that looks
25 like and how that gets sort of codified or

1 memorialized, you know, we're obviously happy to
2 participate in all those conversations.
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And finally, are
5 there other examples of sites similar to this where
6 Parks and DOT have had to either work together or?

7 CHIEF DRURY: In short, yes, but I'm
8 racking my brain a little bit to cite specific
9 examples, but I know we do have a strong sort of just
10 broader narrative history anecdotally of interagency
11 cooperation when it comes to this sort of thing. I
12 don't know that it's necessarily been adjacent to a
13 garden per se or some of the particulars might be a
14 little different. Colleen I don't know if you know
15 anything offhand.

16 CHIEF ALDERSON: I know we're working with
17 them very closely. They are redoing a bridge in
18 Pelham Bay Park in the Bronx, Shore Road Bridge, and
19 there's careful coordination. Doesn't affect a
20 community garden. But it, you know, connects both
21 parts of Pelham Bay Park, and we've been working with
22 them very closely, specifically with their Bridges
23 Units for years and, you know, we've been working
24 through various things including a required wetland
25 mitigation so we're pretty used to it. Their bridges,

1
2 you know, are approximate and extend over park lands
3 so we ,of course, have a relationship with them to
4 ensure the integrity of the parkland affected, to
5 make sure we're giving permission and approval before
6 any work is done in our park, and making sure that
7 restoration, the park is made whole and that's what
8 we'll look out for the community garden. We will have
9 to issue them a construction permit, their
10 contractor, if they are proposing to be in the garden
11 and ensure that...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: That's to DOT?

13 CHIEF ALDERSON: Yes, or their contractor
14 usually in most instances, and ensure that the
15 restoration of the garden is made whole. And I would
16 just add that we've been talking to City DOT. They're
17 fully aware of the community garden, you know, it's
18 conditions, and they have committed to work with the
19 Parks Department to ensure that the garden is, you
20 know, minimally affected and make sure that the
21 garden is kept as intact as possible.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

24 I have one more question. What
25 consideration has been given to Community Board 7's

1 conditional favorable recommendation calling DOT to
2 transfer the site next door to Department of Parks.

3
4 CHIEF DRURY: So, I don't think we can
5 formally speak for DOT, but I do understand they've
6 expressed openness to the dialogue and they have
7 committed as noted to a sort of full public
8 engagement as their bridge project moves forward. At
9 this point, my understanding is that the design is
10 still in too preliminary a stage to kind of speak to
11 those details, that's my understanding, but we expect
12 that those more detailed technical conversations will
13 be part of the engagement as it moves forward.

14 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

15 And for the record, it's really
16 disappointing that DOT didn't join us here today even
17 though they've been asked to show up because it's
18 extremely rare that we have a public siting
19 opportunity in our city and so hopefully next time
20 they show up and this doesn't become a pattern.

21 CHIEF DRURY: We appreciate it and we will
22 obviously relay that, you know, back. I mean in
23 fairness, they're not an applicant to this land-use
24 action so I mean just whatever that's worth, but we
25 understood we did, you know, the request was relayed,

1 here we are, but, you know, we look forward to moving
2 forward and continuing the dialogue.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Great. Well, thank
5 you.

6 And this applicant panel is now excused.

7 CHIEF ALDERSON: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Counsel, are there any
9 members of the public who wish to testify on this
10 item?

11 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. There are
12 approximately eight in public.

13 First up, we have Tom Angotti,
14 Christopher Johnson, Emma James, and Cassandra Warney

15 As a reminder, if I or other Council
16 Members have questions, witnesses are asked to remain
17 online or stay seated here at the microphone after
18 their testimony until they are excused.

19 For those participating online, once you
20 or your group has been excused following any
21 questions, participants may continue to view the
22 livestream broadcast of this hearing on the Council
23 website.

24

25

2 Members of the public will be given two
3 minutes to speak. Do not begin until the Sergeant-at-
4 Arms has started the clock.

5 We will now hear from this first panel.
6 Tom, you may begin.

7 TOM ANGOTTI: Thank you, Council Member
8 Marte. It's great to see you. I appreciate this
9 opportunity. As was stated, myself and my wife, Emma
10 Mato-Ramos, bought this land about 30 years ago and,
11 when we showed up to sign the papers, it turned out
12 that we got this extra lot with it. You know, I
13 should actually for the rest of the panel explain.
14 I'm a retired professor of urban planning. I've been
15 a supporter of open space. I've been a supporter of
16 Green Thumb even before it was born. And so when I
17 tried to remediate the soil and plant in it, I
18 discovered what many other urban gardeners have
19 discovered. It was contaminated. We spent a couple of
20 years trying to remediate the soil and found out that
21 that was going to be a very long term, probably too
22 long term, task so we started doing raised beds. I
23 put out a call saying I can't do this alone, and the
24 next week about 100 people showed up. Some came from
25 the Bronx, from other parts of Brooklyn. There was

1 great interest in this and so over the next year we
2 founded Prospect Farm, focusing on three principles,
3 building community (TIMER CHIME) oh, goodness,
4 improving the soil, and what was the other one?
5 Anyway from the beginning, the important thing for
6 this hearing is community was number one. My
7 background and experience has been in urban planning.
8 I was a professor of urban planning. I worked for the
9 Brooklyn Office of City Planning for six years and
10 and so I think that's the main point I want to make
11 here. We have community members here who are
12 gardeners, who are active. The other main point I
13 want to make is I had the privilege of meeting with
14 an architect for DOT before this actually entered
15 ULURP, and I was a little bothered by the design that
16 was cooked up by DOT that essentially reduced the
17 attractiveness. It was a very poor design. It reduced
18 the attractiveness of the garden. It took valuable
19 space. And then the other thing I have to say is the
20 Seeley Street Bridge borders the property, and my
21 Seeley Street neighbors are very knowledgeable of our
22 history. Thirty years ago, when we moved into the
23 neighborhood, there was a big tussle with DOT because
24 they wanted to rebuild the bridge, and when they
25

1
2 hired engineers, they found that the foundations of
3 surrounding houses would be compromised and that it
4 was a terrible design. I am disturbed by DOT's lack
5 of presence in the neighborhood. When I had the
6 privilege of meeting with this one architect, I said
7 fine, thank you for consulting me, but you need to
8 consult the Gardens. This is a community project
9 Consult. Oh, yes, we'll do that. We've done
10 participation before. And I don't trust that word and
11 and I think we need to get a firm commitment from DOT
12 Okay.

13 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you, Mr.
14 Angotti.

15 Up next, we have Emma James.

16 EMMA JAMES: Good morning, Chair.

17 (INAUDIBLE)

18 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Press the button.

19 EMMA JAMES: Good morning, Chair and
20 Members of the Subcommittee. My name is Emma James,
21 and I'm a Board Member of Prospect Farm, and I want
22 to thank Council Member Hanif a lot and her staff for
23 their support. I'm not going to retell the whole
24 story, but Prospect Farm obviously supports the base
25 acquisition by the Parks Department. We operate as

1 cooperative, no individual plots, just neighbors
2 building community, and it's a super rare model. I
3 first learned about Prospect Farm from a college
4 friend who traveled an hour each way to be a part of
5 it and people come as far as from the Bronx. So, for
6 the last two years and especially now as a recent
7 homeowner in Kensington, which is like a 10-minute
8 walk from the garden, I've come to rely on it as a
9 third space, and spaces like this really matter for
10 people putting down roots in Brooklyn. But, of
11 course, as we'll all highlight, we are deeply
12 concerned about the planned Seeley Street Bridge
13 reconstruction. DOT has, to our knowledge, never
14 engaged the garden or community about bridge designs,
15 which includes a proposed ramp that could permanently
16 harm garden operations, not only just being
17 aesthetically awkward, but harming our access to
18 sunlight, especially as a terraced landscape and also
19 like where our operations for composting and other
20 storage exists currently. So, we ask that DOT does
21 commit to community engagement, actual community
22 engagement before designs are finalized, that garden
23 operations remain functional throughout construction,
24 and that Parks in particular commit to protecting the
25

1 garden from permanent harm which would be documented
2 in a joint Parks/DOT letter. And ultimately, we
3 support being in a community garden so we thank Parks
4 for their engagement, but not at the cost of our
5 community space. So, thank you all.

7 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank You.

8 Cassandra.

9 CASSANDRA WARNEY: Hello, Chair and
10 Members of the Subcommittee. I'm Cassandra Warney.
11 I'm on the Board of Directors of Prospect Farm. I
12 want to thank Council Member Hanif and her incredible
13 Staff, especially Sabine, for their consistent
14 support of our garden. And I support the acquisition
15 with important caveats. First, some context, Robert
16 Moses wanted Prospect Avenue to be a highway so DOT
17 jurisdiction is a bit wider than on other streets.
18 So, of course, next to the bridge, but it stretches
19 in from the sidewalk into our garden and this
20 heightens the importance of clear coordination and
21 protection for the garden. We first requested a joint
22 Parks/DOT letter in September to protect the fringes
23 of the garden. And on background, what Tom mentioned
24 with the preliminary plans that were presented to him
25 by DOT was for a ramp to go through the garden

1
2 itself. And so our goal was to be able to document in
3 writing the verbal understanding between Parks and
4 DOT, specifically that the garden could continue to
5 use the majority of the strip along the sidewalk and
6 that Parks would act as an active partner into the
7 garden where DOT infrastructure projects can carry
8 long-term implications, and we only learned earlier
9 this month through Council Member Hanif's office that
10 a draft is underway. And based on what's been
11 communicated to us to this date, I want to be clear,
12 acquisition should not enable DOT to predetermine ADA
13 upgrades or site infrastructure within the garden
14 absent meaningful community engagement nor should
15 Parks endorse those decisions. Parks should engage
16 our garden as an active partner, particularly where
17 DOT infrastructure projects pose long-term risks, and
18 we're asking this to be in the joint letter which
19 would be transferred to an MOA and so we're just
20 hoping there's going to be a shift in proactive
21 engagement with both Parks and DOT for the garden.
22 Thank you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you.

24 We'll now go to Christopher Johnson.

25

1
2 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah. Hello. My
3 name is Christopher Leon Johnson. I support keeping
4 this garden as the garden, but Ms. Shahana Hanif, as
5 a Council Member, you should be disclosing the record
6 that you have a close tie to a community member
7 that's named Kathy Park Price, and maybe that's the
8 reason why the DOT did not want to come here today
9 because Kathy Park Price runs the DOT via New Yorkers
10 for Parks. New Yorkers for Parks works close to hand
11 with Transportation Alternative that owns the DOT.
12 So, of course, they're not going to show up because
13 you could tell, I could have a big feeling that Kathy
14 Park Price told them not to show up. She runs the DOT
15 even as a lobbyist for New Yorkers for Parks. She
16 still have control of the DOT with the help of
17 Transportation Alternatives. The reason they won't
18 sell as much as Community Board 7 was (INAUDIBLE) he
19 will not, yeah, I agree with him saying that the DOT
20 should sell, give their portion to the New York City
21 Parks for this Land Use application. They won't give
22 it away because the New York DOT is hell-bent on
23 working with these developers to make it where that
24 if they have one getting one inch they're going to
25 take the whole mile. So, they need their portion so

1 they could justify having the whole mile and I'm a
2 big feeling that in years to come, probably about in
3 the next three, four years, that the DOT with the
4 help of Kathy Park Price. And I think that the whole
5 South Brooklyn know that she's a big cancer to
6 Brooklyn. Kathy Park Price is a cancer to Brooklyn
7 politics because she's hell-bent on destroying
8 Brooklyn block by block. This lady, Kathy Park Price,
9 like I said, she will say well let's put a bike lane
10 right in front of the park and you, Shahana Hanif,
11 will be co-sign on it because you have to, because if
12 you don't co-sign, you're not going to be Brooklyn
13 Borough President next year. And that's what's going
14 to happen. The City Council need to start calling out
15 Kathy Park Price today. She's a she's a cancer to
16 Brooklyn politics. She's hell-bent on destroying Park
17 Slope, Windsor (TIMER CHIME) Terrace, and (INAUDIBLE)
18 everywhere in the city. Like I said, I support the
19 application, the DOT need to sell their portion to
20 the Parks to order make sure this community park stay
21 a park because they don't, like I said I have a big
22 feeling in the next few years that this park is going
23 to be taken away like Elizabeth Street Garden. Thank
24 you so much.
25

2 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Okay. Chris.

3 Any questions from my Colleagues?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Yes. Well, thank
5 you so much for joining us this afternoon.

6 Tom, just to have on the record. Could
7 you share how you learned about the Seeley Street
8 Bridge design that you were just talking about and
9 then what to you is proactive community engagement.

10 TOM ANGOTTI: Yeah. The Parks Department
11 set up a meeting solely for me.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And this was
13 because you had requested that?

14 TOM ANGOTTI: I didn't specifically
15 request that meeting. I expressed a concern. I had
16 shared with them what I know of the history of the
17 Seeley Street Bridge, and so an architect working for
18 DOT showed up with a sketchy design, but the design
19 was clear enough that there would be an ADA ramp
20 going from Seeley Street down to Prospect Avenue
21 right across the front of the park. That didn't look
22 good to me because one of the great aesthetic values
23 of the park is the view of green from the street, and
24 this would essentially be covered by the ramp and the
25 ramp would essentially go over the main entrance. So,

2 I said that and I said, you know, theoretically, of
3 course, I support the ADA ramps but you need to meet
4 with the community. Oh, yes, we'll meet with the
5 community. That meeting never happened. Although the
6 message has gotten through to Parks and we never had
7 that meeting. I'm really concerned. I have a long
8 history working with DOT and, by the way, I used to
9 be on the Board of Transportation Alternatives so I
10 love bicycling, but that's not the issue. The other
11 thing I want to add is that traffic on Seeley Street
12 has diminished qualitatively over the last two years
13 since DOT made it one way... two way... no, I'm sorry,
14 one way instead of two way. That reduced
15 qualitatively the traffic on Seeley Street. I
16 question not having a discussion about an alternative
17 which is to close the Seeley Street Bridge. Turn it
18 into a wonderful public area above Prospect Avenue.
19 We haven't had the opportunity to have that
20 discussion with DOT, and I'm concerned. I know DOT
21 very well over the years. I used to be on the Board
22 of Transportation Alternatives when before they
23 discovered bicycle lanes and they're very narrow and
24 so that's my concern.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Did you want to add
3 on in terms of the outreach you'd like to see.

4 CASSANDRA WARNEY: Yeah. So, in terms of
5 proactive engagement, it's simply transparency. So,
6 obviously DOT for a while has some ideas of what they
7 want to do with the bridge. Engage the community.
8 That's not just the Garden. That's the neighbors
9 surrounding that and that hasn't happened, and so
10 this has been an awkward ULURP process because we
11 know what their plans are, but they haven't actually
12 shared them so it's just having that transparency.
13 I'll say it's the same thing when it comes to the
14 joint letter, like we asked this in September. We
15 asked Parks if they could be like some updates if
16 they're going to do this, and the only updates and
17 understanding that a draft is underway is through
18 your office. And so it's this piece of like we're
19 just awkwardly knowing conversations are happening
20 and the main parties that are having those
21 conversations are in no way even letting us know that
22 they're happening, and so just emailing us, letting
23 us know, reflecting back with our community concerns
24 are, and then we're a reasonable group of people in
25

1 terms of like being able to go back and forth to see
2 what's possible and not what possible.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: My last comment is I
5 just want to say, Mr. Angotti, you are a legend and
6 you are one of the reasons why I got into government
7 and I love all your writings and your inspiration all
8 across the city. It seen through community gardens,
9 activism, and community-based planning so thank you
10 for your work and thank you for joining us today.

11 TOM ANGOTTI: Thank you. And thank you for
12 your leadership.

13 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Of course.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: I feel very honored
15 that I get to represent him.

16 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Awesome. This panel is
17 now excused.

18 Up next, we have Kai Lawrence, Angela
19 Pruitt, and Thomas Hitchen.

20 Yeah. Just a reminder, press the button
21 before you speak.

22 Kai, you can go first.

23 ANGELA PREWITT: Wonderful. I'm in support
24 of the acquisition of Prospect Farm. My name is
25 Angela Prewitt, and I live down the street from the

1 Garden and I've been a member for over 10 years. I'm
2 very concerned by the possibility that DOT will take
3 away space and sunlight by constructing a ramp on the
4 fringes of the garden. I'm a gardener and my passion
5 are native flowers that are both healing to people
6 and to insects and birds. We are asking to preserve
7 the fringes of our garden with an MOA between Parks
8 and DOT. Today, I'll speak about what is at stake on
9 the fringes of the Garden that we're asking to be
10 protected. Our pollinator gardens made of native
11 flowers that are vital to birds and insects are on
12 the edges of the garden and would be destroyed by a
13 cement ramp. The addition of a permanent ramp would
14 kill the light native plants need to thrive. Our
15 compost setup is on the fringe of the garden. Our
16 community takes pride in our compost facility and the
17 free compost we provide to any who ask and can carry
18 a bag of our organic compost away. Our compost feeds
19 street tree pits as well as neighboring gardens. I
20 spoke of light. Some raised vegetable beds are on the
21 fringe. The ramp will shrink this area, reducing our
22 area for growing vegetables. Because we are already a
23 small garden, reducing our garden space is
24 devastating. The proposed ramp cuts across the front
25

2 of the garden, casting light and blocking the
3 entrance. (TIMER CHIME) So, we're just asking that
4 you'll please work to preserve the fringes, the edges
5 of our garden. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

7 THOMAS HINCHEM: Good morning. My name is
8 Tom Hinchem, and I have been a member of Prospect
9 Farm for 15 years, including 10 years which I served
10 on the Board of Directors. Over that time, I've
11 witnessed growth in membership and community
12 engagement. I, too, fully support the acquisition of
13 Prospect Farm by Parks. Prospect Farm is a model
14 asset to the Windsor Terrace community and beyond.
15 Our compost collection, our public events, and the
16 beautification of our frontage along Prospect Avenue
17 and hence our neighborhood. Having our land acquired
18 by Parks is a positive step for our community to
19 ensure our garden is a permanent garden for Windsor
20 Terrace. Prospect Farm needs to be preserved in its
21 entirety. It would be unfortunate if any portion of
22 the garden would be lost to any kind of development
23 that would detract from or block the public's
24 enjoyment or access. I am also a resident of Seeley
25 Street. Two and a half years ago after a campaign on

1 the part of Seeley Street neighbors, the Department
2 of Transportation agreed to make Seeley Street carry
3 traffic in one direction only. As a result, Seeley
4 has once again become a quiet residential street.
5 Traffic has been reduced by well over 50 percent,
6 also reducing wear and tear on the bridge over
7 Prospect Avenue. I would like to suggest that the
8 proposed replacement of the bridge is no longer
9 necessary. All of us at Prospect Farm are extremely
10 grateful to Council Member Hanif and her office for
11 their support of Prospect Farm and of the process in
12 which we are now engaged.
13

14 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

15 Any questions for this panel?

16 This panel may be excused. Thank you.

17 If there are any remote public
18 participants who wish to testify and have not already
19 done so, please press the raise hand button now and,
20 if you are here with us in person, please see one of
21 the Sergeant-at-Arms to first fill out a speaker
22 card.

23 There are no other members of the public
24 who wish to testify regarding LU 1 for Prospect Farm
25

1
2 Acquisition, the public hearing is now closed and the
3 items is laid over.

4 I now open a public hearing for LUs 12,
5 13, 14, 15, and 16 for 395 Flatbush Avenue Extension,
6 an application by HPD in conjunction with Department
7 of Health and Mental Hygiene and DCAS seeking a
8 zoning map amendment to change an existing C6-4
9 zoning district to a C6-12 zoning district and zoning
10 text amendments to map a Mandatory Inclusionary
11 Housing area and amend the Special Downtown Brooklyn
12 District and an amendment to the Brooklyn Center
13 Urban Renewal Plan. Additionally, this project is
14 seeking deposition approval for City-owned property
15 and a combination site selection and acquisition of
16 real property interest in Council Member Hudson's
17 District in Downtown Brooklyn. These actions will
18 facilitate the development of a 72 mixed-use building
19 containing approximately 1,263 new units of housing
20 with approximately 253 to 279 of permanently
21 affordable MIH units.

22 Appearing today on this panel is Hallah
23 Saleh, Director of Predevelopment Planning and Urban
24 Design at HPD; Ian Klein, Senior Vice President and
25

2 Head of Development at Rabina and... who's the last
3 person?

4 DIRECTOR HOWARD: Hi. Sorry. I'm Anthony
5 Howard, the Director of Environmental Planning at
6 HPD.

7 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Those wishing to
8 testify remotely must register online by visiting the
9 Council website at council.nyc.gov/landuse.

10 Panelists, please ensure that your
11 microphone is on.

12 Counsel, would you please administer the
13 affirmation?

14 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would
15 you please raise your right hand and state your name
16 for the record?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KLEIN: Ian Klein.

18 DIRECTOR SALEH: Hallah Saleh.

19 DIRECTOR HOWARD: Anthony Howard.

20 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you affirm to
21 tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the
22 truth in the testimony before the Subcommittee and in
23 answer to all Council Member questions?

24 DIRECTOR SALEH: I do.

25 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KLEIN: I do.

1

DIRECTOR HOWARD: I do.

3

CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you, applicant

4

panelists.

5

For the viewing public, if you need an

6

accessible version of this presentation, please send

7

an email request to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

8

And now the applicant team may begin.

9

DIRECTOR SALEH: Good afternoon, Chair and

10

Subcommittee Members. Thank you for having us here

11

today to present on the 395 Flatbush Avenue

12

redevelopment. Next slide, please.

13

The applicant for this project is HPD

14

alongside DCAS and DOHMH who are collectively seeking

15

a series of land use actions to facilitate the

16

development of a new 72-story mixed-use building

17

providing approximately 1,263 mixed-income units,

18

approximately 141,280 square feet of non-residential

19

space, and a public plaza. The development partners

20

for this site are Rabina and Park Tower Group who

21

have an existing ground lease with the City to

22

operate a commercial building on City-owned site in

23

Downtown Brooklyn. Next slide.

24

The site is located in the heart of

25

Downtown Brooklyn, comprised of an entire block at

1 the intersection of Flatbush and Fulton Street. This
2 is a high opportunity and transit rich neighborhood
3 with several local resources in the surrounding area
4 as called out on this map. The site sits directly on
5 top of Dekalb Avenue's B, R, Q subway station and is
6 across the street from an Evans 2, 3, 4, 5 station.
7 In addition to the immediate train access off the
8 site, there are several bus lines and a Citi Bike
9 station in proximity to the development site. In
10 terms of zoning, the site is currently zoned as a C6-
11 4, an R10 equivalent zoning district and within the
12 Special Downtown Brooklyn District. Next slide.

14 Currently, the site is improved with an
15 existing seven-story commercial building from the
16 1970s with ground floor retail, office space used by
17 Verizon as a call center, and a parking garage. The
18 land is currently City-owned and under private
19 control through an executed ground lease, and the
20 current ground lease is set to expire in 2042 with an
21 option to extend for an additional 30 years. Given
22 the existing need for additional housing, the City
23 and the developers under the current lease have
24 partnered to restructure the ground lease and convert

2 this commercial building to provide over 1,200
3 apartments. Next slide.

4 At this time, I'll pass this presentation
5 over to Ian Klein to introduce the proposed project.

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KLEIN: Thanks.

7 Hello. So, the proposed project would introduce 1,263
8 mixed-income rental units, 325 of which approximately
9 will be permanently affordable. That'll be the single
10 largest delivery of affordable housing in a single
11 project in the Community Board within the past
12 decade. And 130 of those units will be permanently
13 affordable to very low-income households. The project
14 will also have a series of other community benefits
15 including over 10,000 square feet of streetscape and
16 public infrastructure improvements, 66,000 square
17 feet of new retail space including a percentage of
18 which earmarked for subsidized community-oriented
19 uses, and 75,000 square feet of City agency community
20 facility office and/or civic uses. The project is
21 targeting a series of sustainable construction
22 measures including Passive House principles, LEED,
23 WELL, and Fitwell certifications. It's set ambitious
24 M/WBE and local hiring goals and will be taking on
25 485X Zone B construction wages. Most importantly,

1 there's zero City subsidy required for the project,
2 allowing the project to move faster and any required
3 subsidy to be routed towards other needy projects.
4

5 Next slide, please.

6 The biggest constraint to construction on
7 this site is that the MTA tunnel runs under over 30
8 percent of the land on the southern edge of the site
9 and the existing building bears on the roof of the
10 subway tunnel structure. This means that the only
11 viable development plan for the site includes a
12 single large building in the northeast corner. In an
13 effort to do the most efficient construction
14 possible, reducing construction costs, and therefore
15 maximizing housing, we've come up with a development
16 plan that involves maintaining and adapting the
17 structure on the southern portion of the site that
18 bears on the tunnel and marrying that with a new
19 concrete tower located on the northeast portion of
20 the site. Next slide, please.

21 So, this series of diagrams illustrates
22 the development plan. You could see on the left the
23 existing building. The next image over the portion of
24 the building structural grid that we tend to adapt
25 for our new building. Next image over is the tower

1 located on the north side of the site, which has been
2 designed as an L-shape in the most efficient way
3 possible, corridors maximizing travel distance based
4 on life-safety requirements. And then finally on the
5 right, an articulated massing developed by our
6 architectural team led by a gold medal winner Deborah
7 Burke (phonetic) and her team which has rescaled the
8 tower into smaller size articulated chunks. Next
9 slide, please.
10

11 So, in all, the project will offer 163
12 dwelling units with 25 percent permanently affordable
13 and using zero City subsidy, 141,280 square feet of
14 non-residential space including both retail and
15 community facility spaces, varied streetscape
16 improvements including a significant public plaza on
17 the south side of the site, widened landscaped
18 sidewalks, and enhanced subway entrance and also a
19 series of sustainability principles in its
20 construction and its operation. Next slide, please.
21 Next slide.

22 So, here you can see a plan on the ground
23 floor, the plaza on the south end of the site which
24 was suggested by folks at City Planning and we
25 thought was a great idea we were happy to take on.

1
2 They've been involved as has CPC in commenting on the
3 design of the plaza. Along Flatbush Avenue, we're
4 widening the sidewalk from 11 feet to 18 feet by
5 taking over a current parking lane. That widened
6 sidewalk will now be the same width as the sidewalk
7 on the adjacent street to the south. We are improving
8 the subway entry while keeping the subway open during
9 the entire duration of construction. And then
10 activating the ground floor with new retail uses,
11 community-oriented retail on the ground floor and a
12 residential lobby located on the northwest corner of
13 the site. Next slide, please.

14 And you could see here the existing
15 subway entry is artificially lowered by a decorative
16 as the architects call it skirt that we could remove
17 from the building and fold into our new design
18 increasing the height above the subway entry from 17
19 feet to 23 feet as well as improvements to the
20 flooring, surrounding architecture, etc. Next slide,
21 please.

22 And I'll go back to Hallah for this.

23 DIRECTOR SALEH: Great. The project will
24 assume MIH Option One to provide deeper affordability
25 to account for approximately 325 permanently

1
2 affordable units. Under this option, the proposed
3 project would provide an average AMI of 60 percent,
4 which is approximately 87,480 dollars for a family of
5 three. There would be 130 units that would be set
6 aside for very low-income households earning 40
7 percent AMI or approximately 58,320 dollars for a
8 family of three, an additional 130 units available
9 for low-income households set at 60 percent AMI, and
10 65 units for moderate income households at an AMI at
11 100 percent which is 145,800 dollars. The proposed
12 building will also provide a mix of units ranging
13 from studios to three bedrooms with roughly 25
14 percent of the units being family-sized.

15 This now concludes our presentation, and
16 we can take any questions. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

18 Council Member Hudson. Do you have a
19 statement or a few questions?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: I do have
21 questions.

22 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Go for it.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you and good
24 afternoon. Thanks for your presentation.

1
2 This development is not utilizing any
3 City subsidy to increase affordability, and I
4 understand that this project started under the prior
5 Administration but what are the current
6 Administration's thoughts on increasing affordability
7 with this project?

8 DIRECTOR SALEH: Thank you. This project
9 is still very much moving forward as anticipated.
10 There's a lot of unique considerations to the site
11 specifically. This is a unique site that's unlike
12 other HPD projects due to the fact that it is under
13 private control and it has an existing office
14 building under an existing long-term lease. There are
15 about 46 years left on that lease, and the project
16 will also be converting the existing office building
17 to residential use through an adaptive reuse
18 strategy.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Are there any
20 barriers to providing additional City subsidies?

21 DIRECTOR SALEH: So, this actually will
22 be, as Ian mentioned, providing more affordable units
23 in the Community Board than we've seen in the last 10
24 years, The project, as noted, is not using any City
25 subsidy and will be privately financed, therefore

1 delivering housing units much faster through our HPD
2 pipeline and funding availability. It would also
3 provide HPD to have additional capacity to deliver
4 financing for more affordable units throughout the
5 neighborhood in the borough and the city. And then if
6 we were to look at this particular site to be 100
7 percent affordable, the development constraints on
8 this site really are what is driving some of the
9 tower construction itself, the MTA easement, that, as
10 Ian mentioned in our presentation, that pushes the
11 development to be in the northwest corner and have a
12 tower structure is the most expensive construction
13 type. So, if we were to look at this as 100 percent
14 affordable, it would likely significantly reduce the
15 size of the project in order to be more cost-
16 efficient and we would likely end up in a very
17 similar number of affordable units that are being
18 proposed in this project.

19
20 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you for
21 that.

22 And then can you just share the
23 difference in timeline? This project or you said if
24 it was going through the typical HPD timeline, how
25 much time are we saving basically?

1
2 DIRECTOR SALEH: Sure. So, you know, if we
3 were to think through this since this will be
4 privately financed and skipping through the HPD
5 pipeline, once we finish ULURP, which will hopefully
6 be in March, this project would then need to go and
7 complete its PDC approvals since it is retaining
8 public ownership. Following that, you know, you're
9 looking at construction starting by earlier than
10 2032. If this were to go through our typical HPD
11 pipeline, it could take significantly longer. I think
12 the other thing I want to note on that is the ground
13 lease really makes development here more challenging.
14 Under the current ground lease, it's set to expire in
15 2042 with an additional extension to 2072 so the
16 property, if we were to want it and develop through
17 HPD solely, we would have to wait those 47 years in
18 order for that to be developed.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: And just to be
20 clear, you're saying that the expedited timeline
21 would start construction in six years from now.

22 DIRECTOR SALEH: That is anticipated, yes.
23 Anything you want to add to that, your construction
24 timeline?

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KLEIN: That's the
3 outside date. So, when, you know, upon completion of
4 ULURP, we will start our design work. The office
5 leases are all set to expire in, the existing leases,
6 in various durations over the next few years and then
7 subject to market conditions we'd like to start as
8 soon as possible.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Okay. And just to
10 be clear, you said there would be a significant
11 increase in the timeline if it was going through HPD
12 so construction would start more than six years from
13 now presumably?

14 DIRECTOR SALEH: Correct. And we would
15 likely have to wait for the ground lease to expire.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you. The
17 Community Board, Borough President, and other
18 constituents in my District have asked about Fort
19 Greene Park, not so much in relation to this project
20 but to the large amount of development that has
21 occurred in Downtown Brooklyn over the last 20 years.
22 Fort Greene Park has seen a large increase in use
23 during this time, placing a strain on park
24 maintenance. Since the City is not providing any
25

1 subsidies for this project, why is the City not
2 providing additional funding for Fort Greene Park?
3

4 DIRECTOR SALEH: So, one thing I just want
5 to note is that in our environmental review, we did
6 an EIS here, there were no significant adverse
7 impacts that were identified related to shadows or
8 open space so that is a one just kind of
9 clarification we want to make there. And in terms of
10 the interest in the formation of a PID, I think
11 that's something, you know, we as a City would be
12 willing to look into with our partners at Parks and
13 SBS. You know, there is a lot to consider there
14 regarding BID laws and, you know, what process would
15 need to go forward in order for that to be
16 established, but it is something, you know, we
17 acknowledge the need for future populations that
18 increase the demand on the 21 parks that are in the
19 surrounding areas. I don't know if there's anything
20 else you want to add to that, Anthony.

21 DIRECTOR HOWARD: Not specifically, but if
22 you have any questions on the review that was done, I
23 could answer those.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: The environmental
25 review? No, I don't think it's really an issue of the

1 shadows or direct impact. I think it's more so the
2 increase in population and Fort Greene Park being the
3 amazing destination that it is and therefore more
4 people using it and the park not getting increased
5 funding in order to maintain greater frequency,
6 resodding, things of that nature that have to happen
7 more frequently than, you know, currently or without
8 as many residents.
9

10 So, just based on your last comment, is
11 it safe to say that HPD has worked with Parks, the
12 Fort Greene Park Conservancy, or the mayoral
13 administration to identify funding mechanisms to
14 address the concerns raised about the park? Are those
15 conversations that you all are having?

16 DIRECTOR SALEH: We're having those
17 conversations. We've now looped in Parks, SBS. The
18 development team has also had their separate
19 conversations with Fort Greene Park Conservancy, and
20 that's, you know, currently underway, but I think the
21 biggest thing I just want to note here is the, you
22 know, the City is looking into what a PID could look
23 like, but there's still a lot of unknowns and a lot
24 of research that needs to be done.
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Right. And that
3 wouldn't necessarily be attached to this ULURP. It
4 would be hopefully a concurrent process, but I think
5 as long as there's an openness and willingness to
6 exploring that as a possibility, everybody would
7 obviously benefit from greater funding into Fort
8 Greene Park, and so that's simply what we're asking
9 for. And I know that's not your specific area of
10 expertise, but I want to make sure that HPD is aware
11 of the concerns as it relates to this project and
12 that your voices can help make a difference in terms
13 of conversations with the Administration.

14 DIRECTOR SALEH: Understood. Thank you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you. And
16 then my last questions. Have any of the existing
17 commercial tenants expressed interest in returning to
18 the new development?

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KLEIN: I do not
20 believe so, but we are continuing to engage with our...

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Sorry. Can you
22 just lead into the microphone a little bit?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KLEIN: I'm sorry.
24 We have not had that explicit request from any of the
25 existing tenants, no.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Okay. And are
3 there any new commercial tenants that have expressed
4 interest in the new retail spaces?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KLEIN: We haven't
6 yet started that process to identify those tenants
7 yet.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Okay.

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KLEIN: Other than
10 to engage with local stakeholders on the designated
11 subsidized community retail box.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: And you do have
13 interest that's been expressed there?

14 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KLEIN: We've had
15 different suggestions on what might be there, and
16 we're continuing to engage with the community to
17 figure out the optimal use.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Okay. Great. Thank
19 you.

20 Thanks, Chair.

21 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Of course.

22 I have a few questions. Is this the first
23 R12 equivalent district proposed in Brooklyn?

24 DIRECTOR SALEH: Yes. And this is one of
25 the first projects that came out of City of Yes so

1 this is one of the first ones that'll be utilizing
2 the R12.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Please explain the
5 rationale for increasing the maximum residential FAR
6 from the 18 permitted to R12 districts to 19 FAR
7 under the proposed text amendment to the Downtown
8 Special District regulations.

9 DIRECTOR SALEH: Sure. I'm happy to. So,
10 the rationale for our density here is largely due to
11 the amount of, it's a huge block site, it's an entire
12 block. It sits directly on multiple transit
13 resources. It also is really revitalizing or in line
14 with the goals of the Special District. The increase
15 in FAR here because it is in Downtown Brooklyn will
16 also respond to us having more residential FAR as
17 well as commercial and retail on the ground floor.
18 But really the full block condition of the
19 development site really will be able to deliver, you
20 know, the needed housing opportunities within the
21 neighborhood, but the borough and city as a whole.
22 And as I noted earlier, this large lot size will kind
23 of allow for that increased floor area beyond what
24 was formally capped and as a direct response to the
25 City of Yes for Housing Opportunity goals. They'll be

2 a significant amount of retail, commercial office
3 space, and our community facility that also responds
4 to the location of Brooklyn Central Business
5 District. So, we really truly feel like it's in
6 context with the surrounding area.

7 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Cool. And the massing
8 that you chose, and you mentioned it's because of
9 being on top of a subway. Have you thought about
10 other massing opportunity or is that the only one you
11 can really do because of the situation?

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KLEIN: Sure. We did
13 a comprehensive study of massing options, height and
14 massing and also efficiency of the floor plate which
15 goes to construction impact on the tunnel, etc., and
16 this was seen to be by far the most viable option for
17 the site from all of those considerations.

18 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Cool. And this is for
19 HPD. Have you considered a pilot structure more
20 forgiving than 485X and that could facilitate more
21 affordable units than the 20 to 25 percent? For
22 example, if there's longer exemption period, maybe
23 that would allow for more affordability.

24 DIRECTOR SALEH: Yeah. So, right now we're
25 very much in this deal mirroring the 485X deal. I

1 think it's something that we can definitely continue
2 to look into. The exact terms of the deal will be
3 finalized post ULURP and pre-closing so it is
4 something we could continue to look into.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Great. Thank you.

7 I now would like to recognize any other
8 Colleagues have any questions or comments.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: I do want to
10 actually just make one very quick comment, which is
11 that I think it's commendable and we should make note
12 of the fact that 25 percent of the affordable units
13 will be two- to three-bedroom family-sized units,
14 which is something that, you know, this Council has
15 been advocating for, and so I just want to commend
16 the team for including two- to three-bedroom units as
17 part of the bedroom mix. Thanks.

18 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Good catch and thank
19 you for mentioning that. And I also support Council
20 Member Hudson for investment in Fort Greene Park as
21 well.

22 Without any other questions or comments,
23 the applicant patent is now excused. Thank you.

24 DIRECTOR SALEH: Thank you.

25 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KLEIN: Thank you.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Counsel, are there any
3 members of the public who wish to testify on this
4 item?

5 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: All right. I might
7 butcher these names because I can't read that
8 handwriting, so I'm sorry in advance. Rosamond
9 Fletcher, Shashank Shamshabad, Kai Lawrence, and
10 Randolph Peers.

11 As a reminder, if I or other Council
12 Members have questions, witnesses are asked to remain
13 online or stay seated here at the microphone after
14 their testimony until they are excused.

15 For those participating online, once you
16 or your group have been excused following any
17 questions, participants may continue to view the
18 livestream broadcast of this hearing on the Council
19 website.

20 Members of the public will be given two
21 minutes to speak. Please do not begin until the
22 Sergeant-at-Arms has started the clock.

23 We will now hear from this first panel.

24 ROSAMOND FLETCHER: Thank you, Chair Marte
25 and this Committee, for today's hearing. My name is

1 Rosamond Fletcher, and I'm Executive Director of the
2 Fort Greene Park Conservancy. We've partnered closely
3 with New York City Parks as the primary steward of
4 Fort Greene Park for 25 years. Based on concerns we
5 voiced about the impact of 395 Flatbush on Fort
6 Greene Park, a landmark park, CB2 issued a condition
7 that the developers make a "meaningful financial
8 contribution" to the Fort Greene Park Conservancy to
9 support ongoing maintenance and operations of the
10 park. The Borough President affirmed this, asking the
11 developers to "adequately invest in Fort Greene Parks
12 operations and maintenance given the anticipated
13 increase in use." Our District 35 Council Member
14 Crystal Hudson has asked the developers to provide a
15 substantial annual contribution to us for the park
16 via a legally binding agreement. I'm here today to
17 urge this Committee and the full Council to advance
18 CB2's, the Borough President's, and Council Member
19 Hudson's conditions with respect to the park. Fort
20 Greene Park is well-used. The data shows that park
21 use per acre is actually double that of Prospect Park
22 and nearly the same as Central Park, the most visited
23 park in the country. This results in significant and
24 costly wear and tear on the park's landscape, barren
25

1 and compacted soil, erosion of the glacially formed
2 hill, and exposed tree roots that threaten the park's
3 canopy. The heavy use of Fort Greene Park stems from
4 the 2004 rezoning of Downtown Brooklyn, which
5 resulted in nearly 30,000 units of housing to date
6 when only 979 units were anticipated. This volume of
7 housing was offset by only one new one-acre park. We
8 now face a severe deficiency of open space in the
9 area, just 24 percent of the guideline so we need to
10 support our existing parks. We're requesting 250,000
11 a year from this project for the park's maintenance
12 and operations. (TIMER CHIME) This is based on the
13 cost to mitigate the 2,500 residents of the project
14 based on the National Parks Association Benchmark. We
15 respectfully request that you require this in your
16 vote on 395 Flatbush. A course correction is
17 necessary. Thank you. I also just want to add that
18 Miss Sharpton, Resident Association President of
19 Whitman Houses, was going to testify today but she is
20 in the ER so she sends her regrets and she will
21 provide written testimony. Thank you.

22
23 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

24 KAI LAWRENCE: Good afternoon. My name is
25 Kai Lawrence. I'm the Environmental Programs Manager

1 at the Fort Greene Park Conservancy. I run our Green
2 Team Program, which is an environmental education and
3 job pathways program for our local teams. The
4 majority of said teams are NYCHA residents, and they
5 will be negatively impacted by this project along
6 with their guardian and park stewardship efforts
7 would be negatively impacted. One of our Green Team
8 members has offered their quotes saying, the more
9 people who use the park, the more foot traffic there
10 is. Each garden we've built has been to mitigate
11 erosion, erosion that affects environmental justice
12 areas more heavily and which increased foot traffic
13 will only exacerbate. Another member shared
14 environmental justice is the equal protection and
15 equitable distribution of environmental benefits,
16 ensuring that nobody is disproportionately affected
17 by environmental hazards. Fork Greene Park is
18 adjacent to an environmental justice area, and the
19 park gives these residents and other communities a
20 green space. As someone who has guided these teams, I
21 just want to point out firsthand how important their
22 testimony is and what they're truly trying to say.
23 This development risks compounding environmental
24 injustices that these communities already face. It
25

1
2 threatens access, health, and equity. The increase in
3 park usage from new residents is expected and we
4 welcome all of those folks, but the reality is the
5 park is already under strain. The added pressure will
6 only accelerate wear on the land, compact the soil,
7 and degrade the very greenery that makes the park a
8 refugee. Our team doesn't just talk about these
9 issues. We spend hours actually going out, addressing
10 them, controlling erosion, receding lawns, etc. with
11 our teams (TIMER CHIME) and we just urge you to
12 require annual funding for this maintenance and
13 operations project.

14 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

15 KAI LAWRENCE: Thank you.

16 SHASHANK SHAMSHABAD: Good afternoon. My
17 name is Shashank Shamshabad from the New York
18 Building Congress. The New York Building Congress
19 proudly represents over 500 organizations and 250,000
20 skilled professionals and trades people who design,
21 build, and maintain the infrastructure of New York
22 and beyond. We strongly support transformative
23 redevelopment of 395 Flatbush Avenue. As the City
24 deals with a continuing housing crisis, this bold,
25 smart, and timely investment in Brooklyn's future

1 will transform the neighborhood into a vibrant hub of
2 housing, retail, and public space. This project
3 includes over 1,200 new rental apartments with up to
4 30 percent permanently affordable, and this is a type
5 of housing and housing production the city needs now
6 more than ever. Beyond housing, this project enhances
7 community benefits with 66,000 square feet of retail,
8 75,000 square feet of commercial space, and a
9 completely reimagined public realm that includes
10 10,000 square feet of infrastructure and streetscape
11 upgrades and 4,750 square feet landscape public plaza
12 and expanded improved entrances to DeKalb Avenue
13 subway station. These high-impact, high-visibility
14 upgrades will make a real difference for residents,
15 commuters, and the community altogether. With equity,
16 sustainability, and inclusivity in mind, this
17 project's 25 percent M/WBE participation goal with
18 full compliance with higher NYC labor standards and
19 targeted all electric adaptive reuse design will be
20 beneficial to this project. Delivered through a 485X
21 zone B program, this project sets a clear standard
22 for how large complex developments can be delivered
23 effectively, efficiently, and equitably. The
24 redevelopment is exactly what we mean when we talk
25

2 about building a better and more affordable New York
3 for everyone. It brings new housing, economic
4 activity, upgraded transit, and improved public realm
5 in one of the most fastest growing and transit rich
6 neighborhoods across the city. The Building Congress
7 urges swift approval and full support for this
8 forward-looking future ready project. Let's get it
9 done. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Mr. Peers.

11 RANDY PEERS: I'm Randy Peers, the
12 President and CEO of the Brooklyn Chamber of
13 Commerce, the leading voice for the Brooklyn business
14 community and advocate for economic development. You
15 have my written testimony. I'm not going to read what
16 you already have, but in terms of projects that are
17 conducted on public land, no project is perfect but
18 this comes awfully close, right. If we think about
19 the new residential units, if we think about the
20 permanent affordability, if we think about the income
21 levels, the very low income levels on the
22 affordability side, if we think about the family
23 units that are going to be included, if we think
24 about no subsidies, if we think about the labor being
25 union wage standards, if we think about expanded

1 commercial office and community facilities,
2 additional retail, public realm improvements. We
3 hardly ever see significant public realm improvements
4 in projects like this all on top of transit-oriented
5 development which is what we all say we want because
6 that's where you want to mask the density. In a
7 growing central business district that is probably
8 the poster child for mixed-use commercial business
9 districts, right, central business district, all
10 built by local developers who are not strangers to
11 Brooklyn. Park Tower and Rabina are local. They know
12 Brooklyn. They understand Brooklyn. They've done
13 other projects in Brooklyn. So, from our perspective,
14 this is a quality project, and we support it. To get
15 to your question you asked the applicants about
16 suggestions for some of the retail box community use
17 space, we did offer, the Chamber did offer a
18 suggestion to house the Brooklyn Tourism Center
19 there. It's at a perfect crossroads for tourism for
20 the borough. Brooklyn is the second most visited
21 borough of all the boroughs. 15 million visitors make
22 it to Brooklyn. We want to make sure they get out of
23 just coming to Dumbo (TIMER CHIME) and they get to
24 other neighborhoods. So, we have a plan and a
25

1 suggestion that it could house the Brooklyn Tourism
2 Center. Brooklyn Chamber manages tourism for the
3 borough. Visitbrooklyn.nyc is our platform, and we're
4 in discussions with them about that option. So, thank
5 you.
6

7 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Sorry, Chair. Just
8 to clarify, 50 or 15 million visitors?

9 RANDY PEERS: 15 million out of the 63
10 million that come to New York City...

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you.

12 RANDY PEERS: 15 million make it to
13 Brooklyn.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HUDSON: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Mostly because they
16 want to see the best University at Long Island
17 University, Brooklyn, my alma mater so I had to say
18 that.

19 Are there any questions from my
20 Colleagues?

21 No? This panel may be excused.

22 For the next panel, we have Nadja
23 Barlera, Robert Tiburzi, Tierra Williams, and Sara
24 Qureshi.

1
2 We'll start left to right. You may begin.
3 Make sure to press the button.

4 NADJA BARLERA: Hi. Thank you so much for
5 hearing us today. My name is Nadja. I live in
6 Downtown Brooklyn, about a 10-minute walk from where
7 this project will be, and I'm also a Local 79 member.
8 I just wanted to share why I'm excited about this
9 project. If you've ever been on that block, you know,
10 the building there is not the most inviting. It's
11 kind of black glass, a little bit ominous, and it's
12 always been surprising to me because that's a really
13 busy area, and so I'm actually really excited to have
14 dense mixed-income housing there. I'm really excited
15 to have new public plaza and open space. I think that
16 will be great for an area that's already busy, wider
17 sidewalks, as people mentioned affordable housing.
18 You know, people have said there's already a lot of
19 development in Downtown Brooklyn, that's true, but we
20 all know there's still a lot of unhoused neighbors
21 and housing insecure folks and I'm scared about
22 rising rents and getting pushed out so I'm really
23 excited about that and not to mention union jobs
24 means that people can actually afford to stay in
25 Brooklyn. There's a lot of development, but when that

1 development is paying poverty wages, then that
2 increases the need for affordable housing. This will
3 actually reduce the need for that group of workers.
4 Thank you so much for hearing my testimony.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

7 ROBERT TIBURZI: Hello, my name is Robert
8 Tiburzi. I'm a representative of LiUNA Local 79, and
9 I live in Brooklyn. Our union represents 10,000
10 construction workers living and working throughout
11 New York City. I want to thank our members who came
12 out today to show their support for the 395 Flatbush
13 project and everyone else here today. This
14 redevelopment is a huge win for working-class New
15 Yorkers. It is a historic project that will create
16 needed affordable housing and fair paying jobs
17 without requiring additional subsidy. Since this
18 project is mirroring the 485X zone B tax incentive,
19 it will help fulfill our city's vision of creating
20 affordable neighborhoods and upholding strong labor
21 standards for New Yorkers. Union jobs means good
22 careers for local residents who build and maintain
23 our buildings. This project also includes other
24 community benefits such as space for the Department
25 of Health and Mental Hygiene, all electric design,

1 and new public plaza. 395 Flatbush Ave. is a model
2 for responsible innovative development in New York
3 City, creating over 1,000 of needed housing and union
4 jobs for Brooklyn workers to support their families.
5 I ask everyone here today to join us in supporting
6 this project. Thank you.
7

8 TIERRA WILLIAMS: Good morning and thank
9 you for having us today. My name is Tierra Williams.
10 I'm not only a long-term member of Flatbush,
11 Brooklyn, I'm a Local 79 organizer and most
12 importantly, I'm a mother of two. I'm extremely
13 excited for this project, specifically because it
14 gives you three-bedroom apartments, which I make a
15 really good wage and it's not that I can't afford to
16 live anywhere, I cannot find a three-bedroom
17 apartment anywhere. Thank you for pointing that out,
18 Crystal. 395 Flatbush Avenue is a great location for
19 more affordable housing for Brooklyn families and the
20 surrounding neighborhoods. I am very familiar with
21 this site because I have passed this intersection
22 often while getting off of DeKalb Avenue station to
23 take my daughter to Fort Greene Park or Paramount
24 Theater. This area needs revitalization. My sister
25 went to LIU and did not always feel safe walking at

1 night. It also doesn't feel safe during the day.
2
3 Improved streetscaping and new public plaza will be a
4 great addition. This project also addresses our
5 city's affordability crisis. It will create family-
6 sustaining careers for construction laborers like me
7 that pay a fair wage, have good health insurance, and
8 contribute to retirement savings. Other nearby
9 housing projects like 9 DeKalb Avenue and 100
10 Flatbush Avenue have been unaffordable and exploited
11 construction laborers with poverty wages. This
12 project's flipped the script. I ask the Subcommittee
13 to approve 395 Flatbush Avenue so our union can build
14 essential housing for our city. Thank you.

15 SARA QURESHI: Good afternoon, Chair Marte
16 and Council Members. My name is Sara Qureshi. I'm
17 here today representing SEIU 32BJ. 32BJ is the
18 largest union of property service workers in the
19 country, representing over 175,000 members across 13
20 states including tens of thousands of commercial and
21 property service workers, security offers, and
22 residential building staff in New York City. We
23 support responsible developers who invest in the
24 communities where they build, and I am happy to
25 report that the developers of the proposed projects,

1 Rabina and Park Tower Group, have made a credible
2 commitment to creating good jobs for the workers who
3 will permanently staff the buildings. Good jobs like
4 these mean prevailing wages, meaningful benefits, and
5 a pathway to the middle class for local community
6 members who tend to fill such positions. We estimate
7 that these two projects will create roughly 25
8 permanent building service jobs and, moreover, we
9 need more housing to be built in every neighborhood
10 of New York City to ensure that working families are
11 not displaced by dwindling supply and skyrocketing
12 rent. The proposed developments will include over
13 1,200 residential units, hundreds of which will be
14 permanently income restricted for low to middle
15 income Residents. As the cost of living rises and
16 working New Yorkers struggle to stay in their homes,
17 it is more important now than ever to create both
18 affordable housing and good jobs which uphold the
19 industry standard in the city. For all of these
20 reasons, 32BJ is in strong support of the 395
21 Flatbush Ave. Extension rezoning. Thank you for your
22 time.

24 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Any questions from my
25 Colleagues?

1
2 This panel may be excused. Thank you so
3 much.

4 Up next, we have Sam Nettenberg and
5 Christopher Leon Johnson.

6 Is there anyone else here in person that
7 would like to speak on this land use application?
8 Anyone else? We're good? Okay.

9 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah. Hello. My
10 name is Christopher Leon Johnson. I support this land
11 use application, but I want to ask the developer, I
12 think you should ask the developer what's the
13 security plan for the retail designation, the
14 commercial designation because I have a big feeling
15 that the McDonald's that's already there right now
16 for 395 Flatbush Avenue extension is going to apply
17 to stay there when (INAUDIBLE) be developed. They're
18 a billion-dollar corporation. I don't know what's the
19 contract right now, if they're able to move back
20 inside that same spot or the retail spot if they was
21 to get forced evicted because of the construction but
22 I'm calling the developer to reject McDonald's or any
23 retail establishment that is supporting thuggery and
24 blatant supporting like vagrants congregating in the
25 retail location, like what happened to McDonald's at

1
2 395 Flatbush Avenue extension. I think Hudson, you
3 see all the videos that come to your office when it
4 comes to that location, all the thugs and all the
5 homeless people congregating in that retail spot. I
6 hope that you as a Member go and have a conversation
7 to that developer and do whatever you can as a Member
8 to... I don't know how the City Council going to be to
9 reject McDonald's to ever move back into that spot
10 because if they do, it does no justice to the people
11 that's living upstairs in that building when it get
12 redeveloped and to the community around there because
13 McDonald's right now is like a thug attraction and a
14 homeless attraction and, like I said, I support this
15 project, but I don't feel comfortable with a
16 McDonald's being put back in that location. Any
17 retail spot that supports thuggery like McDonald's
18 and (TIMER CHIME) Burger King and Popeye's, I don't
19 want it, but I support the project, but I mean
20 McDonald's, nah. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

22 Any questions, comments?

23 Council Member.

24

25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: I had a
3 question, but I think it's more for HPD, the M/WBE
4 goals for this project.

5 DIRECTOR SALEH: Yeah. The M/WBE goals
6 here will be 25 percent or more in line with 485X.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: Okay. And
8 is that both construction and professional services?

9 DIRECTOR SALEH: Yes.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you, HPD.

12 We have a few folks online. Emily Anadu,
13 Mohammad El-Haj Ahmad, Annie Lee, and Adam Ganser.

14 We will start out with Emily first.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

16 EMILY ANADU: Thank you to Chair Marte and
17 the Committee for holding today's hearing. My name is
18 Emily Anadu. I'm a 20-plus-year resident of Fort
19 Greene and the founder of The Lay Out, a Brooklyn-
20 based community platform that celebrates black joy,
21 creativity, and culture. For several years, we've
22 partnered closely with Fort Greene Park and its
23 Conservancy to host programs and gatherings and bring
24 neighbors together in ways that honor the park's
25 history and its role as a shared civic space. That

1 work has even been recognized by the New York Times,
2 Time magazine, and other national media. We all
3 understand that New York City needs more housing. At
4 the same time, advancing housing goals cannot come at
5 the expense of degrading the public infrastructure
6 that sustains neighborhood health. Every new building
7 in this area markets proximity to Fort Greene Park as
8 a selling point. Developers clearly understand the
9 park's value when it drives demand and revenue. In
10 almost every case, that value is extracted without
11 meaningful investment in preserving the resource
12 itself. And while the representative from HPD talks
13 about the 21 parks that people could go to, I have
14 never seen any of these developers market Commodore
15 Barry Park or most of the other 21. I have personally
16 spent hundreds of hours working alongside the Parks
17 team helping to clean and care for the space and, as
18 a very small organization, The Lay Out spends
19 thousands of dollars on cleaning and restoration when
20 we host events in the park because we refuse to pass
21 the burden on to the very space that gives our
22 community a place for joy and connection. If we
23 recognize that responsibility at our scale, it is
24 reasonable to expect the same from large profit-

1
2 driven developments. Adding thousands of new
3 residents and their dogs without corresponding
4 investment in park maintenance and operations is not
5 sustainable, requiring a meaningful annual
6 contribution as responsible, data-driven, and
7 necessary I strongly urge the Council to uphold the
8 conditions put forth and require dedicated
9 maintenance and operations funding for Fort Greene
10 Park as part of your vote. As side notes, I encourage
11 the Council to push on the questions they're asking.
12 The gentleman from the developer saying that he has
13 not heard of any interest from existing commercial
14 tenants is different from whether or not the existing
15 commercial tenants were even asked about their desire
16 to stay. It is also important to remember that while
17 we herald the affordability of this project, 50
18 percent of the residents of Fort Greene live in
19 Ingersoll...

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you for your
21 testimony. Time is expired.

22 EMILY ANADU: With an app... Okay.

23 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Up next, we'll have
24 Mohammad.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

1
2 MOHAMMAD EL-HAJ AHMAD: Thank you to the
3 City Council for holding this hearing. My name is
4 Mohammad El-Haj Ahmad, and I'm here representing Fort
5 Greene Tennis Association. I've been on the Board for
6 10 years. I wanted to echo everything Emily has said.
7 Fort Greene Park is very important to us. It serves
8 as a community space for Fort Greene Tennis
9 Association and other organizations. We hold events
10 and open a space up for thousands and thousands of
11 community members. We work with other organizations
12 and non-profits, The Lay Out being one of them.
13 Another non-profit called Kings County Tennis League
14 offers free tennis and education to the kids that
15 live in and around NYCHA, and we use Fort Greene Park
16 for that space. We understand that New York City
17 urgently needs more housing, especially deep
18 affordable housing but, at the same time, the City
19 needs to protect the parks and the green spaces. I'm
20 here today to ask the Council to require dedicated
21 maintenance and operations funding for Fort Greene
22 Park in your vote on 395 Flatbush. Your action on
23 this is necessary to ensure that we do not further
24 degrade critical park infrastructure as the Council
25 advances the City housing goals. Thank you.

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CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

Up next, we have Annie and then following
will be Adam.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

ANNIE LEE: Thank you to Chair Marte and
this Committee for today's hearing. My name is Annie
Lee, and I'm speaking on behalf of Fort Greene Park
Users and Pet Society, also known as PUPS. PUPS was
founded in 1998 and is a community of 1,500-plus dog
owners who support both off-leash hours and the long-
term health of Fort Greene Park. As daily users of
Fort Greene Park, we value the park as essential
green infrastructure and a rare refuge for dogs and
people alike in a dense rapidly developing
neighborhood. Our members include young families,
older adults, and longtime residents, many of whom
live in nearby NYCHA housing. For many of us, the
park is not just a recreational space. It's the core
of our daily routine and a pillar of neighborhood
life. The 395 Flatbush extension project raises
serious concerns for us. As the population of nearby
residents continues to grow, so does the number of
dogs. Yet, there has been no corresponding investment
in open space. The area already has an open space

1 ratio of just 24 percent of the City's guideline,
2 highlighting how heavily Fort Greene Park is relied
3 upon. The increase in residents will bring an
4 increase in dogs, further crowding an already
5 resource-strained park. With limited lawn space for
6 off-leash hours, additional canine use will
7 significantly impact turf conditions and constrain
8 early morning off-leash capacity. Without increased
9 maintenance and operational support, Fort Greene Park
10 will inevitably deteriorate, affecting all who depend
11 on it. Fort Greene has no public dog runs and Fort
12 Greene Park along with Commodore Barry Park provides
13 the only off-leash access to local dog owners.
14 Maintaining Fort Greene Park is not optional but
15 essential. We support the Fort Green Park
16 Conservancy's request for annual funding from this
17 project for the park's maintenance and operations,
18 and we respectfully ask the Council to require this
19 in your vote for 395 Flatbush. Thank you for your
20 time.
21

22 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

23 Adam, you may begin. Adam, are you on?

24 Please promote Adam if he hasn't been promoted. Adam,
25

1 you have to accept the promotion to be a panelist to
2 speak.
3

4 And just as a reminder as we wait for
5 Adam to speak, you can submit written testimony,
6 especially if you weren't able to say everything that
7 you wanted to say. You can do that online.

8 For the next panel, we're going to have
9 Spencer Heckwolf, Erik Nilsen, Annelise Raymond Alam,
10 and Christine Paglialunga.

11 We'll start out with Spencer.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

13 SPENCER HECKWOLF: Hi. I'll make this
14 short. The student development is right behind me so
15 it's literally right in my backyard, and I fully
16 support building this, getting this off the ground as
17 soon as possible. I think it'd be a fantastic
18 addition to the neighborhood. That current building,
19 I don't think anyone thinks it's aesthetically
20 pleasing, and it'll just add to the neighborhood's,
21 the eyes on the street, the neighborhood's vitality.
22 And I am a local resident and I fully support. Thank
23 you.

24 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.
25

1
2 Up next, we'll have Erik and then
3 Annelise.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

5 Hi. Thank you, Members of City Council,
6 for letting us speak to this project today. My name
7 is Erik Nilsen. I'm a New York City native New
8 Yorker, current Brooklyn resident, and I want to say
9 I fully support this project. Throughout my entire
10 life, New York City has been in a perpetual housing
11 crisis because we don't build enough housing. This is
12 opportunity to get over 1,200 units, 25 percent of
13 which are fully affordable in a transit-rich area and
14 we're doing this without displacing any current
15 existing residential tenants. This seems like a big
16 win for everyone involved and also without City
17 subsidies. So, please, I implore you to support the
18 project as is.

19 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you, Erik.

20 Up next, we have Annelise and then
21 Christine.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

23 ANNELISE RAYMOND ALAM: I'm Annelise
24 Raymond Alam. My law firm, Carter Ledyard and
25 Milburn, represents the Fort Greene Park Conservancy

1 with regard to the 395 Flatbush Avenue project. The
2 Conservancy is generally supportive of the project
3 and its housing goals. However, the project will
4 introduce several thousand new residents into a
5 community with one of the lowest open space ratios in
6 New York City. It is our view that the project will
7 have a significant adverse impact on open space under
8 CEQR Technical Manual guidelines. The DEIS concludes
9 that the project will materially worsen the already
10 deficient open space ratio by reducing it to 0.6
11 acres per thousand residents when the guideline is
12 2.5. The DEIS properly calls this result a
13 significant adverse quantitative impact and then
14 erroneously concludes that the creation of a very
15 small amount of on-site open space will account for
16 this impact. We know you are not charged with
17 evaluating the interpretations and ultimate
18 conclusions of the DEIS. Instead, we want you to look
19 at the team's calculations and the indisputable fact
20 that the project creates a significant adverse
21 quantitative impact on Fort Greene Park. We ask the
22 Council to address the Conservancy's request for
23 mitigation. The most practical and effective
24 mitigation measure representing the consensus of the
25

1
2 Conservancy, Community Board 2, the Borough
3 President, and the Council Member is to require
4 annual contributions for the maintenance and
5 operations of the park and the formation of a park
6 fund to ensure that the little parkland that exists
7 in the area is optimally utilized and maintained. The
8 Council should also charge its staff to work with the
9 Conservancy on ways to advance the structure for this
10 fund, such as the South Levee Improvement District
11 model. The mitigation we are proposing is not novel.
12 In the Hudson Yards rezoning, the City created a
13 business improvement district with the specific
14 purpose of maintaining the parks there. The Community
15 Board and Borough President have called on the City
16 Council to create a park maintenance and operations
17 fund for this community..

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you for your
19 testimony. Time has expired.

20 ANNELOSE RAYMOND ALAM: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Up next, we'll have
22 Christine.

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

24 CHRISTINE PAGLIALUNGA: Good afternoon,
25 Council Members. My name is Christine Paglialunga.

1 I'm the Chief Operating Officer with the Downtown
2 Brooklyn Partnership. The Partnership strongly
3 supports the proposed redevelopment of 395 Flatbush
4 Avenue. This project represents a rare and timely
5 opportunity to reimagine a prominent but
6 unfortunately underperforming location at the
7 crossroads of Flatbush Avenue and Fulton Street, one
8 of the major gateways to Brooklyn. As you know, as
9 you've heard, the proposed development would bring
10 over 1,200 new mixed-income homes, including more
11 than 300 permanently affordable units and, at a time
12 of acute housing shortage, NYC urgently needs
13 projects like this to promote affordability,
14 stability and equity. Beyond housing, this
15 development will activate the streetscape with new
16 retail, landscape public plaza, much needed
17 improvements to the Dekalb Avenue subway station
18 entrance, all of which enhance pedestrian experience
19 in one of the city's most transit-rich and popular
20 corridors. These public realm improvements address
21 infrastructure needs that are critical to the long-
22 term functionality and livability of the
23 neighborhood, and they should be meaningfully
24 considered in the ULURP process. Downtown Brooklyn
25

1 has evolved into a true mixed-use 24/7 district. The
2 transformation of this key site, its thoughtful
3 integration of housing, transit, open space and
4 street-level activity is entirely consistent with
5 this trajectory. We urge City Council to consider the
6 project's potential benefits, and we look forward to
7 continued engagement as this moves forward. Thank
8 you.
9

10 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

11 Are there any questions or comments for
12 this panel?

13 This panel may be excused.

14 Up next, we have Andrew Vladeck and
15 Veronica Yurovsky.

16 We'll start with Andrew.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

18 ANDREW VLADECK: I believe you called
19 Andrew Vladeck.

20 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Correct.

21 ANDREW VLADECK: Thank you, City Council
22 Thank you for holding this hearing at 395 Flatbush.
23 I'm a decades-long resident of Fort Greene. I'm also
24 a former New York City urban park ranger. I led
25 programs citywide in the '90s so I came to know

1 scores of parks intimately, and Fort Greene is
2 uniquely active for its size. It's the only green
3 space serving so many neighbors around the park.
4 That's why its use is double that per acre of
5 Prospect Park. And these very neighbors are exploding
6 with highrises and the corresponding population.
7 While it's difficult to expand housing, it's almost
8 impossible to expand green space so new developments
9 like 395 impact the existing park space with more
10 users and a lot more dog wear and tear. So, all the
11 estimated new residents and dogs will inevitably
12 contribute to various maintenance challenges so it's
13 critical to increase the maintenance with increased
14 uses to maintain what we have. CB2 issued a condition
15 that developers make a meaningful contribution to the
16 Conservancy, and this will go a long way towards
17 mitigating that wear and tear. I'm here to ask the
18 City Council, please require such dedicated funding
19 in your vote on 395. Thank you so much.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

22 Veronica.

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

24 VERONICA YUROVSKY: Hi. My name is

25 Veronica, and I'm a Brooklyn resident. I'm here today

1 because like the majority of renters in the city,
2 including many people I personally know and love, I'm
3 paying too much for housing and a lot of us are
4 struggling to stay in the city. So, needless to say,
5 I'm very much in favor of this project. It will
6 provide over 300 affordable homes in one of the most
7 transit accessible neighborhoods in Brooklyn and
8 giving working class easy access to jobs, schools,
9 and services. That's 300 units more than the zero
10 units affordable or not affordable being provided by
11 the current building. I'm also excited about the
12 promise of public open space and the improvements to,
13 I would say, a kind of scary looking Dekalb Avenue
14 subway station. So overall, this project is going to
15 bring over 1,200 units. Again, that's 1,200 more than
16 the zero units we have in a time where our city is
17 experiencing a dire housing crisis so I hope this
18 project is approved as is and helps alleviate the
19 crunch even a tiny bit. Thank you for your time.

20
21 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Great.

22 If there are any remote public
23 participants who wish to testify and have not already
24 done so, please press the raise hand button now.

25

1
2 And if you are here with us in person,
3 please see one of our Sergeants-at-Arms to first fill
4 out a speaker card.

5 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do you want to try
6 Adam one more time?

7 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Adam, if you're
8 online, you can speak now if you can.

9 Adam, if you can't sign on, you can
10 always submit written testimony online.

11 There being no other members of the
12 public who wish to testify regarding LUs 12, 13, 14,
13 15, and 16 for 395 Flatbush Avenue Extension, the
14 public hearing is now closed, and the items are laid
15 over. Thank you, guys. Thank you.

16 I now open a public hearing on Land Use
17 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 for Constellation Project, which is
18 a set of applications by HPD seeking the designation
19 of an Urban Development Action Area, Urban
20 Development Action Area Project, and the deposition
21 of City-owned land together with an Article XI tax
22 exemption to facilitate the development of eight new
23 residential buildings in the Bedford-Stuyvesant,
24 Brownsville, East Flatbush, and East New York

neighborhoods in Council Members Mealy's and Banks'
District in Brooklyn.

In total, the proposed development will
include approximately 96 affordable homeownership
units to be developed by Habitat for Humanity NYC in
conjunction with HPD. All the development sites are
City-owned vacant land.

Appearing today on this proposal is
Sophia Matheney, Brooklyn Borough Planner at HPD;
Matthew Dunbar, Chief-of-Staff and Executive Vice
President of Habitat for Humanity of NYC and
Westchester County; and Rick Fudge, Project Manager
for Habitat for Humanity of New York City and
Westchester County.

Those wishing to testify remotely must
register online by visiting the Council website at
council.nyc.gov/landuse.

Panelists, please ensure that your
microphones are on.

Counsel, would you please administer the
affirmation?

SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, would
you please raise your right hand and state your name
for the record.

2 SOPHIA MATHENEY: Sophia Matheney.

3 MATTHEW DUNBAR: Matthew Dunbar.

4 RICHARD FUDGE: Richard Fudge.

5 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: And do you affirm
6 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
7 the truth in your testimony before this Subcommittee
8 and in answer to all Council Member questions?

9 SOPHIA MATHENEY: I do.

10 MATTHEW DUNBAR: I do.

11 RICHARD FUDGE: I do.

12 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you, applicant
13 panelists.

14 For the viewing public, if you need an
15 accessible version of this presentation, please send
16 an email request to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

17 And now the applicant team may begin.

18 SOPHIA MATHENEY: Good afternoon, Council
19 Members. My name is Sophia Matheney, and I'm a
20 planner on the Brooklyn Planning Team HPD. So, thank
21 you so much for the opportunity to present to you
22 today on the Constellation Project. Next slide,
23 please.

24 So, the proposed Constellation Cluster is
25 made up of eight scattered sites currently on vacant

1 underutilized City-owned lots across four Brooklyn
2 Community Boards in Council Districts 41 and 42. The
3 project proposes the construction of eight new
4 buildings in Bed-Stuy, East New York, Brownsville,
5 and East Flatbush with approximately 96 affordable
6 homeownership units consisting of a mix of one-, two-
7 , and three-bedroom units. There are four land use
8 applications for the cluster that are moving forward
9 concurrently across Community Boards 3, 5, 16, and
10 17, and the requested project approvals through ULURP
11 include an Urban Development Action Area Designation,
12 project approval, and disposition of 16 City-owned
13 lots. The requested Council approval also includes an
14 Article XI tax exemption for the proposed affordable
15 homeownership project. Next slide, please.

17 And now I'll pass it over to Matt.

18 MATTHEW DUNBAR: Thank you, Sophia. My
19 name is Matthew Dunbar. As mentioned, I'm the Chief-
20 of-Staff with Habitat for Humanity New York City and
21 Westchester County. We are a not-for-profit housing
22 developer that has spent over 40 years building,
23 preserving, and advocating for affordable
24 homeownership. We are joined with Union Street
25 Studios, Norman Cox, who is our architect on the

1 project and has over 40 years of experience building
2 residential housing as well including affordable and
3 Interboro Community Land Trust is our partner on this
4 project as well, which will ensure long-term
5 affordability of the affordable homeownership units
6 built on these sites. Next slide, please.

7
8 As was mentioned, there are eight
9 development sites scattered across four Community
10 Boards. These are all affordable homeownership that
11 were designated back in 2017 and 2018 through the New
12 Infill Homeownership Opportunity Program to create 96
13 units of affordable homeownership. They're scattered
14 between two sites in Community Board 3, two sites in
15 Community Board 5, three sites in Community Board 16,
16 and one site in Community Board 17, which does create
17 a unique community outreach challenge, but we'll get
18 to that in one moment. But we're excited to be
19 continuing our over 25 years of developing affordable
20 homeownership in Central Brooklyn where over 250
21 Habitat homeowners currently reside. Next slide,
22 please.

23 So, there are a few highlights to the
24 project I wanted to emphasize. First is the
25 uniqueness in a 100 percent affordable homeownership

1 project coming before the Council. We are excited to
2 be participating in this and not just participating
3 in building these homes but to create low-income
4 affordable homeownership at 70 to 80 percent AMI
5 whereas the term sheet generally is at 80 to 130
6 percent AMI. One of the priorities of Habitat for
7 Humanity is to create low-income homeownership so
8 we're excited to go below term sheet. We're able to
9 do that with generous support of partners such as
10 Congressman Hakeem Jeffries who allocated
11 congressionally directed funding for this project as
12 well as the Borough President and Council Member
13 Banks who has provided Reso A dollars for this
14 project as well. In addition to that, we're also
15 really excited to mention that over 70 percent of the
16 units across the four Community Boards are family-
17 sized units of two to three bedrooms. So, in addition
18 to that, the partnership with CLT allows for these
19 homes to be permanently affordable as they'll be
20 affordable cooperatives. They will be able to go
21 beyond the tax exemption for 40 years with the
22 Article XI and have a ground lease that will extend
23 to 99 years and will be renewable. That provides
24 opportunities for deep affordability for the long
25

1 term for the residents. It'll also provide
2 opportunities for them to serve both on the co-op
3 board and as CLT resident members as well as access
4 to training and stewardship. And for the public, the
5 CLT partnership allows for a much longer term of
6 affordability being permanent so the subsidies that
7 go into this will last for generations to come,
8 balancing both family equity building and community
9 asset building as well so we're excited about that.
10 Additionally, there are environmental stewardship
11 aspects to this with Enterprise Green Community
12 standard. It will be all electric, solar ready, and
13 we are looking into being able to put on solar panels
14 under this project and we are seeking locally sourced
15 materials as well which is part of our community
16 engagement strategy which is another aspect of this
17 project. As mentioned, over four Community Boards
18 creates a challenge so we are creating and have
19 created a community advisory committee to help guide
20 us throughout this process including identifying
21 potential local and M/WBE contractors to bid and
22 become GC, to educate the community on homeownership
23 opportunities and first time home buying
24
25

2 opportunities coming up, and then to market the
3 opportunity when it comes to market.

4 With that, I'm going to pass it over to
5 my colleague, Rick.

6 RICHARD FUDGE: Thanks, Matt. Should we go
7 to the next slide? Thank you.

8 So, just a little bit more about the
9 buildings themselves. So, in Community Board 3, there
10 are two sites. The first, 908-910 Madison Street,
11 will be a four-story building with approximately
12 14,000 square feet. There will be 14 affordable
13 homeownership units, and 10 of those will be family-
14 sized. The second site, 1901-1903A Atlantic Avenue,
15 will be a seven-story building with about 17,000
16 square feet with 20 affordable homeownership units,
17 eight of which will be family-sized. Next slide,
18 please.

19 In Community Board 5, there will also be
20 two sites. 881-885 New Jersey Avenue will be a four-
21 story building with about 7,000 square feet featuring
22 eight affordable homeownership units, seven of which
23 will be family-sized. And 650 Glenmore Avenue will be
24 a three-story building with about 6,600 square feet

with six units, all of which will be family-sized.

Next slide, please.

Community Board 16 has three sites, all very similar in design. 1794-1796 St. John's Place, 8587 Legion Street, and 250-254 Herschel Street all will be six-story buildings a little under 12,000 square feet, each featuring 12 affordable homeownership units, 10 of which will be family-sized. Next slide, please.

And finally, Community Board 17 has one site, 395-397 East 94th Street. The building will be designed very similarly to the Community Board 16 sites so it will be a six-story building a little under 12,000 square feet, 12 affordable homeownership units with 10 of those being family-sized units.

Next slide.

Pass it back to Sophia.

SOPHIA MATHENEY: So, this chart here highlights the proposed unit mix and affordability across the entire Constellation Cluster, and I just want to point out some key facts and figures. So, these cooperative homeownership units will only be made available to first time home buyers under HPD's Open Door Program. For this project, all units will

1 be made affordable to households earning between
2 approximately 70 percent to 80 percent AMI. There is
3 a mix of one-, two-, and three-bedroom units across
4 the cluster with approximately 74 percent of those
5 being family-sized. The sales price ranges from about
6 156,000 to 225,000 dollars across different unit
7 types. So, moving on to anticipated projected average
8 monthly costs, we have the breakdown of mortgage,
9 maintenance, and utilities. So, the maintenance is a
10 shared building-wide expense that covers the ongoing
11 care of both each individual unit as well as the
12 property as a whole. Total owner costs related to
13 maintenance, utilities, and mortgage will account for
14 no more than 33 percent of household income. Initial
15 sales prices throughout the regulatory period are
16 allowed a 2 percent annual compounded appreciation,
17 and the AMI of all subsequent purchasers cannot be
18 higher than 10 percent above the maximum AMI of the
19 initial purchaser. Affordability will be preserved
20 long-term through a 40-year Article XI tax exemption
21 aligned with a 40-year regulatory period. And at
22 closing, all units will be bound by a regulatory
23 agreement that sets both the affordability levels and
24 duration. And then when the time comes, the units
25

1 will be made available to the public through HPD's
2 Housing Connect 2.0 platform. Next slide, please.

3
4 So, just to wrap up with the project
5 summary, the Constellation Cluster will create
6 approximately 96 affordable homeownership units
7 through eight new construction buildings under HPD's
8 Open Door Program. These buildings will be located
9 across four Brooklyn Community Boards as well as
10 Council District 41 and 42.

11 So, this concludes our presentation, and
12 we'll be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you for the
14 presentation.

15 I have a few questions. I understand that
16 all these sites are being financed together. Can you
17 discuss why this project was broken up across eight
18 sites and is this a typical model for other HPD
19 projects that are across multiple community boards?

20 SOPHIA MATHENEY: Yeah. So, this project
21 was created through the 2014 NIHOP and NCP RFQ, and
22 so with this, The Habitat team was designated in June
23 of 2018 for this project. So since then, the NIHOP
24 program has been replaced with the Open Door Program,
25 and it's the New Infill Homeownership Opportunities

1
2 Program, and so this was just created in an effort to
3 kind of utilize the vacant City-owned lots, the
4 infill properties, to provide opportunities for
5 affordable homeownership.

6 MATTHEW DUNBAR: I could also add to that
7 the original designation was in two clusters, which
8 also included 13 smaller scattered site lots as well
9 that are actually currently under development through
10 our Mosaic project, and those went through the UDAAP
11 disposition because over the years, as we were
12 putting together the project, we thought it the best
13 and most economical way to kind of develop the
14 project was to put the 13 smaller lots together and
15 create Mosaic which is building 42 units of
16 affordable homeownership and then the larger lots
17 that are going through the ULURP process are together
18 in the Constellation project.

19 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Okay. I know on one of
20 the points you brought up, Council Member Mealy
21 stressed some concerns of why HPD picked this
22 developer and why they didn't choose a minority-owned
23 contractor. Maybe you could reach out to her and let
24 her know that this was part of an RFQ.

1
2 SOPHIA MATHENEY: Yeah. We'll be happy to
3 let her know. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: What is the market
5 rate price for comparable units for sale in East New
6 York?

7 SOPHIA MATHENEY: So, I don't think our
8 team currently has figures for market rate units
9 currently in East New York, but we'll be happy to get
10 those figures and follow up with you.

11 RICHARD FUDGE: I will also just add that
12 as part of our market (INAUDIBLE) that we complete
13 during the course of the project development, we do
14 ensure that all of the units do represent at least a
15 10 percent discount to market in their sales prices.

16 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Okay. And so, the way
17 you calculated these numbers, is that through a
18 uniform process that HPD has or is this project
19 specific?

20 RICHARD FUDGE: Project specific, but it's
21 in consultation with HPD so we do take a look at what
22 other sales are happening in the neighborhood, which
23 for the Consultation project specifically, there are
24 very few comparable sales, especially of co-op units,
25 so it's a relatively small sample that we're

1
2 comparing to, but we do keep below the market for the
3 sales prices.

4 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Okay. You know, you
5 mentioned there are other multiple sites. Is the
6 Administration looking at other vacant or publicly
7 owned sites in East New York for potential
8 homeownership opportunities?

9 SOPHIA MATHENEY: With our meetings with
10 Community Board 5, which is East New York, they have
11 expressed that they, you know, are wanting more
12 homeownership opportunities specifically so we were
13 very excited to, you know, bring this project to
14 them, you know, especially given that in CB5 there
15 are, I believe like 93 percent of the units are
16 family-size as well and that was positive feedback
17 that we got from CB5. But we're always looking for
18 more homeownership opportunities.

19 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Okay. And I know that
20 in Community Board 16, they disapproved of the sites
21 in their District and Community Board 3 did not
22 submit a recommendation. Can you discuss how this
23 application is viewed by Community Board 3, since
24 they did not submit a recommendation, and can you
25

1 also talk about the disapproval from Community Board
2 16?
3

4 SOPHIA MATHENEY: Sure. So, from Community
5 Board 3, they expressed concerns about affordability,
6 specifically relating to AMIs and the maintenance
7 costs as well as unit mix, so those are two pieces of
8 feedback that we've taken in and have discussed with
9 the team to try to figure out if there's a way to
10 mitigate that to deepen the affordability and to
11 increase the family-sized units across CB3. And CB16,
12 they had similar feedback to us as well, and they
13 also did submit a letter just outlining essentially
14 the same information, but we definitely heard the
15 feedback that they gave us mainly relating to
16 deepening affordability and increasing family-sized
17 units and we are looking into that.

18 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Okay. Can you talk
19 about the timeline for closing and completion of
20 these projects?

21 RICHARD FUDGE: Sure. So, once the process
22 is completed, we will be finalizing the designs.
23 We've been holding off until we gather all the
24 feedback and take it all into account. We would be
25 aiming to close on this project and start

2 construction at the end of this year or early next
3 year. We're currently anticipating probably a 24- to
4 30-month construction period followed by unit sales.

5 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: All right. Can you
6 provide any details on resale restriction?

7 SOPHIA MATHENEY: Yeah. So, if we could
8 bring the PowerPoint back up to slide 16, we have
9 some information on resale restrictions, but
10 essentially the initial sales prices throughout the
11 regulatory period are allowed a 2 percent compounded
12 appreciation and then the AMIs of all of the
13 subsequent purchasers can't be higher than 10 percent
14 above the maximum AMI of the initial purchaser.

15 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Okay. And my last
16 question is will the larger buildings, buildings that
17 are higher than five stories, will they have
18 elevators?

19 RICHARD FUDGE: Yes, they will.

20 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: And are you addressing
21 ADA compliances in the buildings that are under five
22 stories.

23 RICHARD FUDGE: We are. Some of the units
24 will be adaptable, and there are some vision and

1 mobility units that will have slightly different
2 requirements that will be met in the design.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Sounds good.

5 I want to recognize any of my Colleagues
6 that may have questions or remarks.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: I have a
8 few. So, apologies if I missed this first one. What
9 is CLT?

10 MATTHEW DUNBAR: Sure. CLT is a community
11 land trust and so at the end of construction when the
12 buildings are complete, the buildings will be sold to
13 the homeowners and then the land will be transferred
14 to the community land trust for long-term stewardship
15 and support of the residents.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: Okay. And
17 will each site have its own board?

18 RICHARD FUDGE: The eight sites will be
19 grouped into three separate co-ops. We evaluated the
20 best way to do it to have enough residents to have
21 the boards operate without having the buildings too
22 scattered because there is a little bit of distance
23 between some of them and it seems like the grouping
24 of three was the kind of best balance.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: Okay. And
3 will all be managed by the same management company?

4 RICHARD FUDGE: The boards will ultimately
5 be able to select... we will have a management company
6 in place for the first year just as they get
7 purchased but then, after that, the boards will be
8 able to select their own property manager if they
9 would like to change .

10 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: Have you
11 identified that company yet or no?

12 RICHARD FUDGE: I don't think we have yet.
13 It's still a little bit early.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: Okay. With
15 the maintenance fee, what all does that include in
16 addition to tax, insurance, like gas, heat, hot
17 water? Which utilities are included in that?

18 RICHARD FUDGE: That will include, for
19 utilities, it includes the water, sewer, and common
20 heating and electricity for the public hallways and
21 so on. It will also include some of the services and
22 repairs, materials the superintendents and porters
23 that the buildings will need, the connectivity for
24 the buildings for fire alarms and so on, elevator
25 maintenance.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: Gas and
3 electric would be on the onus of the homeowner?

4 RICHARD FUDGE: Well, there is no gas in
5 the building at all. It's fully electric, but for
6 electricity used within the units, that would be bill
7 directly submitted to the homeowners, but for any
8 common electricity for running like stairwell lights
9 or the elevators for the buildings that have them.
10 Those would be billed as through the maintenance
11 fees.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: Is there
13 anything in place to maintain the maintenance fee
14 levels so that it continues to be affordable for
15 homeowners because that usually, the fluctuation of
16 that usually impedes affordability in the long run?

17 RICHARD FUDGE: Yeah. We don't have
18 specific mechanisms for that because that is
19 something that the homeowners, through their boards
20 will be selecting the services themselves ultimately
21 so we do maintain a presence with our homeowners.
22 Habitat does long-term and so we work with them to
23 help them. We give them a variety of trainings
24 because they are all first-time homebuyers, and we'll
25 help train them like how to run a co-op, how to

1 manage your manager, how to approach like when is it
2 time to find new services to make sure that they're
3 fully equipped and able to get the best ones out
4 there.
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: And how will
7 potential homeowners be identified and what's the
8 process they'll go through to qualify and to purchase
9 one of these?

10 RICHARD FUDGE: The homes will be sold
11 through HPD's Housing Connect 2.0 platform.

12 Sophia, want to add anything else to
13 that?

14 SOPHIA MATHENEY: Yeah. So, we also have
15 some resources through HPD as well like the Home
16 First Down Payment Assistance Program which I believe
17 qualified homebuyers could earn up to 20 percent
18 towards their down payment or closing costs as well.

19 RICHARD FUDGE: And also, just to add on
20 to that as a point of clarification for the sales
21 prices, these are projections. So, we make a number
22 of assumptions so those sales prices are based on a 5
23 percent down payment and then using interest rate
24 that roughly reflects what we're seeing now, we try
25 to be a little conservative, so if a family does use

1
2 a down payment assistance program or has the cash
3 available to put down a higher down payment, then
4 their monthly carry costs would be lower for their
5 mortgage.

6 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you. The
7 applicant panel is now excused.

8 Counsel, are there any members of the
9 public who wish to testify on this item?

10 SUBCOMMITTEE COUNSEL: There is one member
11 online.

12 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Okay.

13 As a reminder, if I or other Council
14 Members have questions, witnesses are asked to remain
15 online or to stay seated at the microphone after the
16 testimony until they are excused.

17 For those participating online, once your
18 group has been excused following any questions,
19 participants may continue to view the livestream
20 broadcast of this hearing on the Council website.

21 Members of the public will be given two
22 minutes to speak. Please do not begin until the
23 Sergeant-at-Arms has started the clock.

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25

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2 We will now hear from the first panel,
3 and it would be for online testimony by Michael
4 Caitlin.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

6 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Michael, please accept
7 the promotion to become a panelist. Oh, I'm getting
8 word that you're declining the promotion. You can
9 always submit written testimony on the City Council
10 website as well.

11 Okay. We have one in person, Idris
12 Abdullah. Please come up to the.. You may begin.

13 IDRIS ABDULLAH: Good afternoon, I should
14 say good morning but good afternoon. I want to thank
15 the Council for having me here today and allowing me
16 to speak. My name is Idris Abdullah. I am a long-
17 standing member of Bedford Stuyvesant. I served on
18 Community Board 3. I presently serve at the 79
19 Precinct Council for over 35 years. I serve on the
20 Land Use Committee as well so I kind of seen where
21 the community has came from, where the community was
22 going, and where the community is at right now. One
23 of the things I would like to definitely say is that
24 a project of this magnitude, a project with this type
25 of context is something that is definitely needed. I

1 know the history of the development of the housing
2 and how much housing is needed at this particular
3 point. Just to basically what you your request was
4 what was the situation with Community Board 3. The
5 reason why, one of the reason why it was not actually
6 submitted because there was a dilemma and because the
7 community does not understand the influctuation and
8 how fast that fluctuating is going to go from now
9 until these projects would actually be completed,
10 that was where the dilemma came in where the
11 community was put on the floor where we might not be
12 able to afford the housing at this particular time,
13 at this particular rate of inflation as the numbers
14 was given by Habitat. However, this is the reality of
15 what is going to actually cost in the next six or
16 seven years when these projects are done so that's
17 kind of where the dilemma was. The Board Members was
18 basically on board with the support but when it was
19 the community and it's a lot of new individuals
20 coming to the community, they realized that this
21 would not really be affordable. But however, my
22 particular position on this project (TIMER CHIME) is
23 110 percent for this project. This is something that
24 we need and we need more of this because this
25

1 actually would give the opportunity for new
2 homeowners to actually be able to afford the new
3 housing in reference to them being out, going to get
4 housing, or trying to purchase housing on their own.
5 So, this is something that we need. And if this does
6 not go through, then what is going to happen is
7 another developer would probably come purchase the
8 project, they would put what they want to put there,
9 and then the community boards would have no say so
10 over it, and it has happened and it's been happening.
11 But in a project like this, we need this project to
12 be approved. We need the City Council to understand
13 that this type of housing is definitely needed. The
14 more people that we can get to actually take the
15 incentive of them being homeowners, the more they
16 would take pride in keeping the community together
17 and building up. So, again, we thank y'all and we
18 hope that y'all really support this project because,
19 again, they are working close with the community in
20 reference to digging deep, finding out what is it
21 that the community wants, what is it that y'all need,
22 how can we make this a partnership that's not just
23 going to last today, it's going to last through the
24 years, etc., etc. So, again, I thank you for this
25

1
2 opportunity, and I hope that y'all give Habitat the
3 blessing that they need to make this project move
4 forward. And we are working together with them and
5 putting our community advocacy team together but,
6 again, thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Of course. My
8 Colleagues have any questions or comments?

9 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: I agree, you know,
10 homeownership, especially affordable homeownership,
11 is really hard to find throughout the city and so,
12 you know, these projects are, you know, a jewel to
13 transform people's lives, you know, but there's
14 always an ask to, you know, push HPD and the
15 developer, in this case Habitat for Humanity, if they
16 can make it cheaper, pursue to make at least a little
17 bit more cheaper, but I agree with you, like this is
18 a rare find and a rare opportunity, but thank you for
19 coming today and waiting to speak. It's been a long
20 one. Thank you.

21 IDRIS ABDULLAH: You probably bought your
22 home your first home from them, huh?

23 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Well, I'm still a
24 renter. I can't afford any homes in my neighborhood.

25 IDRIS ABDULLAH: Especially in New York.

2 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Yeah, yeah.

3 IDRIS ABDULLAH: Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON MARTE: Thank you.

5 If there are any remote public
6 participants who wish to testify and have not already
7 done so, please press the raise hand button now. And
8 if you are here with us in person, please see one of
9 the Sergeant-at-Arms to first fill out a speaker
10 card.

11 There being no other members of the
12 public who wish to testify regarding LUs 2, 3, 4, 5,
13 and 6 for the Constellation projects, the public
14 hearing is now closed, and the items are laid over.

15 That concludes today's business.

16 I'd like to thank the members of the
17 public, my Colleagues, Subcommittee Counsel, Land Use
18 Staff, and the Sergeant-at-Arms arms for your
19 participation today.

20 The meeting is hereby adjourned. [GAVEL]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date February 4, 2026