

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND  
FRANCHISES

----- X

April 5, 2021  
Start: 10:12 a.m.  
Recess: 4:42 p.m.

HELD AT: Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 1)

B E F O R E: Francisco Moya  
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Diana Ayala  
Joseph Borelli  
Barry Grodenchik  
Stephen Levin  
Antonio Reynoso  
Carlina Rivera

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

Richard Lobel, on behalf of the applicant  
Sheldon Lobel PC

Fayanne Betan  
Sheldon Lobel PC

Bwana Payeye Kizito, New York City  
Resident

Ann Tirschwell  
Type A Project

Getz Obstfeld, owner  
Suydam Street

Matt Lonuzzi, Owner  
Suydam Street

Manuela Powidayko, Senior Planner  
Department of City Planning

Kate Richards  
Department of City Planning

Joy Resor  
Department of City Planning

Michael Marrella, Director of Waterfront  
and Open Space Division  
Department of City Planning

Frank Ruchala, Director of Zoning  
Division  
Department of City Planning

Chris Hainer, Deputy Director of Zoning  
Division  
Department of City Planning

Eric Wilson, Deputy Director of Land use  
and Buildings  
Mayor's Office of Resiliency

Alexis Wheeler  
Department of City Planning

George Janes, Urban Planner

Jack Robbins, Director of Urban Design  
FX Collaborative

Wesley O'Brien  
Fried Frank

Claire Newman, President  
Trust for Governors Island

Christopher Tupper, Chief Development  
Officer  
Trust for Governors Island

Sara Krautheim  
Trust for Governors Island

Gale Brewer, Manhattan Borough President

Tammy Meltzer, Chair  
Community Board One

Lucian Reynolds, District Manager  
Community Board One

Jeffrey Chetirko, New York City Resident

Nan Richardson, Chair  
School Advocacy and Expansion Council

Lenny Speregen, Professional Diving  
Instructor  
New York Harbor School

Alexander Pincus, Architect and  
Restaurant  
Island Oyster

Lili Chopra, Executive Director of Artist  
Programs  
Lower Manhattan Cultural Council

Sean Connell, Program Manager  
Grow NYC Teaching Garden

Jainey Bavishi, Director  
Mayor's Office of Resiliency

Pete Malinowski, Executive Director  
Billion Oyster Project

Marisa DeDominicis, Cofounder and  
Director  
Earth Matter

Chris Amatitla  
Earth Matter

Anita Chan, New York City Resident

Stacey Vasquez, Founding member  
Island Bee Project

Merritt Birnbaum, Executive Director  
Friends of Governors Island

Bruce Monroe, Volunteer  
Friends of Governors Island

Marissa Williams, Representative  
32 BJ

Robert Pirani, Board Member  
Friends of Governors Island

Cary Oshins, Associate Director  
US Composting Council

Christine Datz Romero  
Save Our Compost Coalition

Gwen Ossenfort, Operations Manager and  
hauler  
Reclaimed Organics

Brenda Platt, Director  
Institute or Local Self Reliance

Marcel Negret, Senior Planner  
Regional Planner Association

Emily Walker, Director of Outreach and  
Programs  
New Yorkers Parks

Kathryn Heinz, Executive Director  
New York City Audubon

Laura Colacurcio, Vice President  
Association for a Better New York

Roger Manning, Cofounder  
Metro Area and Governors Island Coalition

Ally Ryan, Cofounder  
Metro Area and Governors Island Coalition

Adrienne Andy Sosin, New York City  
Resident

Alex Herrera  
New York Landmark Conservancy

Adriaan Geuze, Founding Principal  
Westside Landscape Architects

Benjamin Kubany on behalf of Eli Vorkin  
Center for an Urban Future

Miranda Massie, Director  
Climate Museum

Karen Imas  
Waterfront Alliance

Thomas Devaney, New York City Resident

Jeffrey Kroessler, President  
City Club for New York

Stephen Smith, New York Resident

Johnathan Andrew Smith, New York City  
Resident

Eric Shiner, Executive Director  
Pioneer Works

Michael Oppenheimer, Professor of  
Geoscience and International Affairs  
Princeton University

Catherine Hughes, New York Resident

Jessica Lappin, President  
Alliance for Downtown New York

Lynn Ellsworth, Chair  
Human Scale New York  
Tribeca Truth

Lucy Koteen, New York Resident

Wendy Bower, New York Resident

Jeff Sears  
Blazing Saddles

Lori Nelson  
Foreheads

Jack Robinson  
Foreheads

Caroline Parker  
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

Carol Ashley, New York Resident

Emily Hellstrom, New York Resident

Susi Schopp, County Committee Member  
EDAD10666

Brad Vogle  
Voice of Gowanus

Gregory Thompson  
Cornell University

Jenn Low, New York Resident

Lindsay Boylan, New York Resident

Megan Malvern, New York Resident

Phyllis Waisman, New York Resident

Stacey Shub, New York Resident

Kirsten Theodos, New York Resident

Nora Breen, New York Resident

Irene Van Slyke  
Sierra Club

Jonathan Rubin  
Sierra Club

Bonnie Webber  
Sierra Club



Joel Kupferman, Environmental Justice  
Attorney

Environmental Justice Initiative

Michael Davis, New York Resident

Margo Spindleman, New York Resident

Emmie Campbell, New York Resident

Will Kurtz, New York Resident

Gabriel Willow, New York Resident

Patty Heffley, New York Resident

Dan Campbell, New York Resident

Maria Roca, Founder  
Friends of Sunset Park

Jada Fabrizio, New York Resident

Judith Canepa, New York Resident

Howard Branstein, Executive Director  
Sixth Street Community Center

Chris Ryan, New York Resident

Gerald Forsburg, New York Resident

Virginia Ryan



2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Sergeants, can you start  
3 your recordings?

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: PC recording rolling.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Cloud recording is  
6 underway.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Backup is rolling.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Sergeant Martinez, can  
9 you give us the opening, please?

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: good morning and welcome  
11 to today's remote New York City Council hearing of  
12 the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. At this  
13 time, would all panelists please turn on their video?  
14 To minimize disruption, please silence your  
15 electronic devices and if you wish to submit  
16 testimony, you may do so at  
17 [landusetestimony@Council.NYC.gov](mailto:landusetestimony@Council.NYC.gov). Once again, that  
18 email is [landusetestimony@Council.NYC.gov](mailto:landusetestimony@Council.NYC.gov). Thank you  
19 for your cooperation. We are ready to begin.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

21 [Gavel]

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Good morning. I am  
23 Council member Francisco Moya, Chair of the  
24 Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. I am joined  
25 remotely today by Council members Reynoso, Rivera,

2 Grodenchik. Today, we will hold public hearings on  
3 the 135-137 Bedford Avenue rezoning and the Suydam  
4 Street rezoning, both relating to property in  
5 Brooklyn. Located in Brooklyn. The citywide  
6 rezoning text amendment as part of the Department of  
7 City Planning's flood resiliency initiative, along  
8 with three separate but related proposals for the  
9 Gerritsen Beach and Sheepshead Bay in Brooklyn and  
10 the Old Howard Beach in Queens and a proposal to  
11 rezone Governors Island relating to the island in New  
12 York Harbor and part of the borough of Manhattan.  
13 And as the procedural note, I will note that the  
14 Governors Island. Well begin no earlier than 11:30  
15 a.m. I now want to begin our hearings. I will  
16 recognize the subcommittee counsel to review the  
17 remote meeting procedures.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair  
19 Moya. I am Arthur Huh, counsel to this subcommittee.  
20 Members of the public wishing to testify were asked  
21 to register for today's hearings. If you wish to  
22 testify and have not already done so, we ask that you  
23 please do so now by visiting the New York City  
24 Council website at [www.council.nyc.gov](http://www.council.nyc.gov) to sign up.  
25 Members of the public may also view a live stream

2 broadcast of this meeting at the Council's website.

3 As a technical note for the benefit of the viewing  
4 public, if you need an accessible version of any of  
5 the presentations shown today, please send an email  
6 request to landuse[testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). When

7 called to testify, individuals appearing before the  
8 subcommittee will remain muted until recognized by  
9 the Chair to speak. Applicant teams will be

10 recognized as a group and called first. Members of  
11 the public will be called and recognized as panels in  
12 groups of up to four names at a time. When the Chair  
13 recognizes you, your microphone will be on muted.

14 Please take a moment to check your devices and  
15 confirm that your microphone is on before you begin  
16 speaking, as there is a slight delay in the process

17 of un-muting. Public testimony will be limited to  
18 two minutes per witness. If you have additional

19 testimony you would like the subcommittee to consider  
20 or if you have written testimony you would like to  
21 submit instead of appearing before the subcommittee,  
22 you may email it to landuse[testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).

23 Please indicate the LU number and or project name in  
24 the subject line of your email. During the hearing,  
25 Council members with questions should use the zoom

2 raise hand function. The raise hand button should  
3 appear at the bottom of your primary viewing window.  
4 Council members with questions will be announced in  
5 order as they raise their hands. Chair Moya will  
6 then recognize them to speak. Witnesses are  
7 requested to remain in the meeting until recognized  
8 by the Chair, as Council members may have questions.  
9 Finally, there will be pauses over the course of this  
10 meeting as we address as we work through any issues.  
11 Chair Moya will now continue with today's agenda  
12 items.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Arthur. I  
14 now opened the public hearing on a pre-considered LU  
15 item for the 135-137 Bedford Avenue rezoning proposal  
16 seeking a zoning map amendment on the ULURP number C  
17 210043 ZMK and relating to property in Council member  
18 Levin's district in Brooklyn. I will remind the  
19 viewing public for anyone wishing to testify on this  
20 item, if you have not already done so, you must  
21 register online in advance and you may do that now by  
22 visiting the Council's website. Counsel, can you  
23 please call up the first panel for this item?

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The applicant panel  
25 includes Richard Lobel and Fyayne Betan, land use

2 Counsel for the applicant. Panelists, if you have  
3 not already done so, please accept the unmute request  
4 in order to begin to speak.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. And, counsel, if  
6 you could please administer the affirmation?

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, please  
8 raise your right hands. Do you affirm to tell the  
9 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in  
10 your testimony before this subcommittee and in answer  
11 to all Council member questions?

12 FAYANNE BETAN: I do.

13 RICHARD LOBEL: I do. Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Thank  
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you.  
17 We have received your slideshow presentation for this  
18 proposal. When you are ready to present it, please  
19 say so and it will be displayed on screen by our  
20 staff. Slides will be advanced when you say next.  
21 Please note that there may be a slight delay in both  
22 the initial loading and the advances-- advancing of  
23 slides. As a technical note for the benefit of the  
24 viewing public, if you need an accessible version of  
25 this presentation, please send an email request to

2 landuse[testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). And, now, if the  
3 panelists would please restate your names,  
4 organizations for the record, you may begin. Also, I  
5 am sorry. I want to acknowledge that we have been  
6 also joined by Council member Ayala. Thank you.

7 RICHARD LOBEL: Thank you, Chair Moya.  
8 Richard Lobel of Sheldon Lobel PC for Don Kiernan,  
9 the applicant in the 135-37 Bedford Avenue rezoning.

10 FAYANNE BETAN: Fayanne Betan from  
11 Sheldon Lobel PC for the applicant.

12 RICHARD LOBEL: Thank you, Chair and  
13 Council members. Good morning. This is a very  
14 straightforward application which we are happy to  
15 bring to the Council. This is for a C14 overlay over  
16 an existing R6 and-- R6A and B district on Bedford  
17 Avenue between North Ninth and 10th Streets in  
18 Williamsburg. Can I have the slide presentation,  
19 please? So, to briefly run through the slides and,  
20 Brian, if you can pull up the second slide which is  
21 the zoning map. As you will see in the lower right  
22 hand portion of the map, the area circled is the area  
23 of the rezoning. This is on Bedford Avenue. This is  
24 a site which is currently R6A and R6B which, although  
25 it allows the underlying bulk of the proposed



buildings here being roughly five and three stories, it does not permit commercial use on the ground floor and this rezoning would allow for that. Next slide.

Good. So, you can see here that area of the rezoning, as well as the development site. The development site is highlighted in red. It is roughly 4000 square feet. And the area to be rezoned encompasses roughly 10 or portions of 11 lots on the frontage of this block. Important to know is then, on the immediate block, the area to the east of this, the entirety of the block is an MX8 M12 R6A zoning district, a holdover from the special North side mixed use district which allows for commercial use throughout these properties. In fact, as will be discussed, most of the property use on the block have some form of commercial use on them. So, the rezoning here would really restore the condition which would allow for commercial use as was

previously allowed in prior zoning. Next slide. So you can see here this is the land use map. As you would expect, there are commercial uses which abound in the area, particularly along Bedford Avenue. On the west side of Bedford Avenue in this area, there is a six block we hear area along Bedford that has

2 already been zoned C 14 as well as a rezoning that  
3 was performed within the last two years which created  
4 additional commercial overlay's along Bedford. There  
5 is also three blocks on the eastern portion in this  
6 area which are zoned C14. So, Bedford Avenue already  
7 has existing commercial flavor here. We are seeking  
8 to allow for an extension of this to provide for  
9 commercial uses on the ground floor of this block.  
10 Next slide. This is merely a highlighted portion  
11 demonstrate both the frontage here, as well as the  
12 development site and, again, you can see the C 14  
13 overlay that is proposed and other commercial  
14 overlay's which exist on this frontage. Next slide.  
15 And if you can just page through the pictures here,  
16 you will see not only the development site, but you  
17 will also see commercial uses to the north and south  
18 portions of the block. Roughly half the uses on this  
19 block frontage already constitutes commercial usage.  
20 The rezoning side which we just skipped over would  
21 merely allow for C 14 overlay as already exists.  
22 Next slide. Finally, we just page through the  
23 project plans which again demonstrate this three and  
24 five-story building. The building bulk here is as of  
25 right. The split R6A and R6B district would allow

1 for these buildings at this bulk with the exception  
2 that the commercial use would now be allowed pursuant  
3 to the C 14. We hope that the Council and,  
4 specifically the subcommittee joins in the vote of  
5 community board wall and, the work with and borough  
6 president, and the City Planning Commission and  
7 finding that this is an appropriate use of the  
8 property and we are happy to answer any specific  
9 questions.  
10

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Just two  
12 quick questions. For private applicants, the  
13 rezoning process even to simply add a commercial  
14 overlay can be a long and expensive process. How do  
15 you determine that putting a commercial ground-floor  
16 this development was worth the delay and the expense?

17 RICHARD LOBEL: Thank you, Chair. So,  
18 as you mentioned, it is a rather long process,  
19 although less costly with our office than it may be  
20 with some other offices, but I won't editorialize.  
21 But the truth is that here the applicant wanted the  
22 flexibility to allow for the commercial uses. The  
23 intention of the applicant going forward is to have  
24 seven productive residential uses on the upper  
25 stories. So, to complement that, the applicant

2 sought for this commercial use on the ground floor  
3 which already reflects a robust commercial presence  
4 on Bedford Avenue. When you look across the street  
5 here, or if you look to the north and south of the  
6 building, there is commercial uses. So, the  
7 applicant here who had the time and availability  
8 here, they thought that this might be something which  
9 was going to benefit the property and, more  
10 importantly, benefit the building and potentially  
11 allow them to develop a building and provide the  
12 incentive in that regard. The community board agreed  
13 with that and so while there was time and expense  
14 that was engendered in the application. They were  
15 here. Given the timeframe, we are happy to engage in  
16 that, given the other recent rezonings in the area  
17 and the fact that Bedford Avenue really is the  
18 commercial thoroughfare.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Last  
20 question. The block between North Ninth and North  
21 10th on Bedford Avenue has a mixed character it  
22 includes many buildings that are exclusively  
23 residential. Have you heard from any neighbors  
24 raising objections to this proposal? Did we lose  
25 Richard?

2  
3 FAYANNE BETAN: I think he froze. No.  
4 We haven't had heard any objections.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Did that [inaudible  
6 00:12:33] the question?

7 FAYANNE BETAN: We haven't heard any  
8 oppositions.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you.

10 FAYANNE BETAN: That I'm aware of.  
11 Yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: All right. Thanks.  
13 That's it for me. I now want to invite any of my  
14 colleagues to ask questions. I'm going to turn to  
15 our counsel to see if we have any Council members  
16 that are present for this panel.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, Council  
18 member Reynoso has his hand raised for a question.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Outside of the  
20 shameless plug, this does seem like a wholly  
21 appropriate rezoning considering it's along Bedford  
22 Avenue. I go all the way to North Fifth street and  
23 it is a commercial corridor and it adds a lot of  
24 vibrancy and character to the neighborhood. Anyone  
25 that knows anything about Bedford Avenue knows that

2 if we could make it continuous that way with the  
3 commercial overlay all the way up to McCarran Park,  
4 it would be amazing. But, yeah. This seems like a  
5 very appropriate use and I'm looking forward to  
6 hearing from Council member Levin there. But I just  
7 wanted to chime in there.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Do we have  
10 any other Council members that have any questions for  
11 this panel?

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Chair. I see  
13 no other members with questions for the panel.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no  
15 further questions, the applicant panel is excused.  
16 Counsel, are there any members of the public who wish  
17 to testify on the 135-137 Bedford Avenue rezoning  
18 application?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. Chair Moya,  
20 we have one public witness who has signed up to  
21 speak. I will note that once panelist have completed  
22 their testimony today, they will be removed from the  
23 meeting as a group. Upon removal, participants may  
24 continue to view the live stream broadcast at the  
25 city Council's website. And we will now hear from

2 the first panel which will include Bwana Payeye  
3 Kizito and my apologies if I have mispronounced that.  
4 Bwana Payeye Kizito.

5 BWANA PAYEYE KIZITO: Hello. Can you  
6 hear me?

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

8 BWANA PAYEYE KIZITO: Thank you so much.  
9 Thank you so much for taking me and thank you so much  
10 for listening to the testimony and I already have  
11 written down so it will be quick, so thank you so  
12 much. So, I believe this is not for us and unfair to  
13 our New Yorkers today and in the future. Land use  
14 public hearings being held virtually due to Covid 19  
15 are too difficult for authentic public participation  
16 and should be suspended. There is precedent to this.  
17 The ULURP process is currently halted. To Brooklyn  
18 rezonings. Gowanis rezoning and 160 Franklin Avenue  
19 rezoning plan across the street from the Brooklyn  
20 botanical gardens. So, I oppose this rezoning and I  
21 will participate in the rest of this hearing. Thank  
22 you so much.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
24 for your testimony. If we have any Council members  
25 who have questions for this panel?

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, I see no  
3 members with questions for this panel.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And we have no  
6 additional speakers on this panel.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: There being no members  
8 of the public who wish to testify on 135-137 Bedford  
9 Avenue rezoning proposal under ULURP number C 21004--

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, excuse me.  
11 I'll ask you if you would dismiss this panel and then  
12 we'll make a general announcement for anyone  
13 listening.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Yes. The  
15 panel is now excused.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: If there any  
17 members of the public on the 135-137 Bedford Avenue  
18 rezoning proposal, please press the raise hand button  
19 now and the meeting will briefly stand at ease while  
20 we check for any members of the public who have  
21 signed up. Chair Moya, I see no other members of the  
22 public who wish to testify on this item.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Arthur.  
24 There being no members of the public who wish to  
25 testify on the 135-137 Bedford Avenue rezoning



2 proposal under ULURP number C 210043 ZMK. The public  
3 hearing on this previously considered LU item is now closed  
4 and the item is laid over. I now opened the public  
5 hearing on LU numbers 753 and 754 and a related previously  
6 considered LU item under ULURP number N 200343 ZRK  
7 for the Suydam Street rezoning proposal requesting a  
8 rezoning map amendment, rezoning text amendment,  
9 rezoning special permit, and relating to property in  
10 Council member Reynoso's district in Brooklyn. Once  
11 again, anyone wishing to testify on this item who has  
12 not already registered in advance, must do so now by  
13 visiting the Council's website to sign up. I want to  
14 now take this opportunity to turn it over to Council  
15 member Reynoso. He has of your opening remarks.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you,  
17 Chair. Bear with me one second. Okay. Good morning  
18 to the Chair and the members of the committee. The  
19 project we are hearing today, 349 Suydam Street,  
20 represent six years of work by the Bushwick community  
21 and development team to realize a project that meets  
22 the needs of Bushwick's residents. I want to  
23 commend all of the parties involved in bringing this  
24 project to fruition. I believe 349 Suydam represents  
25 a model for how to conduct a community process of

1 around responsive development that actually results  
2 in a building-- in a buildable project. For years,  
3 residents in this community have been crystal-clear  
4 that they want to preserve manufacturing spaces to  
5 provide well-paying jobs for local residents and  
6 build affordable housing to provide homes that are  
7 actually accessible to local residents. This project  
8 as both. Preserving an existing manufacturing  
9 building with the commitment to retaining existing  
10 businesses and building a fully affordable housing  
11 building in a vacant lot behind the manufacturing  
12 building. The project delivers on a number of  
13 priorities that Bushwick has been pushing for four  
14 years and that is a microcosm of the issues raised  
15 during the Bushwick community planning process.  
16 Unfortunately, it took a private actor to deliver on  
17 these priorities. I want to know what to the huge  
18 missed opportunity by the city to actually engage in  
19 proactive planning work in Bushwick. Time and again,  
20 our community was told by the city and other  
21 developers that the type of development we wanted to  
22 facilitate was infeasible. Today's presentation  
23 shows that this position was inaccurate. I would  
24 strongly encourage the city to look at the 349 Suydam  
25

1 project as a precedent for responsible development in  
2 the city of New York. No housing is affordable  
3 without a job and the continued disconnect between  
4 the housing and economic development strategies is  
5 hindering us from actually delivering economic and  
6 housing justice to residents. Finally, I want to  
7 raise the issue of enforceability of development  
8 agreements. Bushwick has had terrible experiences  
9 with developers reneging on agreements made with the  
10 community. This experience is not unique to Bushwick  
11 and has occurred across the city, even with this  
12 experience, the Department of City Planning continues  
13 its refusal to enact restrictions when granting  
14 zoning approvals to ensure the project proposed is  
15 what actually gets built. This is a failed policy  
16 and now we strongly urge the next administration to  
17 place restrictive declarations on zoning approvals.  
18 This will go a long way towards rebuilding trust with  
19 communities who seem to always get the short end of  
20 the stick when these agreements go wrong.  
21 Thankfully, the developers for this project have  
22 agreed to enter into a CBA with the community based  
23 organization which will ensure the project we  
24 approved will be the one that we get. Again, I want  
25

2 to thank everyone for their hard work to reach this  
3 point. I look forward to the presentation from the  
4 development team. Thank you, Chair.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Council  
6 member Reynoso. Counsel, if you can please call up  
7 the first panel for this item?

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The applicant panel  
9 for this item will include Richard Lobel and Fayanne  
10 Betan, land-use counsel for the applicant, Ann  
11 Tirschwell on behalf of the applicant, Getz Obstfeld  
12 and Matt Lonuzzi is the property owners.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Applicants, if  
15 you've not already done so, please accept the unmute  
16 request in order to begin to speak.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Counsel, if you could,  
18 please administer the affirmation.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, please  
20 raise your right hands. Do you affirm to tell the  
21 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in  
22 your testimony before the subcommittee and in answer  
23 to all Council member questions?

24 ANN TIRSCHWELL: I do.

25 UNIDENTIFIED: I do.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. We are in  
4 receipt of your slideshow presentation for this  
5 proposal. When you are ready to present the  
6 slideshow, please say so and it will be displayed on  
7 screen by our staff. Slides will be advanced when  
8 you say next. Please note that there might be a  
9 slight delay in both the initial loading and the  
10 advancing of slides. Once again, anyone who requires  
11 an accessible version of this presentation may send  
12 an email request to the  
13 [landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov). And now, if the  
14 panelists would please restate your names and  
15 organizations for the record, you may begin.

16 RICHARD LOBEL: Richard Lobel of Sheldon  
17 Lobel PC for the applicant.

18 FAYANNE BETAN: Fayanne Betan from  
19 Sheldon Lobel PC.

20 ANN TIRSCHWELL: Ann Tirschwell, Type A  
21 Project. Applicant team.

22 GETZ OBSTFELD: Getz Obstfeld. Owner.  
23 Applicant.

24 MATT LONUZZI: Matt Lonuzzi. Owner.  
25 Applicant. Suydam Street.

2 RICHARD LOBEL: Thank you, Chair Moya.

3 Council members, first of all, we are really thrilled  
4 to be bringing this application to the subcommittee  
5 and would echo Council member Reynoso's statements.

6 This has been a long process, but one which we feel  
7 is going to be successful. We are happy to discuss

8 this and answer any questions. Again, we are here

9 for the Suydam Willoughby development and the general  
10 rezoning plan. I will present the zoning discussion

11 to be followed by Annie and Getz who will discuss the  
12 program for the development site as well as the

13 community interaction to date. May I have the slide

14 presentation, please? And you can go straight to the

15 second page which will show the zoning map which

16 demonstrates that the site is currently zoned M11.

17 The site is roughly 32,500 square feet. The M11

18 designation has been in place since 1961. The

19 initiation of the zoning resolution in its current

20 form and so M11 districts are somewhat hamstrung by

21 permitting only a one FAR for commercial uses as well

22 as not permitting residential use. The rezoning

23 actions sought here would cure both of these problems

24 and offer a more productive site to use both for

25 manufacturing as well as for residential use. Next

1 slide. So, this slide illustrates the nature of the  
2 four zoning actions sought. The first would be the  
3 creation of the MX21 district which would create a  
4 mixed use district pairing and M15 district with an  
5 R7D residential district, allowing residential use on  
6 the Willoughby side of the property. The second  
7 would be a raise zoning of the properties both to the  
8 M15 R7D. the M15 district on the eastern portion and  
9 a small 25 linear portion on the southern portion  
10 which would allow for designation of R6 zoning to be  
11 on an existing nonconforming site. The third action  
12 would be to provide for text amendment which would  
13 allow for the imposition of mandatory inclusionary  
14 housing on the site. Both options one and two. And  
15 the fourth action would be for a parking waiver to  
16 waive roughly 36 parking spaces which would otherwise  
17 be required for the development. Next slide. You  
18 can see in pictures of this site-- and feel free to  
19 page through these-- both the four-story school  
20 building to the south of the property along the  
21 vacant lot, as well as the existing four-story  
22 manufacturing buildings. What do these buildings  
23 demonstrate? They demonstrate that the existing  
24 typology in this area allows for these rather tall  
25

2 buildings, although four stories, the school  
3 building, as an example, stands at 95 feet tall. The  
4 proposal here would be to allow for both the  
5 enlargement of the manufacturing building on the  
6 third and fourths stories and for an additional fifth  
7 story, as well as for the creation of a new  
8 residential building to be discussed by Annie on the  
9 Willoughby Avenue side which would house roughly 95  
10 units. From the land use map here, you can see  
11 prevailing land use in the area. We note the  
12 existing R6 districts to the south of the site which  
13 already permits residential development and in FAR  
14 three for quality housing and 4.8 development for  
15 mixed use buildings as well as the fact that there is  
16 a commercial presence here which would be understood  
17 and expanded by the imposition of this rezoning.  
18 Next slide. The next slide merely demonstrates the  
19 zoning change map which shows the existing zoning  
20 district at an M11 with an R6 to the southern portion  
21 and, again, after the rezoning action would allow for  
22 this bifurcated zoning district with an M15  
23 designation to the east, an R7D M15 designation to  
24 the west, and the institution of an R6 zoning for 25  
25 feet on the southern portion. With the additional



2 slide, slide nine, we are going to go into the  
3 building program in typology and I would ask that  
4 Annie to discuss the building program and move  
5 forward with the nature of the development. Annie?

6 ANNE TIRSCHWELL: Great. Thank you so  
7 much. I have to say-- This is Annie Tirschwell from  
8 Type A Project, again. I echo the Council members  
9 excitement over this project. We are, in fact,  
10 grateful to the Council member and the community  
11 board for what has been a long, but incredibly  
12 productive community engagement process. And so, I  
13 think what I was hearing from the Council member this  
14 morning filled me with renewed pride and excitement  
15 over the trajectory of this project again starting in  
16 2015 which I will run you through a little bit more  
17 at the end of the presentation. But I think over the  
18 course of this project, we have been able to stick to  
19 the goals which, as the Council member highlighted,  
20 provide for both affordable living and  
21 manufacturing-- sorry. Providing affordable living  
22 and affordable working spaces in one development. We  
23 hope, as well, that this project will be a bellwether  
24 for other developers in Bushwick and other  
25 neighborhoods across the city where living and making

1 coexist today. One without cannibalizing the other.  
2 Both are so important for a healthy and productive  
3 neighborhood where one can affordably live and work  
4 in a walkable, transit rich environment. So just to  
5 the project itself, as Rich notes, this is a two part  
6 project, one which will expand the existing  
7 manufacturing building. The building itself is over  
8 42,000 square feet. We would add 14,000 square feet  
9 of manufacturing space and, again, both fill out the  
10 building and add one small floor on top. Next slide,  
11 please. The residential portion of the project,  
12 again, will be a nine-story approximately 95 unit  
13 project. 100 percent affordable. Again, we are  
14 presenting this project to the community board and to  
15 the Council member and have worked with them to craft  
16 of the residential development. Next slide, please.  
17 The existing building itself is, as I said, about  
18 43,000 square feet. It is tenanted fully by M1  
19 tenants or tenants fulfilling the M1 zoning  
20 requirements. We will talk a little bit more about  
21 who those tenants are in a moment, but the existing  
22 building site, as noted, also has a 17,500 square  
23 foot adjacent vacant lot that we intend to build the  
24 residential building on. As you probably know,  
25

2 Bushwick is in a transit rich community, particularly  
3 this site is adjacent to transportation and response  
4 to those making spaces that are still living in well  
5 in New York City. Next slide. In particular, we  
6 wanted to highlight to tenants that have been in the  
7 building for a long time to continue to not just  
8 tenant the building, but actually grow in the  
9 building. To tenants who are both in the carpentry  
10 design and woodworking business, Molina Carpentry,  
11 has been a tenant for over six years and Nowla {sp?]  
12 Inc has been a tenant for over 14 years and really  
13 represent the type of work that goes on in the  
14 building. In fact, as part of the community process,  
15 both city-- well, City Planning has organized a  
16 series of tours of the site for the community and for  
17 their staff. And, frankly, people were really  
18 surprised to see how robust our manufacturing  
19 community was in the building. Next slide, please.  
20 So, our expansion, again, seeks to build  
21 approximately 14,000 square feet of M1 space. We  
22 think that will bring online approximately 25 to 35  
23 new jobs and as part of this process, we will upgrade  
24 the building façade and some of the building systems  
25 to accommodate this growth but solidly keep it within

2 a manufacturing vernacular. You can see the image  
3 here shows the addition. This is really just for  
4 illustrative purposes. We have been going through  
5 this process, as we have stated and as the Councilman  
6 noted, for a number of years. And so, we've gotten  
7 some comments from City Planning to perhaps look at a  
8 façade that integrates the new construction into the  
9 old building and we will continue to do so as the  
10 project winds its way out of ULURP and into formal  
11 design. The next slide, please. The next slide  
12 represents-- Oh. Next slide please. This slide,  
13 rather, represents also the rendering of the façade,  
14 but this time of the residential building. We sought  
15 to respond to the red brick of the adjacent school  
16 building, but integrated into a new construction  
17 affordable housing project. Next slide, please. As  
18 you will be able to see from this slide, we, again,  
19 intend to build approximately 95 units of housing,  
20 100 percent affordable. We have been in  
21 conversations with HPD over the last number of years,  
22 in fact, but also more recently as the ULURP became  
23 imminent. We have presented to HPD a 100 percent  
24 affordable project through their M Squared program.  
25 I think one thing to note on this slide is the unit

1 distribution. We responded to the community's goal  
2 to having larger families sized units are studio  
3 units and actually over 50 percent of the units are  
4 two and three bedroom, more appropriate for family  
5 units and also have been working with the community  
6 on crafting the AMI breakdown. Next slide, please.  
7 The next few slides are just preliminary floor plans.  
8 I think we can peruse through them pretty quickly.  
9 On the community engagement slide. And the  
10 community, as we have noted a number of times, what  
11 really is, I think, one of the aspects of this  
12 project to that we are most proud of started in 2015.  
13 Our first meeting was with the Council member and  
14 then quickly to both the general community board  
15 meetings, as well as subcommittee meetings of the  
16 community board there was an organization from the  
17 community board that we worked with direct delay. We  
18 held site visits organized by city planning and sort  
19 of whether they like it or not, the community board,  
20 I think, perhaps got a little sick of us, but we felt  
21 that it was really important to continue to work with  
22 them over the course of this project, engage them,  
23 and respond to their comments and desires for the  
24 project. I would say the one thing I would end with  
25

2 is that, as the Council member had noted, his office  
3 has requested that we, as well as the community  
4 board, enter into a community benefits agreement and  
5 we been working closely with his office to craft that  
6 to make sure that we honor the commitments made as  
7 part of this process. So, with that, I guess, Rich,  
8 we are meant to open it up for questions.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Rich, are  
10 you done with the presentation? Ready for questions?  
11 He's muted. Can we unmute Richard?

12 RICHARD LOBEL: Thank you. Yes. This  
13 concludes the presentation, Chair. We're happy to  
14 answer questions.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great. Thank you.  
16 Before I turn it over to Council member Reynoso, I  
17 just have two quick questions here. Just going back  
18 to the original point, the community board, the  
19 borough president, Council member Reynoso all  
20 expressed support for this development as presented,  
21 but have also noted a concern that the proposal does  
22 not actually require 100 percent HPD affordable  
23 housing or industrial retention. One, are you  
24 working on any mechanisms to memorialize these  
25 commitments? And, two, what is the status of the

2 discussion with HPD on financing the proposed M  
3 Squared development?

4 ANN TIRSCHWELL: So, Rich, why don't I  
5 take the HPD question and you can follow up with the  
6 CBA? So, yes. We have been in conversation with  
7 HPD. As I'm sure everyone on this presentation  
8 knows, the pipeline at HPD is rather clogged and, in  
9 fact, the program that we have been working with them  
10 on, the M Squared program has not had a term sheet  
11 reissued. That said, we have been working  
12 concertedly with HPD over the last few months, again,  
13 and we have a response back to them going in this  
14 week and so it has been a really iterative process  
15 and we think HPD thinks we are all on the right  
16 track. But, again, as the pipeline is so long at  
17 HPD, there has been no formal commitments made nor  
18 can there be until the property is rezoned, but we  
19 then, again, and working dialogue with them and  
20 continue to be so as late as last week.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

22 RICHARD LOBEL: And just to supplement  
23 and to add with regards to the community  
24 arrangements, you know, I would note that it's been  
25 an easier job here than in many other locations

2 because Getz and Matt to have such great  
3 relationships with the community and have such a  
4 long-standing history in the community providing  
5 space for really worthwhile and productive  
6 manufacturing jobs. There what we would call good  
7 neighbors. And so, while we are engaging in that  
8 process right now to memorialize these arrangements  
9 both with regards to aspects including affordability  
10 and the retention of manufacturing space, you know,  
11 we understand that that will be our burden going  
12 forward. It will be one which will be memorialized  
13 in an agreement. We are working with the Council  
14 members office on that as well as working with a  
15 nonprofit partner who would be responsible for  
16 administration there. So, this is an active concern  
17 of the applicant and one which we are happy to engage  
18 in given the fact that this has been such a positive  
19 process throughout its entirety.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. My last  
21 question is the project, with 100 percent affordable  
22 housing in the industrial expansion and retention is  
23 what many communities around New York City would like  
24 to see, but developers usually say such goals are  
25 unrealistic or financially feasible. What's the



2 difference-- What is different and special about  
3 this property and/or your team that makes this  
4 possible here?

5 GETZ OBSTFELD: Maybe I will take that.  
6 This is Getz Obstfeld, one of the owners. Well, we  
7 been involved in developing affordable housing in the  
8 city for the last 30 or 40 years and have several  
9 thousand units under our belt in terms of  
10 construction, management, and so we have a strong  
11 sense of the costs of developing affordable housing  
12 and we have also owned this property for about 20  
13 years or so and so that gives us sort of a like up in  
14 terms of acquisition. The other aspect that we think  
15 will help us with the cost of making this project  
16 work is that on the industrial side we plan on  
17 expanding an existing industrial building. So, that  
18 means that we won't have to expense the cost of all  
19 those services. We have water service, we have  
20 sprinkler service, we have gas mains, we have an  
21 elevator and so, by expanding on an existing  
22 building, as opposed to building something new, our  
23 costs are much less and so that will help us achieve  
24 the cost-- meet the cost parameters we have to in  
25 order to make a project work.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Now, how do I get  
3 you to come to Corona? Thank you very much. That  
4 is it for me. I want to take this opportunity now to  
5 turn it over to the Council member Reynoso.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Thank you,  
8 Chair and, look, I want to be honest here. The way  
9 this happened is that Getz is not a speculator. I  
10 think the problem we have in this city is that we  
11 have developers and folks that buy properties at  
12 exorbitant prices and then come to us to bail them  
13 out when the current use doesn't work and that is  
14 happening in my district all over the place. We have  
15 people that by manufacturing buildings in which  
16 manufacturing space isn't getting more-- if you get  
17 23 to 26 dollars a square foot, you are on like the  
18 high end of what it costs to be able to rent out or  
19 lease out your space and they are buying it for 250  
20 dollars a square foot and then coming to us and then  
21 saying, oh, it just doesn't work. It was never going  
22 by, you know, 10 times its cost. Getz has been here  
23 for so long-- for 20 years. One, he is from the  
24 community, so it is easier for him to talk to the  
25 people he already knows and people respect that they

2 have had businesses there and you have been part of  
3 the community for so long, but also this is his  
4 property that he has had for a long time and there  
5 was no speculation. In doing so, there is a win-win  
6 across the board. A long time Bushwick tenant,  
7 right? Or a Bushwick owner gets an opportunity to  
8 develop property at 100 percent affordable housing  
9 and we get an industrial not only retention, but  
10 expansion here and I think it really speaks to the  
11 issues we have. The larger issues in the city of New  
12 York when it comes to speculation and how people are  
13 buying property, expecting the city to bail them out  
14 through the PSA or to come through our committee. It  
15 is constantly happening. So, this was a very unusual  
16 situation here and also the applicant, you know,  
17 stuck with us for seven years. We have been talking  
18 about this for like six years. Type A came to was so  
19 long ago and they didn't get, you know, tired or  
20 bored of having to go to the community board, having  
21 to come see me, and so forth. They just stuck with  
22 it. You know, and Richard already said that he has  
23 like the most inexpensive system in the city to get  
24 these things done, so it just ended up being a  
25 perfect marriage to really have this happened. But,

2 I just wanted to like serve as an example. If  
3 speculation doesn't happen in the city doesn't bail  
4 people out for speculation and they stop taking these  
5 risks of purchasing these buildings outside of what  
6 they are worth so significantly, right? Now, if you  
7 buy it for \$50 a square foot instead of the 25 that  
8 you are going to get, maybe there could be something  
9 that happens there. But when people are buying it  
10 for 10 times what it costs, it just doesn't make any  
11 sense. So, again, I just want to thank the  
12 applicant. Chair Moya, I really-- You know me and  
13 how I am about these affordable housing projects in  
14 these developments in general and for them to come  
15 through with it and do this process the way they did,  
16 it's the only rezoning that is happening in Bushwick  
17 in my time as a Council member. I wish we could have  
18 done the entire Bushwick rezoning, which would have  
19 helped projects like this happen when the city didn't  
20 want to do it, so we had to go through this private  
21 application. So, I just want to thank everybody for  
22 this. The CBA, the community benefits agreement is  
23 in like it's finishing stage of those. It isn't a  
24 matter of if. It's a matter of when. We are in  
25 discussions when we all agree that the CBA is going

2 to come soon. If it was up to Getz, you would have  
3 already signed it, but we have more things that we  
4 need to work out when it comes to like the  
5 organization that is going to be doing this work.  
6 So, it isn't in something like we are negotiating or  
7 the last minute will change anything. We all feel  
8 like we are going to get this done and thank you.  
9 Thank you for giving me the time to speak and I am  
10 really excited about this project. I hope that it  
11 could be a model for how we are going to be doing  
12 work long term.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Council  
14 member Reynoso. This is the happiest I've ever heard  
15 you since I have been chairing this committee. So,  
16 now, I want to ask any of my colleagues if they have  
17 any questions for the applicant panel.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, it appears  
19 that there are no members with questions for this  
20 panel.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great. Thank you.  
22 There being no further questions, the applicant panel  
23 is excused. Counsel, are there any members of the  
24 public who wish to testify on the Suydam Street  
25 rezoning application?

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, Chair Moya.  
3 Who have signed up to speak and is present and I will  
4 remind public speaking panelists that, upon  
5 completion of your testimony, you will be removed as  
6 a group and may continue to view the live stream  
7 broadcast of this meeting on the Council's website.  
8 And we will now hear from the first public panel on  
9 this item which will include Bwana Payeye Kizito.  
10 Again, apologies for mispronouncing. Bwana Payeye  
11 Kizito.

12 BWANA PAYEYE KIZITO: It is Bwana. Thank  
13 you so much.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Before you start, I just  
15 want to give a reminder to the public that you will  
16 be given two minutes to speak and please don't begin  
17 until the sergeant-at-arms has started the clock.  
18 So, now, whenever you're ready, you can begin.

19 BWANA PAYEYE KIZITO: Thank you so much.  
20 So, I just want to make sure that the communities  
21 that are in Brooklyn that have been in Brooklyn are  
22 considered. You know? I want to make sure that  
23 black people and Hispanics have been taken care of  
24 and are respected in this process. It is very  
25 important. And, you know, I believe-- I still

2 believe like earlier that this is an awful rush and  
3 unfair to all New Yorkers today and in the future.  
4 Land use public hearings being held virtually due to  
5 Covid 19 are too difficult for attending public  
6 participation and should be suspended. So, thank you  
7 so much and thank you so much for today. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
9 for your testimony today.

10 BWANA PAYEYE KIZITO: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I want to acknowledge  
12 that we have been joined by Council member Borelli  
13 and is there any Council members that have questions  
14 for this panel?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, no. I see  
16 no members with questions for the panel.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no  
18 more questions for this panel, the witness panel is  
19 now excused. Counsel, if you kind, please call up  
20 the next panel.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: if there any other  
22 members of the public who wish to testify on the  
23 Suydam Street rezoning proposal, please press the  
24 raise hand button now and the meeting will stand at  
25 ease briefly while we check for any newly registered

2 members of the public. Chair Moya, I see no other  
3 members of the public who wish to testify on this  
4 item.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There be no more  
6 members of the public who wish to testify on the prey  
7 considered LU item under ULURP number N 200343 ZRK  
8 and the related LUs 753 and 7544 the Suydam Street  
9 rezoning proposal, the public hearing is now closed  
10 and the items are laid over. I now opened the public  
11 hearing on a set of actions by the Department of City  
12 Planning that are generally related and intended to  
13 collectively address coastal flooding resiliency. We  
14 hear a number of pre-considered LU items for this  
15 project for ULURP number N 210095 ZRY, the zoning for  
16 coastal flood resiliency which is a proposed zoning  
17 text amendment to abate floodplain regulations  
18 citywide and three separate proposals under the  
19 departments resiliency neighborhood framework for the  
20 Gerritsen Beach and Sheepshead Bay in Brooklyn and  
21 for the Old Howard Beach in Queens under ULURPs C  
22 210130 ZMK, N 210131 ZRK, N 210232 ZRK, and C 210133  
23 ZMQ. Gerritsen Beach proposal includes a zoning map  
24 amendment and a zoning text amendment relating to  
25 property in Council member Maisel's district in



2 Brooklyn. The Sheepshead Bay proposal includes a  
3 zoning text amendment relating to property in Council  
4 member Deutsch's district in Brooklyn in the Old  
5 Howard Beach proposal includes a zoning map amendment  
6 relating to property in Council member Ulrich's  
7 district in Queens. Before I turn it over to my  
8 colleagues and affected local members for her  
9 remarks, I will remind everyone that we will first  
10 receive a combined presentation by the Department of  
11 City Planning staff on all of these items and for any  
12 members who have questions for this panel, I will  
13 just note that we will address the citywide proposal  
14 first and then each of the separate neighborhood  
15 proposals in turn, taking questions for the applicant  
16 panel in that general order. We will then take  
17 public testimony on all items concurrently and one  
18 hearing and, where appropriate, I will ask the public  
19 to please specify which proposal they are commenting  
20 on when their name is called. As a general minder to  
21 the public, if you wish to testify in this meeting,  
22 please visit the Council website now to complete the  
23 online registration process for you may also submit  
24 written testimony to  
25 landuse[testimony@Council.NYC.gov](mailto:testimony@Council.NYC.gov). So, I want to ask

2 our Counsel, do we have any Council members who wish  
3 to make any opening remarks?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Chair. It  
5 appears that we have no members seeking to make  
6 remarks at this time.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you. If  
8 you can now, counsel, please call up the first panel  
9 for this item?

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The applicant panel  
11 for the following items will include Manuela  
12 Powidayko, Kate Richard, and Joy Resor, all the  
13 Department of City Planning. Manuela Powidayko will  
14 present the citywide zoning text amendment. Kate  
15 Richard and Joy Resor will focus on the neighborhood  
16 resilient neighborhood proposals. Also available for  
17 question and answers are Michael Marrella, Frank  
18 Ruchala, and Chris Hainer, all of the Department of  
19 City Planning and Eric Wilson of the Mayor's Office  
20 of Resiliency. Michael Marrella, the director of  
21 waterfront and open space division at City Planning  
22 will act as a moderator in dealing with questions and  
23 answers. Frank Ruchala and Chris Hainer are the  
24 director and deputy director of the zoning division  
25 of the Department of City planning and Eric Wilson is

2 the deputy director of land use and buildings at the  
3 Mayor's Office of Resiliency. Panelists, if you have  
4 not already done so, please accept the unmute request  
5 in order to begin to speak.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Counsel, if  
7 you could, please administer the affirmation.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, please  
9 raise your right hands. Do you affirm to tell the  
10 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in  
11 your testimony before the subcommittee and in answer  
12 to all Council member questions?

13 UNIDENTIFIED: I do.

14 MANUELA POWIDAYKO: Yes.

15 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

16 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

17 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. We are in  
20 receipt of your slideshow presentation for this  
21 proposal. When you are ready to present the  
22 slideshow, please say so and it will be displayed on  
23 the screen by our staff. Slides will be advanced  
24 when you say next. Please note that there may be a  
25 slight delay in both the initial loading and the

2 advancing of slides. Once again, everyone who  
3 requires an accessible version of this presentation  
4 may send an email request to land use  
5 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). And now, if the  
6 panelists, if you would please restate your names,  
7 organizations for the record and then you may begin.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, my  
9 apologies. We also have a Lexus Wheeler, appearing  
10 on behalf of the Department of City Planning.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you.

12 MANUELA POWIDAYKO: Thank you. I'll  
13 start. My name is Manuela Powidayko. I am a senior  
14 planner in the zoning division at New York City  
15 Department of City Planning. I guess I should start  
16 or should everyone introduce themselves?

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yeah. If everyone could  
18 just quickly say your name and then we can--

19 MICHAEL MARRELLA: Michael Marrella. I'm  
20 the director of waterfront planning at the Department  
21 of City Planning.

22 FRANK RUCHALA: Frank Ruchala. City  
23 Planning.

24 CHRIS HAINER: Chris Hainer, City  
25 Planning.

2 ALEXIS WHEELER: Alexis Wheeler, City  
3 Planning.

4 KATE RICHARD: Kate Richard, City  
5 Planning.

6 JOY RESOR: Joy Resor, City Planning.

7 ERIC WILSON: Eric Wilson, Mayor's Office  
8 of Resiliency.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. You may  
10 begin.

11 MANUELA POWIDAYKO: So, first of all,  
12 good morning, Council member. I would like to really  
13 thank you for your time reviewing this proposal and  
14 for all the work that you do in resiliency. I will  
15 start this presentation by highlighting the zoning  
16 for coastal flood resiliency is really the results of  
17 the feedback we ever see from thousand off of New  
18 Yorkers through more than 200 public meetings since  
19 2016. It's also a work that was built upon the  
20 painful experience the city went through with  
21 hurricane Sandy and the several years of recovery  
22 that followed that. I will do a quick recap of the  
23 citywide text proposal and then the project managers  
24 for the resiliency local actions will also do the  
25 same prior to getting to Q and A. So, next slide,

1 please. So, as you know, while there are many  
2 sources of flooding in New York City, because  
3 trustor's present the most significant flood risk in  
4 terms of compromising human safety, property damage,  
5 and business disruption. When we are analyzing the  
6 city's risk, we tend to focus on the area that FEMA  
7 designates as the high risk flood zone, the area that  
8 has a one percent chance of being flooded every year.  
9 However, the in 2012, Sandy awakened us to a more  
10 widespread risk by inundating well beyond that area.  
11 Close to half of the properties that are technically  
12 classified as being at moderate risk of flooding  
13 today were having a 0.2 percent chance of flooding  
14 every year were inundated. In the two areas  
15 combined, we have almost a million New Yorkers living  
16 at risk of being flooded by a coastal storm and, with  
17 climate change, the floodplain will continue to  
18 expand. By the 2050s, today's moderate risk flood  
19 zone will likely be the future high risk flood area.  
20 Next slide. So, to the wide range of challenges that  
21 come with flood risk adaptation, we need to pursue a  
22 strategy that involves multiple lines of defense.  
23 The city's work includes coastal defense strategies,  
24 protection of our inland infrastructure, and advanced  
25

1 emergency preparedness, however, the CFR focuses on  
2 advancing resiliency of our building stock. Next.  
3 So, this project builds upon to text amendments that  
4 the city adopted post Sandy on an emergency basis  
5 which are already expiring. The 2013 flood text is  
6 set to expire one year after the adoption of the new  
7 flood insurance rate maps by FEMA and the 2015  
8 recovery expired on July of last year. If these  
9 rules are not made permanent, it could hinder the  
10 protection of existing vulnerable buildings and dis-  
11 incentivize resiliency measures in new construction.  
12 However, in addition to that, the CFR builds upon  
13 lessons learned from the recovery process, proposing  
14 changes that reflect the feedback we have received  
15 for more than 3000 stakeholders which were published  
16 well in advance of the start of the public review  
17 process. Next slide. So, now I will get to a quick  
18 summary of the proposal. Next slide, please. So,  
19 after this long process, we were able to established  
20 for overarching goals to help us move from Sandy  
21 recovery to a longer-term resiliency strategy. First  
22 of all, the floodplain community wants to be able to  
23 prepare buildings for flooding even if they are not  
24 located in what FEMA currently determines to be the  
25

1 highest risk flood zones. People also want the  
2 option to raise their occupy double space a little  
3 higher than the current flood level that FEMA  
4 projects because they have seen already higher flood  
5 levels and expect the risk to grow in the future.  
6 Third, residents and business owners want to be able  
7 to invest in resiliency incrementally so it is more  
8 affordable over time. They want options like moving  
9 their mechanical equipment to a higher elevation  
10 without necessarily triggering a requirement to raise  
11 or fully flood proof the structure all at once. And,  
12 lastly, we know that we need a way for the city to be  
13 nimble in responding to future events that might  
14 require rebuilding homes or even other forms of  
15 recovery. Next slide. So, starting with goal one.  
16 It detects applicability. It is important to note  
17 that these regulations are all optional and would be  
18 facilitating buildings to meet or even exceed flood  
19 resistant construction standards set by FEMA and  
20 enforced by the city's building code in appendix G.  
21 Next slide. Next slide, please. I'm not sure if  
22 there is a lag. I'm pretty sure I should be seeing a  
23 photo slide.  
24



2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: One second. We're  
3 having a little technical difficulty. Bear with us  
4 for a second here.

5 MANUELA POWIDAYKO: All right. Perfect  
6 slide. So, to continue on the citywide text  
7 applicability, the CFR would be expanding the  
8 applicability of the current text by allowing any lot  
9 located within both the one percent and that is 0.2  
10 percent annual chance floodplains to have access to  
11 rules that enable them resiliency at the building  
12 scale, even when they are not required by appendix G  
13 of the building code. Next slide. Regarding goal  
14 number two, this set of provisions include  
15 regulations that will be available only if the  
16 building is fully complies or even exceeds appendix  
17 G. Next slide. So, starting with the building  
18 envelope, more flexibility with height and yards  
19 would allow building owners to elevate habitable  
20 spaces above expected flood elevations without  
21 putting them in the hard spot of potentially having  
22 to choose between keeping their whole building versus  
23 making their homes more resilient. Next. And  
24 through [inaudible 1:03:52] exemptions and ground for  
25 regulations, the proposal would encourage internal

2 access and active uses to be capped at the sidewalk  
3 level so floodplain communities continue to be  
4 vibrant and accessible. Next slide. And to ensure  
5 that resilient buildings contribute to their  
6 surroundings, the CFR will mandate that a set of  
7 streetscape requirements are met so that the ground  
8 floor level design of resilient buildings is  
9 improved. Next. In the floodplain, we also have  
10 many buildings that do not fully comply or conform  
11 with our current rules, leaving residents in these  
12 areas in the hard position when trying to undertake  
13 resiliency improvements. Therefore, the proposal  
14 would set up a framework that allows those buildings  
15 to be retrofitted without bumping into rezoning  
16 constraints. Next slide. Last, we will go to--  
17 sorry-- Because of such a vast and diverse building  
18 stock, the proposal will continue to offer  
19 discretionary pathways in the form of BSA special  
20 permits to ensure that all unique situations are able  
21 to meet resiliency standards. Next slide. So, now  
22 moving to our third goal which includes what we call  
23 partial resiliency strategies. Since they assist  
24 buildings undertaking incremental steps towards  
25 resiliency without requiring that structure to fully

1 meet appendix G all at once. Next. We learned that  
2 raising mechanical equipment is often the first step  
3 to make buildings more resilient and so the CFR,  
4 through permitted obstruction regulations, would  
5 enable more options for the placement of equipment  
6 above the flood level, either on top of roofs or in a  
7 separate structure. Next slide. We also learned  
8 that many businesses cannot completely be elevated or  
9 drive flood proved and may, therefore, may need to  
10 prioritize what kind of spaces will be raised above  
11 harm's way. The proposal would then provide the  
12 flyer exemptions and more flexibility requiring how  
13 mixed-use buildings can be configured to enable that.  
14 Next. The CFR would also allow different types of  
15 flood protection measures to be implemented on site  
16 by classifying flood panels and landscape berms as  
17 per met obstruction on open areas. Space is used for  
18 the storage of panels would be able to be exempt from  
19 flood area to enable on-site storage. Next slide.  
20 And, last, the CFR will continue to offer greater  
21 flexibility of waterfront sites and required visual  
22 corridors and facilitate resiliency measures such as  
23 soft shorelines to be designed to help account for  
24 sea level rise. Next. And now, regarding our final  
25

1 goal which, differently from the previous  
2 regulations, they include rules that would mostly  
3 apply on the citywide level. Next slide. First of  
4 all, Sandy showed us how storms affect can go beyond  
5 the floodplain, especially across our energy grid.  
6 The proposal would allow power systems to be  
7 considered permitted obstruction on open areas across  
8 all zoning districts to facilitate their installment.  
9 Next. And, in addition, to ensure that all areas of  
10 the city can easily provide ADA access, the proposal  
11 would classify both ramps and lifts as permit  
12 obstructions and all required open areas to  
13 facilitate accessible designs. Next slide. And  
14 another important issue is how disasters, especially  
15 those that require the evacuation of residents,  
16 impact the vulnerable populations. Especially  
17 residents of nursing homes who require continued  
18 medical care. The CFR would prohibit the development  
19 of new nursing homes within the high risk floodplain  
20 and selected geographies that would likely have  
21 limited vehicular access during a storm. Existing  
22 facilities would still be able to conduct  
23 enlargements. Next slide. And, last, the proposal  
24 would include rules that could be made available to  
25

2 facilitate the recovery process from future  
3 disasters, some of which will be implemented now to  
4 help address the pandemic. These include allowing  
5 more time for property owners to complete their  
6 regional planning and construction or returned  
7 operations. Next slide. And I will and the  
8 presentation by acknowledging that, after several  
9 years of civic engagement, that this proposed zoning  
10 changes received support from the vast majority of  
11 community boards, borough boards, and borough  
12 president's and thank you so much for your attention  
13 and engagement on this project. It has been a long  
14 run. Now Kate Richards will present the Brooklyn  
15 local actions. Thank you so much, again.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
17 for the presentation. A couple of questions here.  
18 Of the city's multilayered resiliency strategy of  
19 which the ZCRF is only one part?

20 MANUELA POWIDAYKO: Let me just go to  
21 this slide and maybe-- well, I guess I can just  
22 speak about it. So, yeah. So, the idea here is  
23 really for the city to advance what we call the  
24 multiple line of defense strategy. We need to look  
25 into the building stock while we are looking into

2 infrastructure improvements and coastal defense  
3 strategies such as the east side coastal resiliency  
4 project. So, while we have other agencies and other  
5 levels of government really working on those other  
6 levels of protection which, of course, includes the  
7 amazing work that the Office of Emergency Management  
8 does with residents and businesses so they are  
9 prepared in events of coastal storms, the idea is  
10 that DCP, together for us with the Department of  
11 Buildings really focused on the properties and how  
12 buildings and the building stock can be made more  
13 resilient. And I will just say that, you know, one  
14 of the main components of this text is to conduct the  
15 necessary changes and the tweaks that we found  
16 necessary after our civic engagement process that  
17 were preventing especially existing buildings from  
18 being retrofitted since we have such a diverse  
19 building stock in the city which is very different  
20 from elsewhere in the nation. But that is the  
21 general gist of it.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. So, does the  
23 ZCFR encourage new development in floodplain areas?

24 MANUELA POWIDAYKO: No. No. It's not  
25 encouraging development. Basically, because it is a

2 citywide text, we really just were removing existing  
3 hindrances for development that is [inaudible  
4 01:10:52] to be able to, you know, comply with  
5 resiliency standards. Also, we have several  
6 provisions that we are proposing as part of the text  
7 that will be incentivizing extra levels of  
8 protection. Something that wouldn't be able today  
9 without, you know, a lot of property owners having to  
10 go to the BSA for special permits. So, that is one  
11 thing that we are doing. With existing properties,  
12 as I mentioned before, this is not incentivizing new  
13 development or requiring retrofits, but it is just  
14 providing the framework for that work to occur in a  
15 more resilient manner.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. So, should there  
17 be city, state, or federal programs to help property  
18 owners afford to make their buildings more resilient?

19 MANUELA POWIDAYKO: Yes. We understand  
20 that it is very expensive to conduct the measures  
21 that we are trying to enable with the text. You  
22 know, I personally went to several of the workshops  
23 and, actually, all the workshops that we did for the  
24 text and one thing that we did was to connect with  
25 the residents and go on a case-by-case basis and

2 everyone, of course, demonstrated their well and  
3 wanting to create and, you know, make their buildings  
4 more resilient, but, of course, don't have the means  
5 to do that. Right now, a lot of-- we talk about  
6 homeowners that, you know, have been there for a long  
7 time and a lot of homes that are really-- you know,  
8 it's a place in the city that is really providing  
9 affordable homes to a lot of New Yorkers. So, we  
10 understand that there is a need for more funding and  
11 I have other colleagues here that can speak a little  
12 bit more about programs that we have today. I think  
13 it could be helpful to just list what we have today  
14 since we got a lot of comments about, for example,  
15 the need for backflow valve installations and so we  
16 have some programs already, but there is always a  
17 need to have more predisaster funding. So, maybe I  
18 will turn to Michael.

19 MICHAEL MARRELLA: Thank you. I think  
20 there are several of us who will need to be on muted  
21 for this. If I could ask that Eric Wilson also be on  
22 muted. It is an excellent point that funding is,  
23 obviously-- and access to capital is absolutely one  
24 of the keys to making certain that more New Yorkers  
25 are able to make use of the provisions that we are



seeking through zoning for coastal flood resiliency.

On the whole, I would say that we have to be looking at our federal government for the funding. The scale of the problems of our coastal resiliency can only be resolved looking at funding from the federal government. A key aspect of that is what is referred to as predisaster mitigation. Putting money in advance of the storm. That is in contrast to how FEMA funds things currently which is, by and large, putting money after a storm occurs like what we saw during hurricane Sandy and after hurricane Sandy, I should say. But let me turn to Eric Wilson from the Mayor's Office who can speak about a couple of projects right now.

ERIC WILSON: Yeah. Sure. Thank you, Michael. Thank you, Council member, for that question. Coming off of hurricane Sandy, we did receive funding from state and federal organizations to create what is called the Flood Help New York program and everyone can still go to this. It is at [FloodHelpNewYork.org](http://FloodHelpNewYork.org). [Flood helpNY.org](http://FloodhelpNY.org). This is a partnership between the state Governor's Office of Storm Recovery, the city of New York's Office of Resiliency, and the Center for New York City

1 Neighborhoods to get information out to property  
2 owners across the city about resiliency retrofits and  
3 about flood insurance which is another part of our  
4 multi-prolonged resiliency strategy. The idea is to  
5 get information out there so property owners can  
6 start making decisions. In some neighborhoods,  
7 property owners qualify for an in-home resiliency  
8 audit to help them understand what vulnerabilities  
9 their property has and strategies to advance  
10 construction projects that will make their homes more  
11 resilient. As part of the Flood Help New York  
12 program, certain property owners may qualify to get a  
13 backwater valve. A backwater valve is a key  
14 component of one's home that can prevent sewer  
15 backups into a basement and that program will  
16 subsidize the installation I have a backwater valve.  
17 In addition to Flood Help New York, we are continuing  
18 to work with our colleagues at the Department of  
19 Housing Preservation and Development to identify new  
20 opportunities for to assist New Yorkers make this big  
21 transition that we need to make to make all of our  
22 buildings more resilient. One of the programs we are  
23 looking at with them is Home Effects which is an  
24 existing program for property owners. Currently  
25

2 under Home Fix, properties can apply for assistance  
3 with a number of different kinds of repairs, roof  
4 repairs, but included in that all our backwater valve  
5 installations which we think are pretty key element  
6 of making one's property more resilient. So,  
7 together with this proposal that the Department of  
8 City Planning is bringing you today which makes the  
9 regulatory framework much more flexible, we are  
10 looking at new ways and, you know, building on  
11 Michael's comments of federal partners, the federal  
12 government is going to be an absolute necessity in  
13 this and we look forward to continued partnerships  
14 with them.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yeah. So, just with  
16 that, the as this was being planned, was there any  
17 conversations that the city had with its partners  
18 from the state and the federal level to look at what  
19 type of funding may be available, knowing full well  
20 that this is something that was going to be asked of  
21 property owners aside from the valve that you're  
22 talking about right now?

23 MICHAEL MARRELLA: It certainly was. This  
24 has been part of the city's legislative priorities  
25 both in Albany and in Washington. Obviously, now in

2 Washington we have a very different environment in  
3 which we anticipate far greater reception for these  
4 types of partnerships then we had just a few months  
5 ago. So, I think that is really going to be changing  
6 the tenor of the conversation.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. And then, just  
8 how does this text amendment affect the mechanical  
9 void allowances and how does it interact with  
10 recently approved or proposed changes that provide  
11 exception for certain mechanical void spaces?

12 MICHAEL MARRELLA: Manuela, do you want to  
13 respond? I believe Manuela needs to be unmuted.

14 MANUELA POWIDAYKO: Thank you so much.  
15 Yeah. Sorry about that. So, yeah. With the void  
16 question, the proposal has, you know, options for  
17 that kind of creation of new mechanical buildings and  
18 we got that question a couple of times in a couple of  
19 Council member meetings, but, basically, we have, for  
20 example, for mechanical equipment on yards, we have  
21 height limits and even though we don't have high  
22 limits for a mechanical building, they, of course, do  
23 have to comply with the height limits of the lot  
24 itself, but we don't see a reason why someone would  
25 try to create avoid in that instance because we

2 have-- the way we wrote the language, we require  
3 that mechanical buildings have to be predominantly  
4 used for mechanical equipment. So, it is not that  
5 you are, you know, creating more space for  
6 residential because it's just an ancillary structure  
7 to support the functionality of the building,  
8 especially on campuses, which is one of the main  
9 strategies that we have for our housing campuses. I  
10 don't know if that answers your question.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. For the sake of  
12 time, I'm going to keep moving because we have a  
13 couple more members who wanted to ask questions, as  
14 well. This is my last question. Regarding the  
15 section 64 - 322 paragraph C and subparagraph two of  
16 the proposed text, does this section have any  
17 limitations on floor area exemption of the area below  
18 the first story of the flood elevation which is  
19 beyond the limitation on the habitable spaces?

20 MICHAEL MARRELLA: Manuela will need to be  
21 on muted again.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: That's okay.

23 MANUELA POWIDAYKO: sorry, again. I  
24 usually eat myself automatically to avoid background

1 noise. So, I believe you're talking about the  
2 exemption and we have four wet flood proofing spaces.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Uh-hm.

5 MANUELA POWIDAYKO: So, we don't have a  
6 limitation on that and I will explain why. So, the  
7 wet flood proofing and floor area exemption is only  
8 four areas that will be, as it says, wet flood proved  
9 pursuant to code and what that means is that appendix  
10 G only allows parking, storage, and building access  
11 to be wet flood proved. So, you can't really use  
12 that for anything, you know, more useful. And the  
13 wet flood proofing floor exemption, it is something  
14 that we already have today in the zoning resolution.  
15 It is a provision that was really crucial for us to  
16 include after hurricane Sandy, otherwise, buildings  
17 would basically-- especially low density buildings  
18 that we have a lot in the floodplain, would have to  
19 lose 1/3 of their homes in order to retrofit sense,  
20 you know, they have to raise and that ground-floor  
21 can only be used for parking storage and access. So,  
22 yeah. Hopefully, that explains the wet flood  
23 proofing exemption.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. And could  
3 you just make sure you keep your mic open for the  
4 remainder of the questions?

5 MANUELA POWIDAYKO: Yes. Sorry about  
6 that.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: It's okay. That's it  
8 for me. I want to ask our Counsel if we have any  
9 Council members who have any questions for the panel?

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Chair Moya, I  
11 see no members with questions for the panel at this  
12 time.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no  
14 further questions, the applicant panel is excused.  
15 Counsel, are there any members of the public who wish  
16 to testify on any of the Department of City Planning  
17 flood resiliency proposals?

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We do have some  
19 members of the public signed up to testify, Chair  
20 Moya. I just want to confirm with the applicant  
21 panel that they have concluded or do they--

22 MANUELA POWIDAYKO: No. Yeah. So, we  
23 still have the local action presentation. So, three  
24 local actions.

2 MICHAEL MARRELLA: We ask the Chair if  
3 you'd like us to proceed with the presentations on  
4 local actions?

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yes. Please.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I think we will ask  
7 for the presentation to come back up. Are you ready  
8 for that?

9 KATE RICHARDS: Yes, please. Thank you.

10 MANUELA POWIDAYKO: And you can go to  
11 slide 26 for Kate.

12 KATE RICHARDS: Thanks, Manuela.

13 MANUELA POWIDAYKO: No problem.

14 KATE RICHARDS: Great. Good morning.

15 So, this is the first of two local resiliency actions  
16 in Brooklyn. Resilient neighborhoods Gerritsen  
17 Beach. This area, located in Brooklyn's community  
18 District 15 was studied as part of DCP's Resilient  
19 Neighborhoods initiative. Next slide, please.  
20 Gerritsen Beach neighborhood has some unique  
21 conditions that can pose resiliency challenges.  
22 These include narrow streets, sunken lots,  
23 nonstandard lot sizes, and limited egress and access  
24 to and from the neighborhood. Next slide, please.  
25 To address the issues resiliency challenges, DCP



1 proposes a zoning map amendment and zoning text  
2 amendment and Gerritsen beach. The zoning map  
3 amendment would replace the current R4 zoning with  
4 R41 zoning, the C3 zoning with C3A, and the C12 and  
5 C22 commercial overlays on carrots and Avenue would  
6 be replaced with a C23 overlay. The zoning text  
7 amendment would establish a new special coastal risk  
8 district. Next slide, please. The new R41 and C3A  
9 zoning districts would prevent the development of new  
10 attached or multifamily homes in the neighborhood.  
11 Reduced side yard requirements would also allow for  
12 contextual flood resistant development in Gerritsen  
13 Beach. Additionally, under C3A, the existing mix of  
14 water dependent and residential properties along the  
15 neighborhoods waterfront would remain in conformance  
16 with the zoning and would not face obstacles from  
17 zoning regulations if they were to undergo any  
18 resiliency retrofits. The new C23 commercial overlay  
19 would permit some expanded retail services including  
20 home maintenance and repair services that would be  
21 useful in disaster recovery or rebuilding. Next  
22 slide, please. The special coastal risk district  
23 would further restricted the density and scale of  
24 future development in Gerritsen Beach by only  
25

1 allowing single-family detached homes on lots less  
2 than 3000 square feet. Residential building height  
3 would also be limited to 25 feet above the reference  
4 point. Next slide, please. This project was  
5 referred to public review in October 2020. Community  
6 board 15 held a public hearing and vote for this  
7 project along with resilient neighborhood Sheepshead  
8 Bay and, as you see [inaudible 01:25:36] on November  
9 17th and voted unanimously in favor. The Brooklyn  
10 borough president also submitted recommended approval  
11 of the project in January 2021. That concludes the  
12 resilient neighborhoods Gerritsen Beach presentation.  
13 I can answer questions or go ahead to the Sheepshead  
14 Bay presentation.  
15

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You can go ahead.

17 KATE RICHARDS: Okay. In that case,  
18 next slide, please. Resilient neighborhoods  
19 Sheepshead Bay is the second local resiliency action  
20 in Brooklyn. It is also located in community  
21 District 15 and it was also studied as part of DCP's  
22 resilient neighborhoods initiative. Here, DCP  
23 proposes a zoning text amendment. Next slide,  
24 please. Created in 1973, the special Sheepshead Bay  
25 district promotes water related commercial uses and

1 new public open space. The special text allows floor  
2 area bonuses in certain areas for developments that  
3 provide open space on-site, however, there is minimal  
4 guidance on how those spaces should be designed and  
5 maintained and no consideration for flood risk or  
6 resiliency in these spaces. For example, public  
7 spaces may be entirely paved and sunken up to 2 feet  
8 below grade which creates a drainage issue and flood  
9 risk. The proposed text amendment aims to encourage  
10 flood resilient and active design of public spaces  
11 where the special district requires or encourages  
12 them through floor area bonuses. Next slide, please.  
13 More specifically, the proposed text amendment would  
14 encourage flood resilient and active design by  
15 requiring clauses to be located at or above grade.  
16 By improving the consistency of public space across  
17 the special district by consolidating what are now  
18 separate types of open space bonuses. Eliminating a  
19 bonus for arcade spaces or covered walkways which  
20 tend to produce enclosed spaces that don't support  
21 the goal of commercial activation and, by setting a  
22 clear and improved standard for how future pauses are  
23 designed to ensure they are accessible, provide  
24 elements like seating, trash bins, drinking  
25

2 fountains, and have trees and plants that are  
3 tolerant to occasional saltwater flooding. Next  
4 slide, please. To help show the effects of these  
5 proposed changes, we have taken an example of  
6 existing conditions on Edmonds Avenue and shown what  
7 might occur under the proposed standards. This is  
8 just an illustrative drawing. There is no planned  
9 redevelopment of the site or any other sites that  
10 would be affected by these regulations at this time.  
11 So, this plaza was designed to the existing  
12 standards. It is a hardscape to open space with  
13 minimal planting. Under the proposed conditions,  
14 there would be requirements and standards for things  
15 like seating, movable furniture, and bike parking.  
16 Next slide, please. This project was also referred  
17 out for public review in October 2020 and the public  
18 hearing and vote by community board 15 was held on  
19 November 17th and they voted unanimously in favor and  
20 the Brooklyn Borough President recommended approval  
21 of the project in January 2021. And that concludes  
22 this presentation.

23 MICHAEL MARRELLA: We will go straight to  
24 presentation on Queens, if that's okay, Chair.

25 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yes. Thank you.

2 JOY RESOR: Good morning, Council  
3 members. I'll be presenting on Old Howard Beach  
4 rezoning which is the Queens local action and that  
5 certified in conjunction with coastal flood  
6 resiliency. DCP is seeking a map amendment year.  
7 Next slide, please. Old Howard Beach is outlined  
8 here in white and is served by the A train at the  
9 Howard Beach JFK airport station. It is a waterfront  
10 community north of Jamaica Bay bounded by Michelle  
11 Bank basin to the west and country basin to the east,  
12 making it susceptible to flooding and it is also a  
13 neighborhood that is deeply impacted by hurricane  
14 Sandy in 2012. As Manuela mentioned, the city has  
15 done a lot of work since 2012 to ensure that coastal  
16 communities are better protected against flooding.  
17 In 2014, DCP launched our resilient neighborhoods  
18 initiative to work directly with coastal communities  
19 that were devastated by Sandy. The 2017 Old Howard  
20 Beach, Hamilton Beach, and Broad Channel resilient  
21 neighborhoods study built on that work, providing  
22 zoning recommendations specific to unique  
23 neighborhood conditions and risks which, for Old  
24 Howard Beach, included enacting targeted zoning  
25 treatment to reflect the neighborhood's unique

2 character and long-term vulnerability. Updating  
3 zoning to make it easier to retrofit building and  
4 advancing infrastructure and coastal protection  
5 strategies. The proposed rezoning aims to achieve  
6 these goals were also leveraging CCFR provisions to  
7 increased flexibility for resilient construction.  
8 Next slide. Way that in the one percent annual  
9 chance floodplain or the high risk flood zone.  
10 Portions of Old Howard Beach to the north are within  
11 the .2 percent annual chance floodplain for the  
12 moderate risk flood zone. The neighborhood was  
13 completely inundated by Sandy which most straights  
14 experience saying that an average of three to six  
15 feet of flooding in some seeing up to 18 feet of  
16 inundation. Next slide, please. Old Howard Beach  
17 consists of predominantly low rise residential  
18 buildings, the majority of which are detached single  
19 and two family homes. This slide reflects the  
20 housing typology that exists under the neighborhoods  
21 current zonings. The majority of the area is zoned  
22 R31 which is reflected in the detached zones you see  
23 in the top right. Some of these homes have already  
24 been elevated to be more flood resilient. Homes  
25 within the northern portion of Old Howard Beach shown

1 in the bottom right are typically semidetached in  
2 nature and are single or two family duplexes that are  
3 most common in the R32 zoning district to the north.  
4 Semidetached buildings are harder to retrofit to meet  
5 resiliency standards. Next slide. The proposed  
6 rezoning includes a map amendment outlined in orange  
7 and yellow affecting 48 blocks and 1037 buildings in  
8 the area. The proposed rezoning would change the  
9 current R31 and R32 districts into a single R3X  
10 districts. The R3X rezoning would better reflect the  
11 typology of the existing housing stock which consists  
12 of predominantly single and two family detached  
13 homes. The proposed rezoning would not produce a  
14 large difference in what is currently permitted with  
15 the FAR maximum height and parking requirements  
16 remaining the same. The largest difference would be  
17 in the permitted housing typology which would be  
18 limited to only detached single and two family homes.  
19 Along here on the street to the north outside of the  
20 one percent annual chance floodplain, the current R32  
21 districts would be rezoned to R31 which is the lowest  
22 density district allowing for semidetached single and  
23 two-family residences and what ensure that housing  
24 typology characteristic of the street remains in  
25

1 compliance. However, the future construction of  
2 small multifamily apartment buildings would no longer  
3 be permitted and, again, the FAR maximum height and  
4 parking requirements would all remain the same. The  
5 difference here would be in the permitted housing  
6 typology. Next slide. On December 3rd, Queens  
7 community board 10 voted unanimously in favor of the  
8 proposal with the following conditions that no future  
9 development of community facilities with sleeping  
10 accommodations be permitted and that all other  
11 restrictions listed in the special coastal risk  
12 district text be applied including floor area limits  
13 the maximum floor area ratios for rezoning lots  
14 containing residential and community facility uses.  
15 The Queens Borough President also voted in favor with  
16 the following condition. That nursing homes with  
17 sleeping accommodations-- excuse me. That community  
18 facilities with sleeping accommodations be further  
19 excluded in agreement with the community board's  
20 recommendation. To address these points, Manuela had  
21 mentioned earlier that nursing homes are licensed to  
22 house populations that require continual medical care  
23 which puts them at risk whether resident shelter in  
24 place or evacuate prior to a coastal storm event.  
25



Community facilities such as psychiatric and other health facilities generally do not serve a resident population that experiences negative health and morality outcomes when subject to evacuation.

However, we respect to the community board and borough president's recommendations and will continue to consider future restrictions in the floodplain.

In response to the second recommendation, the agency conducted outreach and research during the neighborhood planning process to determine the appropriate zoning treatment for Old Howard Beach. A map amendment, rather than a special coastal risk district is being proposed because of the neighborhood slightly higher elevation, wider and more regularly sized lots, and lower susceptibility to daily tide flooding as compared to nearby Hamilton Beach. The proposed down zoning would work in tandem with the ZCFR citywide text amendment to bolster resiliency efforts by limiting future development to housing types that are easy to retrofit and built to resilient standards, as well as retaining the existing neighborhood character. This concludes my presentation. I'm not available for questions.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. I just have  
3 one quick question on Old Howard Beach here. And I  
4 might've missed it. I'm sorry. But if you touched  
5 upon this. But how do you determine which vulnerable  
6 populations met the criteria for limiting certain  
7 land uses in the floodplain?

8 JOY RESOR: Sure. Happy to answer that a  
9 little bit and then I will pass it on to Manuela if  
10 you would like to elaborate more. But, again, we did  
11 some research and really looked at different  
12 populations that exist within the flood plain and how  
13 we are defining vulnerable populations. And in this  
14 instance, nursing homes are considered the most at  
15 risk because whether they shelter employees or  
16 evacuate, they are still subject to harm because of  
17 the continued medical care that they need. So, we  
18 have determined that they would be placed at the  
19 highest risk if they were allowed to remain in the  
20 floodplain.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, if it's just nursing  
22 homes? I'm just wondering why work more uses  
23 restricted to the floodplain such as homeless  
24 population and, hospitals, Senior housing, etc.

2           MICHAEL MARRELLA: Chair, if I may, this  
3 was based on rather extensive research and  
4 collaboration with the Department of Health and  
5 Mental Hygiene and our colleagues at the Department  
6 of Aging that the nursing home residents face a very  
7 unusual type of risk. For most other populations, in  
8 the event of a storm, relocating temporarily to  
9 another location during the duration of this storm is  
10 what is considered best practice throughout the  
11 United States, however, nursing home residents, given  
12 the nature of the care that they require, face a very  
13 different type of risk which is that there is a  
14 negative health outcome if they were to either move  
15 to a different location during the duration of the  
16 storm or if they were to try to stay in place during  
17 the storm and this is based on the experience during  
18 hurricane Sandy, as well as national research that  
19 shows numerically that it's based on actual  
20 statistics that there is actual health consequences  
21 to that. That makes them really in a very different  
22 category. One of the reasons and why it is-- you  
23 know, there are some similarities between, obviously,  
24 hospitals and nursing home facilities, but hospitals  
25 tend to be much larger facilities that have the

2 ability and the staffing, etc., to be able to-- in  
3 general, not always, but in general-- take the  
4 continuity of care into consideration during the  
5 duration of an event like a hurricane.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: There's also a lot of  
7 senior housing over there, too, and I'm just--

8 MICHAEL MARRELLA: Yeah. But, it-- Yes.  
9 But senior housing, particularly when it is  
10 independent senior housing where the residents are  
11 able to take care of themselves, there has not been  
12 the research to show that there is that same level of  
13 negative health consequences to that of nursing home  
14 residents. That is really the key distinction, based  
15 on the research that we have found, I should say.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, where was this  
17 research done?

18 MICHAEL MARRELLA: This was research that  
19 was done after Hurricane Katrina, I have after  
20 hurricane Irma in Florida. Numerous-- and this is  
21 not research that-- this is research that public  
22 health officials and public health experts have done  
23 to examine this exact question.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: At the city itself just  
25 took those studies? You didn't do your own study in

2 regards to its effect on the Old Howard Beach and  
3 other areas like that?

4           MICHAEL MARRELLA: No. No. We were  
5 looking at the national studies that have been peer-  
6 reviewed and have been published in scientific public  
7 health journals.

8           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. I would love to  
9 talk more about that after this. I don't want to  
10 hold up other folks, but it really concerns me that  
11 we are not thinking more broadly when it comes to  
12 seniors and the hospital. Issues that we already  
13 have seen in the last year. So, this is something  
14 that I would like to continue this off-line with all  
15 of you. With that, that was my last question here.  
16 I would like to turn it over to our counsel to see if  
17 we have any members that have any questions for this  
18 panel.

19           COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya, I see  
20 no members at this time with questions for the panel.

21           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you. There  
22 being no further questions, the applicant panel is  
23 excused. Counsel, are there any members of the  
24 public who wish to testify on any of the Department  
25 of City Planning flood resiliency proposals?

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, Chair. We  
3 have two registered witnesses signed up to testify.  
4 For members of the public here to testify, please  
5 note, again, that public witnesses will be called in  
6 panels. If you are a member of the public signed up  
7 to testify on one or more of the flood resiliency  
8 proposals, please stand by when you hear your name  
9 being called and prepare to speak when the Chair  
10 recognizes you. Please note, again, that, upon  
11 completion of your testimony, you will be removed  
12 from the meeting it can view the live stream  
13 broadcast of this meeting at the New York City  
14 Council's website. We will now hear from the first  
15 panel which will include Bwana Payeye Kizito and  
16 George Janes. Our first speaker will be Bwana Payeye  
17 Kizito followed by George Janes.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: And just as a reminder  
19 for members of the public you will be given two  
20 minutes to speak. Please don't begin until the  
21 sergeant-at-arms has started the clock. So, you may  
22 begin now. Thank you.

23 BWANA PAYEYE KIZITO: Hello. Thank you  
24 so much. And I would like to add it is very  
25 important not to forget the communities that live in

2 Harlem, in Yonkers, in the Bronx, in Washington  
3 Heights around Marcus Godfrey Park that still need to  
4 be renovated and Southside Jamaica Queens, use New  
5 York and Brooklyn, Queens Bridge and [inaudible  
6 01:42:26]. There are other communities that will be  
7 impacted by flooding and by other natural causes due  
8 to the climate and it's not to be forgotten and I  
9 wanted to add that. So, thank you so much. Thank  
10 you.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
13 will be George Janes.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

15 GEORGE JANES: Thank you. My name is  
16 George Janes. I am an urban planner. I have two  
17 points to make about zoning for coastal resiliency.  
18 First, this is zoning does not make new building  
19 safer. That is the job of the building code. What  
20 CFR does is it makes building in the floodplain  
21 easier which I would say encourages development in  
22 the floodplain, in the places most likely to flood.  
23 And, really, there's a question for this policymaking  
24 body is a good policy to encourage development in  
25 areas that will likely flood? And, actually, I don't

1 know the answer to that question, right? It is a  
2 decision that was made right after Sandy and New York  
3 City really has never had a serious policy discussion  
4 over this question. ZFCR makes per minute and  
5 expands build it back policy and is that a good  
6 thing? My other point is that there is one citywide  
7 change in ZFCR that applies everywhere in New York  
8 City and that I hope you will modify. ZFCR will make  
9 accessory mechanical equipment housed in separate  
10 buildings exempt from floor area and allowed these  
11 permitted obstructions in yards and quarts  
12 everywhere, not just in floodplains. This provision  
13 will allow buildings to cover 25 percent of the lots  
14 required open space that DOB does not-- This is  
15 important. The DOB does not require that a building  
16 be right sized to the mechanical equipment holds so  
17 you should expect that it will be built to its  
18 maximum size. This change would allow the  
19 development of structures on small lots or, you know,  
20 relatively small buildings on small lots, but larger  
21 buildings on larger lots and [inaudible 01:44:43]  
22 development. It will mean a loss of green space,  
23 but also the increase in the amount of impervious  
24



2 services which perversely increases the potential for  
3 flooding during storm events. You should either--

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.

5 GEORGE JANES: strike this provision  
6 entirely, limit its application to floodplains, or  
7 require the spaces used for the mechanical equipment  
8 be right sized. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
10 for your testimony today.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya, that  
12 was the last speaker on this panel.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Are there any  
14 Council members of questions for this panel?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, I see no  
16 members with questions for the panel.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you. There  
18 being no more questions-- There being no questions  
19 for this panel, the witness panel is now excused.  
20 Counsel, is there another panel? Anyone else that is  
21 listed to testify on this item?

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We will now check  
23 and see if there are. If there are any members of  
24 the public who wish to testify on the zoning for  
25 coastal flood resiliency proposal or any of the

2 resilient neighborhood proposals for Gerritsen Beach,  
3 Sheepshead Bay, or Old Howard Beach, please press the  
4 raise hand button now and the meeting will stand at  
5 ease while we check for any other members of the  
6 public who may registered to testify. Chair, it  
7 appears that we have one individual waiting to  
8 testify who has a hand raised. We are going to check  
9 to see whether that individual is seeking to testify  
10 on the flood resiliency proposals. We will now hear  
11 from, I believe, Jonathan Perez. Jonathan Perez?

12 JONATHAN PEREZ: Yes. I was hoping to  
13 testify on the Governor's Island. Is that not  
14 happened yet?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That item has not  
16 started yet.

17 JONATHAN PEREZ: I will hold on, then.  
18 Sorry about that.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

20 JONATHAN PEREZ: Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: So, Chair Moya,  
22 there are-- we see no other members of the public  
23 wishing to testify on these items.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no  
25 members of the public who wish to testify on the prey

2 considered LU items under ULURP numbers N 210095 ZRY,  
3 C 210130 ZMK, N 210131 ZRK, N 210132 ZRK, and C  
4 210133 ZMQ for the zoning for coastal flood  
5 resiliency and for the resilient neighborhoods  
6 Gerritsen Beach, Old Howard Beach, and the special  
7 Sheepshead Bay District proposal, the public hearings  
8 are now closed and the items are laid over. As I  
9 announced at the start of today's meeting, since--

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry, Chair. We  
11 are going to skip that paragraph.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Got it. I now  
13 want to open up the public hearing on the prey  
14 considered LU item under ULURP number N 210126 ZRM  
15 and C 210127 ZMM for the Governors Island rezoning  
16 proposal which seeks a zoning map amendment and  
17 zoning text amendment and which relates to property  
18 in Council member Chin's district. I will remind the  
19 viewing public, for anyone wishing to testify on this  
20 item, if you have not already done so, you must  
21 register online in advance and you may do that now by  
22 visiting the Council's website. I would now like to  
23 take this opportunity to recognize Council member  
24 Chin for some remarks. Council member?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you, Chair.

3 I just have questions for later, but I really thank  
4 you for chairing this important meeting and Governors  
5 Island is a treasure for the whole city and I know  
6 that many of my colleagues have visited or brought  
7 their constituents there, so we just hope that  
8 whatever we do there in the future will continue to  
9 be a wonderful resource in place for our city. So, I  
10 look forward to the presentation and thank you,  
11 again, for chairing this meeting at another long  
12 meeting for you, Council member Moya. Chair Moya.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: It's a walk in the park  
14 for us, Council member. Thank you so much. Thank  
15 you. Counsel, if you could please call the first  
16 panel for this item?

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The applicant panel  
18 for this item will include Clara Newman, Christopher  
19 Tapper, and Sarah Kraut time for that Trust for  
20 Governors Island. Clara Newman, as president and CEO  
21 for the trust will act as the moderator of sorts for  
22 today as needed. We will also have Jack Robbins as  
23 the project architect signer and planner and Wesley  
24 O'Brien, land-use counsel for the applicant.

2 Panelists, if you have not already done so, please  
3 accept the unmute request in order to begin to speak.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. And now,  
5 counsel, if you could please administer the  
6 affirmation.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Panelists, please  
8 raise your right hands. Do you affirm to tell the  
9 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in  
10 your testimony before this subcommittee and in answer  
11 to all Council member questions?

12 UNIDENTIFIED: I do.

13 JACK ROBBINS: I do.

14 WESLEY O'BRIEN: I do.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. So, we are  
16 in receipt of your slideshow presentation for this  
17 proposal. When you're ready to present the  
18 slideshow, please say so and it will be displayed on  
19 the screen by our staff. Slides will be advanced  
20 when you say next. Please note that there may be a  
21 slight delay in both the loading and the advancing of  
22 slides. Once again, anyone who requires an  
23 accessible version of this presentation may send an  
24 email request to land use [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).  
25 And now, if the panelists would please, once again,

2 restate your names and organizations for the record  
3 and then you may begin.

4           CLAIRE NEWMAN:     Thank you, Chair Moya.  
5 I am Claire Newman, president of the Trust for  
6 Governors Island.

7           CHRISTOPHER TUPPER:     Good morning, Chair  
8 Moya. I am Christopher Tupper, chief development  
9 officer at the Trust for Governors Island.

10           SARAH KRAUTHEIM: Sarah Krautheim, Trust  
11 for Governors Island.

12           WESLEY O'BRIEN:     Yes. And Wesley O'Brien  
13 from Fried Frank.

14           JACK ROBBINS:         Jack Robbins, partner  
15 and director of urban design for FX Collaborative,  
16 consultant to the trust.

17           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great. Thank you. You  
18 may begin whenever you're ready.

19           CLAIRE NEWMAN:     Great. Thanks, Chair  
20 Moya. We ready for the presentation. Good morning,  
21 Chair Moya, Council member Chin, Council members.  
22 Thank you for having us today. As mentioned, I am  
23 Claire Newman, the president of the Trust for  
24 Governors Island and we are very thrilled to be  
25 presenting our vision for Governors Island. Next,

2 please. Governors Island is truly a gem in the  
3 harbor, just minutes from lower Manhattan and  
4 Brooklyn by ferry. It totals 172 acres and is home  
5 to 1,300,000 square feet of landmarked buildings on  
6 the northern island. We are open to the public from  
7 May to October. Next, please. The trust for  
8 Governors Island is a mission driven not-for-profit  
9 that owns and operates the island. We are 100  
10 percent focused on making Governors Island an amazing  
11 public place for New York City residents through  
12 three key pillars. First, stewarding and expanding  
13 the islands open space, park, and recreational  
14 resources, view from the hills, as pictured here.  
15 Second, expanding opportunities for dynamic diverse  
16 arts and culture which has been a core of what the  
17 island has meant to New York from its inception, and,  
18 third, making the island an even greater resource  
19 for the city through expanding its use as a climate  
20 education and research Center. Next, please. The  
21 island has an incredibly rich history. First  
22 utilized as a hunting and fishing camp by the Lenape  
23 and, for nearly two centuries, was utilized as a  
24 military base. It was closed to the public in the  
25 mid-1990s. Following the closure of the Coast Guard

1 base, nearly a decade of advocacy led to the transfer  
2 of the island from the federal to local control. In  
3 2013, the northern historic section of the island was  
4 rezoned to allow for mixed use is envisioned by the  
5 transfer. Next, please. It's also important to note  
6 the history of planning on the island. The deed for  
7 the island required the creation of a master-planned  
8 and it outlines required permitted and prohibited  
9 uses of the island. Note that the deed requires  
10 educational use and Park use on the island in  
11 perpetuity and it contemplates mixed use development  
12 on the island. In 2006, project roles in line with  
13 the deed were outlined, including mixed uses and  
14 revenue generation which, again, are fully in line  
15 with our proposed rezoning. Next, please. In 2010,  
16 the master plan was released which really outlined in  
17 award-winning Park which has already been opened and  
18 delivered to the public. It also identified, as you  
19 can see here, two sites for development on the  
20 southern half of the island to support and  
21 enhancement of the island as a 365 active resource  
22 for the city, as well as to generate revenue to  
23 support the islands mission. These are the sites now  
24 being proposed for rezoning. Next, please. Over the  
25



1 past 10 years, a huge amount of progress has been  
2 made-- a huge amount of progress has been made on  
3 the island. Thanks to the work of many who came  
4 before, the island has invested in Park, open space,  
5 and infrastructure. The city has invested over \$400  
6 million, in fact. We have built out partnerships  
7 with the harbor school, lower Manhattan Cultural  
8 Counsel, and programming partnerships focused on arts  
9 education, and environmental users, and we have  
10 attracted millions of visitors. 80 percent of  
11 visitors to the Governors Island are from New York  
12 City and we get visitors from every single  
13 residential ZIP Code in the city. Thanks to this  
14 progress, we believe Governors Island is now ready to  
15 take its next at and grow from being a six-month  
16 destination 283 65 part of the city's fabric. Next,  
17 please. To that end, the Mayor's Office and trust  
18 laid out a vision to create a leading center for  
19 climate solutions on the island, a vision which  
20 builds upon the work of the existing partners like  
21 the Harbor school, Billy and oyster project, and many  
22 others in the environmental and educational  
23 community. The islands iconic location, its unique  
24 geography, it's role in New York City as an authentic  
25

1 public place all meaning can provide a platform to  
2 bring together and scale the climate research and  
3 policy work so needed to tackle this next big  
4 challenge to the city and the world. By taking  
5 education and resource out of-- research out of a  
6 traditional campus environment and putting it in a  
7 public place, we believe we can center equity and  
8 public engagement and moving climate action forward.

9 Next, please. For us, the realization of this  
10 climate center starts with attracting an educational  
11 and research partner to create a truly cross  
12 disciplinary hub of learning, research, and public  
13 engagement. This will be the foundation upon which  
14 we can bring a cross sector approach to the issue.

15 Next, please. The links between public health,  
16 climate, and the environment is unquestionable and as  
17 we emerge from the Covid 19 crisis, we have an  
18 opportunity to reimagine our urban fabric and prepare  
19 for the existential threat of climate change. This  
20 division is a key part of the Mayor's recovery  
21 agenda. The project alone is projected to create  
22 8000 permanent jobs on Governors Island. The plan  
23 also offers tremendous potential to create synergies  
24 with our existing tenants, build broad educational  
25

1 and training opportunities, again, like the harbor  
2 school and billion oyster project pictured here.  
3  
4 Next, please. This initiative also builds upon New  
5 York City's leadership in climate policy and  
6 resiliency by expanding space for education,  
7 training, and research and offering opportunities to  
8 showcase and engage visitors in real solutions they  
9 can take back to their communities. Next. Here is  
10 an illustrative vision of what a climate center on  
11 Governors Island could look like. Not official real  
12 architecture, but meant to paint a picture of how  
13 this zoning envelope could be utilized to realize a  
14 climate center. Next. We plan to release a  
15 solicitation for an educational and research partner  
16 institution this year. Working with our community  
17 advisory Council, we are outlining goals specifically  
18 focused on, one, public engagement. Two, equitable  
19 development of equitable workforce and educational  
20 pipelines, and, three, design guidelines. In  
21 addition, we will continue to move forward with the  
22 activation of the historic district through targeted  
23 RFPs focused on attracting educational, cultural, and  
24 amenity uses to the island. Next, please. This  
25 proposed rezoning is critical to delivering on the

1 islands potential as a resource for the city that is  
2 accessible year-round and for supporting the vision  
3 for the climate center. One, the zoning is necessary  
4 to allow for the mix of educational, cultural, and  
5 commercial uses long contemplated for the island and  
6 in line with the deed. Second, the proposal would  
7 generate revenue to support care for the park to  
8 support expanded citywide access to the islands,  
9 create additional programming, and care for the  
10 historic district. Three, that brings life and  
11 activity to the island year-round, making it as much  
12 of a resource on a Tuesday in February as it is now  
13 on a Saturday in July. And, last, it creates an  
14 envelope and guard rails that will enable us to  
15 realize a critical project for the city: the Center  
16 for climate solution. Next. So, on to the proposed  
17 rezoning. The proposal in front of you involves  
18 extending the special Governors Island district that  
19 was created in 2013 on the North Island only to the  
20 southern portion of the island. Next, please. The  
21 picture here is an overview map of the island. The  
22 northern section of the island, as mentioned, is home  
23 to the 1.3 million square feet of historic buildings.  
24 It is also home to a handful of year-round tenants.  
25

1 We continue to work towards attracting new users to  
2 these historic buildings and really pushing forward  
3 the adaptive reuse. The South Island zoning today is  
4 in conflict with the deed. It is zoned for  
5 residential uses. Throughout the decades of planning  
6 for the island, rezoning has always been necessary on  
7 the South Island for that reason. Next. Pictured  
8 here are the current development sites on the  
9 southern portion of the island. Today, they are all  
10 fenced off to the public. One site is home to a  
11 glamping operation and the other is home to the  
12 vacant buildings that are structurally unstable, left  
13 over from Coast Guard days. Next, please. Our  
14 proposal is to extend the uses allowed on the North  
15 Island today to the South Island development areas,  
16 adding research and development and small-scale  
17 production. The zoning will also protect and expand  
18 park and open space on the island. The existing Park  
19 will not be impacted by this proposal. In fact, an  
20 additional layer of protection is being afforded.  
21 And, finally, the proposal would increase the  
22 allowable density on the southern part of the island  
23 from the approximately 3.4 million square feet  
24 allowed today under the R32 to about 4.275. That is,

2 effectively, a 3.0 FAR without including, of course,

3 the open space. Height limits range on the island.

4 They vary from 60 foot base heights to the maximum

5 heights of between 200 and 250 feet. Next, please.

6 What is important to point out is that development

7 may only be generated with the development zones

8 outlined by the master plan. Those are the only

9 areas that create FAR and open space subarea is

10 proposed to be created which includes all of the

11 existing Park, plus some unbuilt sections of the

12 original Park plan and the entire Esplanade. In that

13 space also has protections under the deed. Next,

14 please. I am now going to turn it over to Jack

15 Robbins from FX Collaborative to share more about the

16 urban design framework for the proposed rezoning.

17 Jack?

18 JACK ROBBINS: Great. Thank you,

19 Claire. So, this rezoning is the product of years of

20 study and input from stakeholders, as Clear as

21 outlined. Some of that-- and I want to walk through

22 what some of the key urban design points are. We

23 began by establishing a set of guiding principles and

24 these principles are designed to safeguard and to

25 enhance those qualities in place that make Governors

2 Island so amazing. The park, the waterfront, the  
3 historic buildings, the relationship to the harbor  
4 and to the skyline. In addition, we, the things that  
5 will allow Governors Island to become a beacon of  
6 sustainable development. Next, please. One of the  
7 key questions, one of the key issues, of course, is  
8 what is the right density and scale? How do you get  
9 to that critical mass that, as clear talked about,  
10 will make you feel comfortable on a weeknight in  
11 February, as well as a Saturday in July? How do we  
12 achieve that critical mass? Well, one of the things  
13 we did was to study comparable developments from  
14 around the country in places like Boston and Atlanta  
15 and we looked at what the size of those developments  
16 is and what the density there is. And they ranged,  
17 as you can see here, from about two and a quarter  
18 million square feet up to 8 million square feet.  
19 This puts the Governors Island proposal exactly in  
20 the mid-range of that. And when you look at the  
21 FAR-- and, again, the FAR or the denominator in the  
22 FAR is just the development zones. It does not  
23 include the park. It is only a 2.98, quite allow FAR  
24 for this kind of development. Next, please. Another  
25 key element of the urban design has to do with the

1 connectivity. Both the visual connectivity and how  
2 you actually move around the island and we began with  
3 a focus on Yankee Pier and that is the main arrival  
4 point and created Yankee Pier Plaza. And then, a  
5 network of pathways connecting to win through the  
6 development zones to connect to the waterfront to the  
7 park and connect the South Island to the North Island  
8 and really make this a place that is easy to get  
9 around. Next, please. The part, of course, is one  
10 of the main assets of the island and we really were  
11 looking to enhance that. So, we are not taking away  
12 any park space with this development. In fact, we  
13 are adding to the park space. We are adding areas  
14 around the edges to become part of the park and we  
15 are then creating a network of open spaces that  
16 support the park. Pathways, clauses, other areas  
17 that will help to we the open spaces on the island  
18 together into a network for everyone to enjoy. Just  
19 emphasize the park space is being increased, not lost  
20 or decreased. Next, please. The bulk envelope is  
21 designed to be flexible and to create variety. It  
22 allows moments of greater height, while keeping the  
23 sensitive edges lower. No more than 30 percent of  
24 the planned development zone can be built in the  
25



1 taller maximum heights and then, again, very across  
2 the development zones. Greater heights allowed  
3 closer to Yankee Pier-- again, that's just kind of  
4 good basic urban design coordinating your  
5 transportation and your density. But it is also Law  
6 were in other key areas. Next, please. One of the  
7 key restrictions in height is a transition zone. It  
8 is created along the border between the North Island  
9 and the South Island. That border was known as  
10 Division Road, but we want to make it not a division.  
11 We want to make it a seamless transition. The  
12 heights in this transition zone are limited to 60  
13 feet. The heights on the North Island across from  
14 that range from 35 feet to 125 feet with most of the  
15 building heights being around 50 feet. So, this will  
16 create a transition area as the height goes up or can  
17 go up towards the South Island, so even though you  
18 have some of the taller heights right next to Yankee  
19 Pier, they are not in the development area next to  
20 Yankee Pier. They are not right next to Yankee Pier.  
21 Between the Plaza and this transition zone, it will  
22 be pushed back considerably from the historic core.  
23 We see this as a way to connect the North Island in  
24 the South Island and, as a whole, these urban design

2 controls, we think, is really the best recipe to make  
3 Governors Island a vital year-round place. Back to  
4 Claire.

5 CHRISTOPHER TUPPER: Can we unmute  
6 Claire, please?

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: There you go.

8 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Thanks, everyone.  
9 Thanks, Chris. Throughout this process, the trust  
10 has been committed to robust public engagement.  
11 Working closely with our partners, we had presented  
12 at 15 public meetings on this proposal alone. We  
13 have heard comments around a few key areas that we  
14 made modifications of the application into. As you  
15 heard, we lowered maximum building heights which had  
16 been into areas of 300 feet down to 250 feet. We  
17 have made adjustments to lower base heights to allow  
18 for a better transition from the park and the  
19 historic district. We decreased allowable parking.  
20 The island will continue to remain car free for, you  
21 know, driving trips to and from. The parking  
22 allowance is really intended for the storage of  
23 operational vehicles. For example, the trust already  
24 has approximately 50 vehicles today just to care for  
25 the few historic buildings that are occupied in the

2 park space, as well as for ADA accessibility issues.  
3 Next, please. We have also significantly reduced  
4 park amenity use is allowed with the open space sub  
5 area in response to concerns. We are now only  
6 allowing what you would find really anywhere. Years  
7 is allowed are limited to park amenities including  
8 bike kiosks, small outdoor cafés, mini golf, other  
9 low impact amusements like carousels. All of which  
10 have to be open to the sky, and an amphitheater which  
11 is something folks have long wanted on the island.  
12 We have also committed to ensuring that there is  
13 robust public engagement around the climate center  
14 RFP itself. We will be presenting finalist responses  
15 for or qualified responses for input publicly. Next,  
16 please. Of equal importance, we don't want to lose  
17 sight of the other comments we received throughout  
18 this process that fall outside of the zoning, but are  
19 incredibly important to the island. First, we have  
20 committed to ensuring that existing tenants and  
21 partners continued to work on the island. We are  
22 actively working with groups, including Harbor  
23 school, Grow NYC, Earth Matter on location plans and  
24 all our committed to ensuring their work continues on  
25 Governors Island. This is extremely important to the

1 island and the climate center vision and something we  
2 are actively pursuing. And, in fact, we made  
3 significant real progress in the last months. We  
4 also know how important field space is on the island,  
5 especially during this past year. We are continuing  
6 to work on the expansion of those uses. Third, we  
7 plan to expand ways for visitors to engage with the  
8 waterfront. We have kayaking and other activities  
9 now and, as capital funding becomes available, we  
10 want to continue to integrate places to touch and be  
11 with the water on the island. And then, of course,  
12 we are committed to building upon the legacy of the  
13 park to use the island as a showcase for new  
14 approaches to urban sustainability and resiliency,  
15 whether it is with our historic buildings or new  
16 facilities or day-to-day operations. Next, please.  
17 At the end of the day, we believe this proposed  
18 rezoning is our pathway to delivering on the long-  
19 held vision integrating Governors Island into the  
20 city as a mission driven 365 place, generating a  
21 revenue stream to help support the island, all while  
22 creating a one-of-a-kind project to bring together  
23 science, policy, arts, and public engagement devoted  
24 to pressing issues of climate and the environment in  
25

2 a way that adds value to the city's recovery. We are  
3 committed to continuing this process in partnership  
4 with the Council and to continue to work on all the  
5 detailed input we have received to date. Next,  
6 please. With that, I am happy to take any questions  
7 and thank you all for the time.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you.  
9 Before I turn it over to Council member Chin for some  
10 questions, I just have a few questions for you. So,  
11 according to the EIS Governors Island in its open  
12 space functions as a major destination for the city  
13 and the region with over 16,000 workers and visitors  
14 on a peak single day, is it correct that your  
15 proposal is expected to double this population to  
16 over 42,000 people?

17 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Thank you, Chair Moya.  
18 I'm going to ask Wesley and Chris from Martin to  
19 tackle that question.

20 WESLEY O'BRIEN: Sure. The peak number  
21 of users is not in definitive of the 42,000 people on  
22 a single day, Chair Moya. They have looked at--

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Can you speak a little  
24 louder? I didn't quite hear you.

2 WESLEY O'BRIEN: Yes, sir. They have  
3 looked, as part of the EIS. They have analyzed the  
4 peak hour of [inaudible 02:14:05] to the island  
5 particularly during the business days.

6 CHRISTOPHER TUPPER: Chair Moya, the  
7 number of people-- because a lot of our peaks now  
8 are on summer weekends, we are actually going to have  
9 a somewhat even population-- the big increase is  
10 going to be on weekdays because they will start to  
11 have more tenant businesses and workers and students  
12 and people going to the climate center on the South  
13 island. But those will tend to be, you know, Monday  
14 through Friday where our existing peak users are  
15 public access summer weekends and that we don't  
16 anticipate to change that much from where it is  
17 today.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. So, just to be  
19 clear, you're saying that it is not going to be over  
20 42,000 at peak hours?

21 CHRISTOPHER TUPPER: No. Our peak our  
22 transportation demand is around 9000 people coming on  
23 like a Monday morning, let's say, at 9 a.m.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. So, just with  
25 that, as well, you just mentioned something that

2 leads to this question, which of the proposals  
3 proposed uses envision that would bring the most  
4 people to the island?

5                   CLAIRE NEWMAN: I think, Chair Moya--  
6 Oh, go ahead, Wesley. Please.

7                   WESLEY O'BRIEN: I was going to say so of  
8 the two analyses that were undertaken, they looked at  
9 one that was heavier and weighted towards the  
10 University uses and one that would be heavier  
11 weighted towards the office uses. For the  
12 transportation analysis, it is a bit of a mix-and-  
13 match because, in different periods, they are  
14 different peaks. So, they have taken, as part of the  
15 EIS, they look at the most intense transportation  
16 from either one. So, for example, the office may be  
17 the peak in the morning use. The more heavily  
18 weighted office mixed-use development may be the peak  
19 in the morning, but then the University may have been  
20 the peak for the midday. So, it's the mix-and-match  
21 for the most intense for the analysis.

22                   CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. And can you give  
23 us an idea of how much the ferry system would need to  
24 be expanded to serve the increased population?

2           CLAIRE NEWMAN:     Yeah.  I'll start and  
3 that'll turn it over to Chris, as well.  Right now, I  
4 think to just give a sense of the volume of that, on  
5 a weekend hour, we have the capacity to bring about 4  
6 to 5000 people to the island.  So, our financial  
7 modeling and our planning for this intends increase  
8 both ferry frequency and ferry service as we  
9 adaptively reuse buildings and as new buildings,  
10 online in order to keep up with the demand.  Chris,  
11 do you want at the details?

12           CHRISTOPHER TUPPER:     Yeah.  Just that,  
13 as Claire just said, because we are already used to  
14 large peak key populations where everyone wants to  
15 get out as early as possible on a summer-- you know,  
16 a sunny summer day, we are going from about the  
17 ability to carry about 4500 people on a peak day to  
18 needing to be able to carry about 9004 what we  
19 envision in the long run.  The full development of  
20 the South island and re-tenting of the North Island.  
21 So, it's really basically we have two ferries today  
22 with some supplementary chartered service in the  
23 summer to Brooklyn and with NYC Ferry.  Basically,  
24 need to double what we have today, but we actually  
25 have, in our existing 10 year capital plan with OMB



2 capital for two additional ferries, one of which is  
3 already in design.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. What are the  
5 allowable use is being proposed in the open space  
6 subarea?

7 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Sure. Once again, all  
8 started I'll ask the team to jump in if I get  
9 anything wrong. First, you know, we have to go with  
10 the zoning use groups, but there are sort of things  
11 that I would put in the category of food and  
12 beverage. It used to be that it allowed for food and  
13 beverage uses of over 200 persons. It's now only  
14 such things below 200 people. So, really similar to,  
15 honestly, if you came to Governors Island today and  
16 you ate at Fauzia's or Island Oyster or those kinds  
17 of spaces that people need on the island of the  
18 amenities on the weekends and weekdays when they come  
19 visit the island. That is one group. The second  
20 group are open-air sort of children's oriented  
21 amusements. We eliminated a whole swath of things  
22 that folks were concerned could allow larger scale  
23 amusements like what you would find on Coney Island  
24 which was not the intent, but we made sure to clean  
25 that up. So, it would be things like carousels, mini

2 golf, outdoor day camps. This whole group of things  
3 is only open-air, nothing that is enclosed or covered  
4 in any way. And then there's a bucket of things that  
5 are sort of infrastructure related to serving the  
6 park. So, you know, I don't know. City Bike kiosks,  
7 a little stop with an overhead for a trim. Thank  
8 you, Council member Chin for your support on the  
9 trams. And things of that nature. Wesley and Chris,  
10 did I miss anything?

11 CHRISTOPHER TUPPER: No. I think you  
12 capture the important things. There was a slide if  
13 we wanted to see the full list in the presentation,  
14 if it is helpful or not. But it listed out every  
15 single use and, as Claire made the important point  
16 that they all have to be open to the air.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. And can you sort  
18 of talked or how these uses were studied in the final  
19 EIS?

20 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Yeah. Wesley, jump in.  
21 I do want to just make the point that, you know,  
22 because we started this project, gosh, back in--  
23 Well, I don't know when you would say we started it.  
24 It's been going on for many, many years now. But the  
25 scoping in 2018 was looking at a more generic program

2 and so we did study, as Wesley said, two things. One  
3 was a more office oriented program and one was a more  
4 University oriented program and in all cases,  
5 obviously, took on the very serious responsibility to  
6 always look at the reasonable worst-case scenario  
7 across those two so that that way there was no chance  
8 that we had overlooked some potential environmental  
9 impact. But, Wesley, can you share the details of  
10 our approach there?

11 WESLEY O'BRIEN: Sure. And, Chair Moya,  
12 I understand your question to be focused on the  
13 analysis of the open space area and how that was  
14 looked at in the EIS? Yeah. So, this is a  
15 supplemental EIS, so there was initially a generic  
16 EIS in 2011 followed by a supplemental in 2013. So,  
17 the supplemental EIS-- actually both 2011 and 2013  
18 looked at the build out of the park pursuant to the  
19 master plan. So, that and the trips generated by  
20 park users, the types of users that would be  
21 anticipated at the time were all studied in detail at  
22 that point in 2013. So, today we are here with a  
23 second supplemental EIS that looks at the new uses  
24 that are going to be generated by the proposed  
25 rezoning. So, that is really focused on the uses in

2 the development zones and that is layered on top of  
3 the work that is done in 2011 and 2013.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: And how can we provide  
5 more assurances to the public that these uses will  
6 not take over the open space?

7 CHRISTOPHER TUPPER: Could you unmute  
8 Claire, again? Claire, you can't-- don't you  
9 yourself.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You. Don't mute  
11 yourself.

12 CLAIRE NEWMAN: I finally figured it  
13 out. I'm going to keep up now. Sorry, all. Go  
14 ahead, Chris.

15 CHRISTOPHER TUPPER: Yeah. So, we been  
16 managing-- obviously, there's going to be a balance,  
17 I think, between the number of amenities. I think  
18 everyone wants more than there is today. There's no  
19 bathrooms. There are very few places to get food, in  
20 particular, year round. You know, I think it is just  
21 generally our commitment to managing the park so that  
22 it has a diversity of uses that a diversity of  
23 amenities for a broad range of New Yorkers, both  
24 active and passive recreation, plenty of green open

2 space for respite. Places for children to play and  
3 places for families defined entertainment.

4 SARAH KRAUTHEIM: And if I could just add,  
5 Chair Moya, you know, the part, as Claire mentioned  
6 in her presentation, it is protected by the deed in  
7 perpetuity in the open space subarea, the uses  
8 allowed within that area are very much in line with  
9 what you would find in any park across the city, so,  
10 you know, the park is incredibly important to the  
11 island today and in the future and, you know, while  
12 there is been some noise out they are around  
13 development happening on the park, FAR cannot be  
14 generated in the park in the park is protected  
15 through this process.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. But could those  
17 uses potentially reduce the open space ratio on the  
18 island?

19 CLAIRE NEWMAN: No. I mean, I would  
20 also say that, you know, we-- particularly this came  
21 up a lot of the community board. You know, we were  
22 very concerned about the issue and so we did-- I  
23 mean, we really took pen to paper and tried to make  
24 the changes that will we thought folks would provide  
25 the comfort you are asking for, but, you know, if

2 there's something in that list that in second review  
3 and second look that people say, gosh, you know, that  
4 scares me. I really don't want that. We are, of  
5 course, open to continuing those conversations. As  
6 Chris said, we are trying to make sure that there is  
7 enough uses that we can at places to get a sandwich,  
8 coffee, whatever, what have you. Maybe people want  
9 to go on a merry-go-round, but we very much  
10 appreciate the importance of this issue and want to  
11 continue to work together on that.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. And last  
13 question. Do any of the construction of the  
14 retrofitting of buildings to be more resilient  
15 require any specialized labor?

16 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Oh. That's an  
17 interesting question, Council member Moya. I'll have  
18 to get back to you on the details of that, but we do  
19 expect, you know, that the adaptive reuse of the  
20 buildings really can be a showcase for how to do, in  
21 particular, rehab of historic buildings in a way that  
22 is sustainable and resilient. So, expect that there  
23 will be a lot of specialized trades involved in that  
24 work. Chris, do you want to share something more  
25 there?

2 CHRISTOPHER TUPPER: No. I mean, a lot  
3 of I think what you said is right. Definitely, I  
4 think that there is going to be a lot of  
5 opportunities and as the technologies and approaches  
6 change, I think it is certain that there will be  
7 specialized trades and engineering.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you.

9 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Thanks.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: That is it for me. I  
11 want to now turn it over to Council member Chin.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah. Thank you,  
13 Chair Moya. And thank you to the Gov. Island team on  
14 your presentation. I have some follow-up questions  
15 that the Chair talked about and other questions. In  
16 terms of expansion of the ferry service, because  
17 right now there are fairies coming from Brooklyn and  
18 from lower Manhattan, but for other parts, I think,  
19 of the city, are you looking at really expanding the  
20 ferry service about other neighborhoods will have  
21 easy access to Governors Island instead of having to  
22 take a bus to the ferry terminal or to take a subway  
23 or since we have so many ferry stops now, how do we  
24 sort of increase the service directly to Governors  
25 Island?

2           CLAIRE NEWMAN:    Yeah.  Thank you,  
3 Council member Chin.  That is certainly our vision.  
4 I mean, as you said, we want to be able to connect  
5 directly with many more parts of the city at greater  
6 frequency.  Actually, a few years ago now we were on  
7 a year-round basis and one of the New York City ferry  
8 lines, but there wasn't really that demand in place  
9 to support it, so our hope is that as we are able to  
10 bring more folks to the island on a year round basis,  
11 whether it be park visitors or, you know, students  
12 going to the Harbor school or, you know, folks  
13 tenanting new buildings in the historic district,  
14 that we will be able to really add that additional  
15 connectivity.  We think it is enormously important,  
16 A, getting people to the island easier so they can  
17 enjoy this fantastic resource and, B, providing those  
18 connections to jobs and educational opportunities as  
19 the vision comes to life.  Chris or Sarah, something  
20 you want to add on that?

21           SARAH KRAUTHEIM:  The only thing I think I  
22 would just point out is, you know, as Claire is  
23 mentioned, it's very important and, recently, we did  
24 expand direct ferry service to Red Hawk really in an  
25 effort to increase accessibility, especially to



2 communities that don't have as much access to open  
3 space. So, I think that is something that is very  
4 much on our radar and we are going to continue to  
5 study as the funding becomes available to increase  
6 ferry expansion.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And we are also  
8 asking the city EDC to help support the, especially  
9 in the lower side of my district and also Council  
10 member Rivera's district. When the East River Park is  
11 going under resiliency efforts, people need to go to  
12 another park. Need to go to Governors Island--

13 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Totally.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: and we want to make  
15 sure that they have direct access--

16 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Yes.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: with the ferry  
18 service. So, that is one thing that is important  
19 immediately. The other question that I want to raise  
20 is that I have heard from the public and constituents  
21 about the overall density. The level of density when  
22 we heard back is [inaudible 02:28:20] because,  
23 comparatively, it looks like it's a lot. The  
24 buildings are taller and you're talking about 250  
25 feet. That's like 25 story building on the island

2 and, with that, the justification the talk is always  
3 been, well, this is also important for financial  
4 self-sufficiency. So, I guess you can address that  
5 issue. Like what is the need for that kind of  
6 density in terms of the bulk and height and how that  
7 financial self-sustainability, how is that goal  
8 aligned in this proposed special district?

9           CLAIRE NEWMAN: Sure. Thanks, Council  
10 member. Yeah. I think we have really approach to  
11 the review ways because, you know, it's not a simple  
12 question and we want to give it a lot of care and  
13 thought over the years working closely with DCP, as  
14 well. You know, I would remind that it does sound  
15 like a lot. It is also spread out over 33 acres and  
16 it can sometimes be hard to have a sense of the scale  
17 of the island when you come and visit, but it is  
18 equivalent to half like-- basically, if you took  
19 Governors Island as a map and plopped it on to  
20 Manhattan, it would run from the foot of the Brooklyn  
21 Bridge down to the Staten Island ferry terminal all  
22 the way to Broadway. So, it is a very large space  
23 and the effective FAR, as Jack pointed out, is below  
24 with three. That is less than what Cornell Tech is  
25 by way of example. It is less than really every

1 comparable in New York City we could look at. You  
2 know, all that said, on to the specifics of your  
3 question, we did look at those comparable  
4 neighborhoods. We looked at creating that sort of  
5 critical mass to and live it the island 365, as Jack  
6 was saying, and we did countless hours of analysis  
7 from a financial productions point of view, looking  
8 at what those bases both adaptive reuse of the North  
9 Island buildings, plus new construction on the South  
10 Island. I should say plus all the other sources of  
11 revenue that the island gets through the hard work of  
12 the Friends and grantmaking, through, you know,  
13 revenue from concessions and events, etc. and,  
14 basically, said, over time, can we get to the point  
15 where, you know, the island is generating more than  
16 it is taking in? In this project is the University  
17 pathway and does, indeed, sort of meet that goal and  
18 check that box. We also have talked with the  
19 different public hearings about density. We  
20 understand it is a concern. It's an area we remain  
21 committed to discussing with you all up to ensure  
22 that, you know, folks feel good about the amount that  
23 is being proposed for the island. We know that is an  
24 area where we have to continue to do work.  
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah. I think the  
3 concern is also encroachment on the open space or how  
4 do we view that open space? I had a discussion with  
5 community board want just last week and like when I  
6 talk about going from the North Island of the South  
7 Island, you go through the historic part through the  
8 arch and then you see this beautiful park and we just  
9 all don't want that view to be blocked.

10 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Yes.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Right. So, as much  
12 as possible, we want to protect that magnificent  
13 view. It just reminded me of, you know, the Wizard  
14 of Oz--

15 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Totally.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: that you go through  
17 and you are-- So, I think that is part of the  
18 concern we heard from the public. So, in terms of  
19 the landscape, how do we make sure that that is kept  
20 intact and also the island is very windy and because  
21 of the park, we are concerned about shadowing.

22 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Yep.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And so those are  
24 things that the public are really concerned about. I  
25 mean, they go there they want to be able to enjoy the

2 sun and enjoy the park and we don't want to be blown  
3 away by the wind and we don't want to be, you know,  
4 just always in shadow. So, those are the things that  
5 we want to look at with the height and the mass that  
6 would have an effect--

7 CLAIRES NEWMAN: Yes. Totally.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: on those aspects.

9 CLAIRES NEWMAN: Yeah. We are, of  
10 course, 100 percent committed to that with you. I  
11 would also say that, you know, one thing we didn't  
12 mention in this presentation just sort of in the  
13 interest of time is that, when Westgate designed the  
14 park whatever that was sort of coming out of the 2010  
15 competition and really drew the outline of these  
16 areas that we are seeing today that are now being  
17 proposed for rezoning, they have, I mean, hundreds of  
18 hours for consideration for exactly the issues you  
19 are talking about which was really about views, was  
20 really about the experience in the park as those  
21 areas see new construction, and also thinking through  
22 what is the experience like coming through Liggett  
23 Archway as the trees mature over time, as well. And  
24 trying to position that development in a way to  
25 minimize things like shadow impact and impact on

2 views. And that, in particular, by way of example,  
3 is why the sort of southern and the majority of the  
4 western portion of the island, the park directly  
5 connects to the water. So, but, anyway. But, yes.  
6 We will continue to work on that with you.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah. I am also  
8 glad to hear about the, you know, expansion of  
9 athletic fields. That is really greatly needed, not  
10 just for the harbor school, but also, you know, for  
11 all the neighborhoods around the city and especially  
12 for lower Manhattan.

13 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Yes.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And all the soccer  
15 leagues and all the kids that want to play baseball.

16 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Absolutely.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Touch the grass.  
18 You know, feet on the grass. That is really  
19 important and I know that You know, we are expanding  
20 the harbor school the ferry service is so critical  
21 because, I mean, the mayor is talking about a middle  
22 school in every borough, so I want to make sure that  
23 every borough, the kids will be able to access the  
24 harbor school as easy as possible. As convenient as  
25 possible.

1           CLAIRE NEWMAN:     I just want to say, that  
2  
3     and this is a little personal, as someone who played  
4     softball in Central Park when the Central Park fields  
5     were just little shards of glass and dust, we are  
6     very sympathetic to that and, in fact, Sarah and her  
7     team have already been reaching out to principles in  
8     your district and in Council member Rivera's district  
9     in order to make sure that they know about field  
10    space in preparation for the closure you mentioned.

11           COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN:   I mean, [inaudible  
12    02:35:00], so we have a lot of teens that are really  
13    looking for space. I know that you talked about the  
14    climate center and that education and open space  
15    protected by the deed in perpetuity. So, can you  
16    just expand a little bit on that?

17           CLAIRE NEWMAN:     Yeah. Sure. So, the  
18    required uses, as we mentioned, there sort of three  
19    buckets of uses that are contemplated in the deed and  
20    each is treated a little differently. But, the  
21    required uses are in perpetuity. They don't timeout  
22    and they cover two topics. One is park space and it  
23    essentially requires 40 acres of park space on the  
24    island in perpetuity and then the other is  
25    educational space that requires 20 acres of

2 educational space in perpetuity. Wesley, did I get  
3 anything wrong with that?

4 WESLEY O'BRIEN: Those are the correct  
5 acreages. I would just say that the parkland  
6 requirement is in perpetuity. The educational uses  
7 are for 30 years required use.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. So, we might  
9 have to look at that. How do we extend the deed on  
10 that compartment to make sure that-- I mean, one of  
11 the fears-- or one of the concerns people are  
12 raising also is that they don't want it to, all of a  
13 sudden, become office complex commercial. Amazon and  
14 all that that can encroach upon the island. So, the  
15 educational component versus the climate center  
16 hopefully that will have been. Otherwise, some  
17 higher education components continue to remain on the  
18 island. Can you just expand on 40 acres. How much  
19 is the park space now that's there? So that people  
20 have a better idea? When you're talking about 40  
21 acres of parkland of space?

22 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Sarah, do you have that  
23 figure?

24 SARAH KRAUTHEIM: Yeah. So, the new park  
25 on the southern portion of the island that was



2 designed by Westgate and completed really in two  
3 phases between 2014 and 2016 is approx. 43 acres.  
4 The master plan incorporates all the components  
5 people know and love. Hammock Row, Liggett Terrace,  
6 the ballfields on the South Island, the hills. But  
7 when you look at the island in total just in terms of  
8 acreage, it is a 172 acre island and between the  
9 historic district in the southern portion of the  
10 island, we are home to roughly 120 acres of open  
11 space in total.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay.

13 SARAH KRAUTHEIM: And the open space  
14 subarea as through this proposed rezoning would cover  
15 the entirety of the built open space. The new park  
16 space designed by Westgate as part of the master  
17 plan. There are two portions of the original master  
18 plan that were not finished. There is a portion of  
19 Picnic Point, both envision to be rebuilt, as well as  
20 a tiny portion south of the Western development zone.  
21 All of that, in addition to the waterfront Esplanade  
22 and then all new open space as proposed through the  
23 rezoning would be part of the open space subarea.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. Yeah. It  
25 would be good to get all of that total up to see the

2 amount of park space open space. I mean, I think  
3 with open space we have to get a little bit more  
4 specific just to alleviate the issue out there that  
5 it is not permanent structures or other things that  
6 can encroach on it. So, if we can get down to be  
7 more specific in terms of what is allowable or what  
8 is restricted, I mean, that would be helpful.

9 CLAIRES NEWMAN: Certainly.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: The other question  
11 that came up is the tallest part of the redevelopment  
12 there is a hotel in this whole issue with hotels and  
13 boat-tel, are you proposing a certain amount of floor  
14 area that you envision for those?

15 CLAIRES NEWMAN: Thanks, Margaret. So,  
16 the zoning envelope doesn't specify a certain height  
17 for specific use, so we are not proposing that a  
18 potential hotel be the tallest. You know, what we  
19 are essentially saying is this envelope establishes  
20 these guardrails around so much F a R and that then  
21 via this future RFP process, we are going to start by  
22 securing this educational or research partner and  
23 then, over time, expand into the other uses, as well.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Well, I mean, I  
25 don't really think that a hotel or boat-tels should

2 be part of it. I mean, especially a hotel. I mean,  
3 we have so many hotels in lower Manhattan and also on  
4 the Brooklyn side. So, I just really don't see the  
5 need of having a hotel on Governors Island. I mean,  
6 we looked at you have an educational institution or  
7 you have dormitories and you need faculty housing. I  
8 mean, we can take those into consideration. But  
9 having a hotel or the so-called boat-tel Doc on the  
10 docks. I don't think that is what the public wants  
11 in terms of what, you know, we need there. I just  
12 wanted to, you know, lay that out. I know you  
13 touched on the parking and I understand you are  
14 saying that there is really use for surface parking.  
15 A most of them are run on electric. If they are not  
16 run on electric, how are they getting refueled? So,  
17 they did get off the island to get refueled or you  
18 have--

19 CLAIRES NEWMAN: Chris, go ahead.

20 CHRISTOPHER TUPPER: So, we do have a  
21 legacy from when the Coast Guard was on site. We do  
22 have a legacy small, essentially, gas station. It  
23 just has two pumps that has been used for operational  
24 vehicles, basically, since the time of the Coast  
25 Guard. It's only available for our vehicles. No one

2 else is able to use it. So, that it is currently  
3 what is used for our nonelectric vehicles, but our  
4 intent is to transition to all electric over time.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Okay. The other  
6 thing--

7 CLAIRE NEWMAN: Council member, I just  
8 wanted to add, too, that we have heard that the hotel  
9 component is an important component of this vision  
10 for the climate center. Obviously, we remain  
11 committed to discussing that, as all issues with you  
12 and the team, but, when we think about this idea that  
13 we really can bring together a community that is  
14 talking about issues of climate, talking about, you  
15 know, issues of environmental action and  
16 sustainability and resiliency and making this a real  
17 center for that kind of activity. The idea that you  
18 can have some type of hotel accommodation on the  
19 island has really emerged as being a critical issue  
20 for those types of uses.

21 CHRISTOPHER TUPPER: And, Claire, I was  
22 just going to also add to that the amount we studied  
23 in our plan is less than 10 percent of the total  
24 development envelope.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Yeah. And whoever  
3 comes to the climate center, I don't want them to be  
4 isolated on this island, either. At New York City  
5 has so much to offer. That is why like we have so  
6 many hotels available. So, that's why it really  
7 doesn't make sense. I mean, you go to the island and  
8 do your work and then come back and enjoy what we've  
9 got to offer in lower Manhattan nor in Brooklyn or  
10 another part of the city that they can make use of.  
11 So, we have to-- I guess we can follow up with that.  
12 I just have a couple more questions. One is that  
13 bicycles. Right? Governors Island is a great place  
14 for cyclists, so I guess the issue of getting a  
15 bicycle onto the island door having facilities for  
16 people to park their bike before they get on the boat  
17 and also after they get off of the island, place for  
18 them to park their bike if they don't want to ride a  
19 bike. And in the city bike station you talk about.  
20 Are you are also considering a path? Bike path  
21 because being a pedestrian, bicycle and pedestrian  
22 sometimes don't go together. Yeah, it's ideal to  
23 share the road, but it usually is not that safe for  
24 pedestrians. So, that is one thing that I wanted to

2 say in terms of have you considered having a bike  
3 path on the island?

4           CLAIRE NEWMAN:    Yeah.  We have pretty  
5 extensive cycling infrastructure in place today, but  
6 we also very much appreciate that is something that  
7 can and should expand in line with this vision and,  
8 you know, one of the things we heard as part of this  
9 public review process is the Eastern Esplanade is not  
10 wide enough.  How can you accommodate people and  
11 bikes and etc. safely?  And so, we did actually make  
12 that change and expanded it from, I think, the 55  
13 feet to 70 feet.  So that is certainly something we  
14 plan to take into account.

15           COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN:  Yeah.  That is good  
16 because I think that that's the thing we have learned  
17 is that it definitely should be separated.

18           CLAIRE NEWMAN:  Uh-hm.

19           COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN:  Because, you know,  
20 along with pedestrians, they are walking around the  
21 Esplanade.  They want to stop.  They want to take  
22 pictures.  They wanted to look at the view and I  
23 don't want people to get hit by bicycles in the back  
24 because, you know, you're walking and somebody is,  
25 you know, honking at you or beeping at you.  It's not

2 a pleasant experience. I think that we want to make  
3 sure that both pedestrians and cyclists get to enjoy  
4 the island. That's what is--

5 CLAIRES NEWMAN: Yeah.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: critical.

7 CLAIRES NEWMAN: You know, our belief is  
8 that visitor ship to the park will, you know, go up  
9 as part of this project, too, as we are able to open  
10 year-round, as we are able to increase ferry  
11 frequency and, as you said, very access locations.  
12 So, yes. Mitigating that potential conflict is  
13 something that we will address.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And you also-- you  
15 also I think earlier in your presentation, you did  
16 mention about commitment for space or earth matter  
17 and Grow NYC so that they are a part of the island,  
18 that they are tenants of the island. So, they know  
19 that they have security and that they're not going to  
20 get evicted.

21 CLAIRES NEWMAN: Yeah.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: That they are going  
23 to be there and they are going to be able to expand  
24 because that is so related to the climate solution.

2           CLAIRE NEWMAN:    Yeah.  We have double,  
3 triple, quadruple checked that are proposed zoning  
4 framework allows both composting, excuse me, and  
5 agriculture as of right.  We know that that has been  
6 a sort of pain point and we wanted to make sure that  
7 that would not be an issue for us and we are in  
8 conversations actively right now with both of those  
9 groups amongst many other island partners on, as you  
10 said, long term security on the island.  So no one  
11 has to be worried, oh, what is my future here?  In  
12 those cases, it is especially totally in line with  
13 the climate center vision.

14           COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN:  Great.  Well, we  
15 are going to continue the conversation and the  
16 discussion and trying to address issues that the  
17 constituents and the public have raised to us.

18           CLAIRE NEWMAN:  Yes.

19           COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN:  And we will  
20 continue with that.  Chair Moya, I'm going to pass it  
21 back to you.  I know that that discussion will be  
22 ongoing until we get to a point where we can all  
23 agree.  So, I want to also give opportunity for the  
24 other Council members.  Thank you so much for the  
25 time, Chair Moya.



2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you so much. I  
3 now will ask our counsel to see if there's any  
4 Council members have questions for this panel.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Chair Moya. I  
6 see no members with questions for the panel at this  
7 time.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: There being no further  
9 questions, the applicant panel is excused. Counsel,  
10 are there any members of the public who wish to  
11 testify on the Governors Island rezoning application?

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, Chair Moya.  
13 There are approximately 88 public witnesses who have  
14 signed up to speak and potentially additional  
15 registrations yet to come in. For members of the  
16 public here to testify, please note, again, that  
17 witnesses will generally called in panels of four.  
18 If you are a member of the public who has signed up  
19 to testify on the Governors Island rezoning proposal,  
20 please stand by when you hear your name being called  
21 and prepare to speak when the Chair recognizes you to  
22 do so. Please also note that when all panels in your  
23 group have completed their testimony, you will be  
24 removed from the meeting as a group and the next  
25 group of speakers will be introduced. Once removed,

2 participants may continue to view the livestream  
3 broadcast of this meeting at the New York City  
4 Council website. We will now hear first from the  
5 Manhattan borough president, Gale Brewer. We should  
6 just be brining in the first speaker who will be the  
7 Manhattan borough president, Gale Brewer.

8 GALE BREWER: Thank you. I'm sorry. I was  
9 muted. Thank you very much, Chair Moya and I  
10 appreciate this opportunity. I am here to speak in  
11 opposition, although I know there has been a lot of  
12 movement in terms of some of these unresolved issues  
13 and I think the Trust for doing that. Needless to  
14 say, that I have been at hundreds of discussions and  
15 I, just like everybody else, we left Governors  
16 Island. I do want to thank you because I know that  
17 there is, according to the trust, and expansion of  
18 open space on the South Island because, as you heard  
19 earlier, there is a commitment to why did the  
20 waterfront Esplanade on the eastern image. That is a  
21 big deal and I know that there is also been, as you  
22 heard earlier, a commitment in the open space that  
23 has small scale park amenities and not large ones.  
24 And I thank you for the harbor school. I know that  
25 the parents have been talking about expanding into

1 another building and the pool, I will tell you,  
2 ironically-- I still want to know exactly how this  
3 pool is being paid for because, as we speak, I put in  
4 some money capital. I'm sure that the Council  
5 members did also, but as we speak, the Mayor's Office  
6 is calling us to put more money in. So, I'd like to  
7 understand who is putting in money to make this very  
8 expensive and fabulous pool a reality. I do have--  
9 and this is why I am concerned-- concerned about the  
10 scaled development and the youth groups and I know  
11 that you will have put forth, you know, a way to talk  
12 about climate change and all those great overarching  
13 goals of increasing public access. We need financial  
14 self-sufficiency, but we're all nervous-- I'll be  
15 honest with you-- about doing it at the expense of  
16 the unique character of the island and I know you  
17 heard some of this from the Council member. The  
18 buildings that the trust is proposing would rise as  
19 high as 250 feet and I know that there is a reduction  
20 of the maximum height and I know there's a lowering  
21 of the maximum based height of all buildings to be  
22 more in line with the fabulous historic district.  
23 But just like community board one, I am pushing for  
24 125 feet maximum to really reflect the scale of the  
25

1 historic district. I do think, when you see the  
2 photographs of the deck that you saw earlier, it's  
3 tall. It's 25 stories. That's a lot. And I also  
4 want to say one other thing that is of concern of me  
5 and probably only me, but when the Council member  
6 said correctly, how do we get more-- Oh. This  
7 fucking thing. How do we get more access to the  
8 island with the ferry stop offs, which would make  
9 sense, but I just want to be clear that the stop offs  
10 that is currently there which we have all taken many  
11 times from lower Manhattan and the one from Bread  
12 Public, that they continue to be as populated and as  
13 accessible and as publicized as the one at Yankee  
14 Pier because I worry that people would end up at  
15 Yankee Pier and that would just be the commercial  
16 cycle. So, just be aware of that. And I am also  
17 concerned about the hotel. You know, it is tall. I  
18 do think, if you are an academic and I am a semi  
19 academic, because I teach at Hunter, but I do know  
20 that they don't necessarily need a fancy four-star,  
21 three-star, two star hotel and if there's something  
22 that could fit more in with the University academic  
23 experience because I assume this hotel will be open  
24 to the public. And I will all be honest with you.  
25

2 People who have a lot of money coming for the  
3 weekend, it does change the open public access of the  
4 island. Academics are fine. So, I am just saying  
5 it's a nuance. You know what? It been around a long  
6 time and I know that that is what happens in a  
7 situation where you make it so private. And it  
8 wouldn't be you. It would be the concierge and  
9 others pushing something that we don't want for  
10 Governors Island. We've got to be so careful about  
11 that. And I know you need money. I think it would  
12 be helpful that a little bit more. I know board one  
13 has asked for this in terms of the financials. How  
14 do you get to that breakeven point by 2050? What  
15 exactly do you need in order to get to that point?  
16 And also just-- I know you have talked about all the  
17 resiliency issues, but I think those two should be  
18 set out a little bit more. Thank you for what you've  
19 done for Earth Matters in addition to the other ways  
20 in which you responded to the community based  
21 organizations that are on the island. As you know,  
22 Earth Matters is pleased to be preserved and so it  
23 will be an asset to the future of the island. They  
24 would like a little bit more space. I think we heard  
25 that. I know you always think people want more,

1 more, more. Earth Matters is fabulous. They want to  
2 go from half an acre to two acres to be responsive to  
3 the growing [inaudible 02:54:20] of this plan. I do  
4 think the climate research tenant-- some don't agree  
5 with me on this. I certainly would agree with you  
6 that that is the anchor of the plan, but you stop to  
7 make it clear. I know that you have to have a plan  
8 and then the University and I hope that CUNY would be  
9 part of this or SUNY. We have to have those public  
10 universities involved. And I know you have been  
11 talking about this. But the question is how do you  
12 keep it as public minded is possible? You have to  
13 make sure that that is the number one goal. If the  
14 climate center, how is it diverse? How was it  
15 University with CUNY and SUNY? I just want to  
16 mention a couple other things. I know that the issue  
17 of community board one's review has been phenomenal  
18 and I want to thank the Chair and all the members  
19 because I know they have tried to figure out how to  
20 incorporate greater community import and you have  
21 certainly responded and it would be great, as  
22 suggested, that the final RFP would include three  
23 proposals and it would include CB one's review, but I  
24 also hope that they could have import through the  
25

1 community advising counsel into the RFP in the first  
2 place. We know that the goal of any development on  
3 Governors Island should be through enhancing the  
4 character of the island and its use is and I believe  
5 that the goals of the rezoning can be achieved  
6 without a major impact on the historic qualities and  
7 the [inaudible 02:55:46] qualities that make this  
8 island such a magnet for the public and the fact that  
9 it is free and with my municipal ID I can get on the  
10 ferry for free, that is what makes it special. It is  
11 hard to prioritize the preservation of the island  
12 along with its other goals, those public goals and  
13 the financial goals, but that's what you have to do.  
14 So, I do continue to object to the proposed height of  
15 the buildings on the south island. I also take that  
16 into consideration, so I thank you for the  
17 opportunity to testify and for your careful review of  
18 this application. You know what? This is probably  
19 the most beloved island in New York City, if not in  
20 the world. Please, take care. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Madam Borough  
23 President, for your testimony today. I want to check  
24 in with our counsel to see if we can call up the  
25 first panel now.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. Before  
3 excusing Mdm. Borough Pres., I see no members with  
4 questions for her and we will then move to the next  
5 panel which will include Tammy Meltzer and Lucian  
6 Reynolds, the Chair and district manager respectively  
7 of Manhattan community board one. First speaker will  
8 be Tammy Meltzer followed by Lucian Reynolds.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I just want to take this  
10 opportunity to remind the members of the public that  
11 you will be given to minutes to speak, so please do  
12 not begin until the sergeant-at-arms has started the  
13 clock.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

15 TAMMY MELTZER: Good morning, Chair Moya  
16 and esteemed members of the subcommittee. I am Tammy  
17 Meltzer, Chair of the Manhattan community board one.  
18 While Governors Island falls within our district, it  
19 is an extraordinary public resource for the state and  
20 city and nation. In 1997, we testified at a  
21 congressional hearing on the future of Governors I  
22 learned that wanted it to be kept as Parkland with  
23 active, open recreational space. Further, the one  
24 thing Community board one did not want to see happen  
25 was for Governors Island to the be converted into a



1 private or semi-private area prohibiting residents,  
2 workers, and [inaudible 02:58:00] from coming to the  
3 island. This sentiment has remained unchanged over  
4 the past 24 years and was clearly demonstrated by the  
5 majority opinions presented in our review of the  
6 ULURP. We had a public hearing November 9th with  
7 thousands of people speaking and over 160 written  
8 comments with the majority opposed to the scale and  
9 density of development. We have long supported  
10 Governors Island and, in December 2020, we adopted  
11 resolution as our formal recommendation which  
12 resulted in a no vote with conditions. Of note, the  
13 community board vote included seven abstentions and  
14 three in opposition who were people split between  
15 opposed to any development, opposed to some  
16 modifications, and three who voted in support. Of  
17 this, the trust has addressed to conditions fully,  
18 nine partially, and 23 have not been adjusted at all.  
19 The public's understanding of the rezoning and  
20 density was based on the 2013 environmental statement  
21 which was 1,600,000 square feet of development, close  
22 to two thirds less than the current proposal. Our  
23 resolution states the zoning must be amended to  
24 reduce density, bulk, and height. Although the  
25

2 heights have been slightly reduced, we urge that the  
3 proposed height be capped at 125, the existing height  
4 of Liggett Hall. And this is limited in conjunction  
5 with the density reduction. The trust maintains  
6 4,250,000 square feet is required to become self-  
7 sustaining. We have not seen a detailed financial  
8 modeling of the initial plans comparative to this  
9 proposal and the absence of the modeling for the  
10 alternative scenarios make it impossible for the  
11 public to determine the appropriateness of this  
12 proposal. Rezoning is a blunt tool that cannot shape  
13 every aspect of Governors Island. We are  
14 appreciative and hope to be involved with further  
15 engagement--

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

18 TAMMY MELTZER: One last line?

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your  
20 testimony today.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
22 will be Lucian Reynolds.

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

24 LUCIAN REYNOLDS: Thank you, Chair. Good  
25 morning. My name is Lucian Reynolds. I am the

1 district manager of CB one. As CB one Chairperson  
2 melts are outlined the major overarching issues  
3 related to this proposal, I will address some  
4 specific issues within the zoning and the DSS GEIS  
5 which CB one has identified as problematic. New York  
6 City does not have a comprehensive plan. The zoning  
7 resolution serves to function as the city's plan and  
8 it is relied upon to make development predictable.  
9 While the trust proposal provides maximum  
10 accessibility for developers through the zoning,  
11 these wide parameters are problematic and make future  
12 development unpredictable and provide numerous  
13 opportunities for potential exploitative development,  
14 especially considering the both use and bulk  
15 regulations can be further altered through the CPC  
16 authorizations. As CB one Chairperson Meltzer has  
17 touched upon, there are many concerns that the plan  
18 will not actualize the way the trust intends in the  
19 already [inaudible 03:01:02] proposed rezoning could  
20 result exploitative development contrary to the  
21 vision. A major concern of the proposal is the  
22 management and protection of open spaces and  
23 parkland. While the open space sub area defined in  
24 the proposed zoning does not generate any zoning  
25

2 floor area, zoning still uses in structures not  
3 typically found in parks. Considered as permitted  
4 obstructions and exempt from any floor area or  
5 coverage restrictions, building and other structures  
6 up to 25 feet are allowed when they house permitted  
7 uses. Though the trust has made amendments to scale  
8 back the currently proposed development allowances  
9 within the open space subarea. The changes are  
10 modest and it is not enough to afford protection of  
11 what was originally intended as parkland. The zoning  
12 must redefine open space areas and open space  
13 subareas as public parkland including open spaces in  
14 the North Island to assure adequate protection and  
15 consistency with the deed's parkland restriction  
16 terms. The reasonable worst-case development  
17 scenario is a critical aspect of the DSS GEIS in the  
18 community believes it is not fully accurate. The DSS  
19 GEIS assumes there is no urban development in the  
20 open space subarea which is not a reasonable  
21 assumption as the zoning proposal does not, in fact,  
22 while-- does, in fact--

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

24 LUCIAN REYNOLDS: allow for significant  
25 potential development.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you so  
3 much for your testimony today. Now, I will ask our  
4 counsel to see if there are any Council members who  
5 have any questions for this panel.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya, it does  
7 not appear to be any members with questions for the  
8 panel.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no  
10 more questions for this panel, the witness panel is  
11 now excused. Counsel, if you could please call up  
12 the next panel.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
14 include Jeffrey Chetirko, Nan Richardson, and Lenny  
15 Speregen. The first speaker on the panel will be  
16 Jeffrey Chetirko followed by Nan Richardson.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

18 JEFFREY CHETIRKO: [inaudible 03:03:26]  
19 New York harbor school. It is no secret that, while  
20 the New York harbor school aims to provide this  
21 unique maritime program to New York City public  
22 school students, we have communicated for years that,  
23 the as a maritime school, harbor school requires  
24 additional specific resources like a pool, and  
25 additional space, appropriate funding for equipment

1 and work-based learning opportunities. Not having  
2 these resources would be like trying to run a theater  
3 program without an auditorium and an art school  
4 without additional funding for paint and now, when  
5 Governors Island, our home, is looking to bring a  
6 climate center to the island, we couldn't be more  
7 excited to support this work. We are excited about  
8 the potential it brings to further develop our own  
9 schools growth and the potential it brings to all  
10 students in New York City. This vision aligns with  
11 our school's mission in educating our diversity about  
12 climate change, while continuing our restoration work  
13 around the New York harbor with our students and  
14 staff alongside the Billion Oyster Project.

15 Simultaneously, this initiative creates an  
16 opportunity to open the island to the public for the  
17 entire year. Most of our school year, from October  
18 31 to May 1, the island is closed to the public and  
19 only then to the small number of tenant. This  
20 amounts to only having me I now for 410 months that  
21 school this creates an realistic environment for our  
22 students, as well as difficulties with challenges to  
23 running a vibrant school on the closed island. It is  
24 our hope that the climate center on Governors Island  
25

2 will be an opportunity to grow and align our work  
3 with the cities need to increase maritime education  
4 and climate restoration. Development for New York  
5 City students. This will direct-- this will  
6 directly impact the ability in providing equitable  
7 opportunities for our diverse city population to be  
8 better represented in the maritime industry. The  
9 addition of a climate center on Governors Island  
10 supports New York City public school students, our  
11 unique career and technical education programming,  
12 and it helps in breaking down the barriers towards  
13 diversity in the maritime industry by providing all  
14 New York City's students the opportunity to gain with  
15 the University and/or research Center that inhabits  
16 the proposed climate center. Thank you so much for  
17 allowing me to speak.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
19 for your testimony today.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear  
21 from Nan Richardson followed by Lenny Speregen.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

23 NAN RICHARDSON: Hi. Can you hear me?

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.  
25

2                   NAN RICHARDSON: Hi. Thank you. My name  
3 is Nan Richardson. I am Chair of the PTA SCAC, the  
4 school advocacy and expansion committee and let me  
5 just say we are thrilled to hear that the trust, the  
6 SCA, and the DOE have just given us building 515 on  
7 Governors Island so that, at long last, this school  
8 has the chance to have the facilities needed to  
9 fulfill its core mission. This has been a decade-  
10 long effort for us through five chancellors and three  
11 mayors to try to argue that this school,  
12 overcrowded, on-screen, 69 percent minorities school  
13 which is a flag we fly proudly, deserves the ability  
14 to finally fulfill its mission. So, today, since the  
15 time limit is really, you know, makes it difficult to  
16 say very much more, I would like to tell you this  
17 story, but many of you have already heard it, about  
18 the harbor school, you know, role and long path here,  
19 but hundreds of dedicated parents really tried to  
20 make this clear over the last five years. So, today  
21 I just want to thank our redoubtable Council member,  
22 Margaret Chin, and her able First Lieutenant, Gigi  
23 Lee, who guides us through this labyrinth. To SCA  
24 and Lorraine Grillo and the trust president, Claire  
25 Newman, and Sarah Krautheim, and we are forever



2 grateful to Manhattan borough president, Gale Brewer,  
3 and Senator Brian Cavanaugh who supported this with  
4 Council and funding and hopefully more funding. I  
5 hear you, Gale. And also to Speaker Johnson who  
6 believed in us and gave us \$1 million in 2019 as  
7 evidence of that belief. Also, to Congressman  
8 Nadler, Senator Gillibrand, Congressman Velasquez,  
9 Assembly woman Ulene Yo, who is herself a champion  
10 swimmer, so she understood what was at stake. Former  
11 Senator Bowman Montgomery, Comptroller Stringer,  
12 Senator Adababo, Assembly members Lui and Glick,  
13 Council members Levin, Matteo, Borrelli, Ulrich, and  
14 incalculable support from CB one, especially Tricia  
15 Joyce and Tammy Meltzer and CB two and CB six  
16 Brooklyn. Now, much work remains to be done in the  
17 future construction at 515 and the future of the  
18 island and planning which we hope to have a voice in  
19 as a city facing climate change, but today, let me  
20 just say-- share a sailors wish from harbor, fair  
21 winds and following seas do you all. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
23 for your testimony today.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker on  
25 the panel will be Lenny Speregen.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

3 LENNY SPEREGEN: Hi. My name is Lenny  
4 Speregen. I am the professional and I instructor at  
5 the New York harbor school and, before that, I was a  
6 professional diver in New York harbor. I would just  
7 like to explain why investing in the marine and  
8 maritime education now is more imperative than ever.  
9 The city is almost 1100 miles of coastline. We call  
10 it the sixth borough and while it is known that  
11 visible infrastructure of New York City is a bit  
12 eroded, it is less known that the underwater  
13 infrastructure has also been neglected for over a  
14 century. Because we don't have enough diving experts  
15 to do the job, we are importing divers from the Gulf  
16 of Mexico and as soon as it starts getting cold, they  
17 flee back to the Gulf of Mexico. We also have-- We  
18 have surpassed Seattle as the number one city in  
19 America with commuting by C, with water taxis that  
20 crisscross the rivers. The lifeguards that card the  
21 52 pools and dozens of beaches in New York are being  
22 imported from Eastern Europe on a special visa. We  
23 don't have enough New Yorkers to fill those jobs.  
24 With only 14 percent of the 400,000 jobs and 99  
25 billion connected with the port of New York, the

2 [inaudible 3:09:26] are held by New Yorkers. The  
3 need for trained maritime and marine experts is huge  
4 and growing. Nothing really emphasizes the dire  
5 nature this whole-- the whole scenario we're facing  
6 is the climate change you guys referenced earlier.  
7 Right now, our school is fulfilling a job creating  
8 divers, creating captains for what we need to help  
9 New York. The Billion Oyster Project is helping  
10 clean up the harbor. We can't tell you how much you  
11 are going to appreciate what we can bring to the  
12 party. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you,  
14 Lenny, for your testimony today.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the  
16 final speaker on this panel.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Are there any  
18 Council members that have any questions for the  
19 panel?

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, I see no  
21 members with questions.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no  
23 more questions for this panel, the witness panel is  
24 now excused. Counsel, if we could please call up the  
25 next panel.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
3 include Alexander Picas, Lily Chopra, Sean Connell,  
4 Jainey Bavishi, and Pete Malinowski. The first  
5 speaker on this panel will be Alexander Pincus  
6 followed by Lily Chopra and then Sean Connell.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

8 ALEXANDER PINCUS: Hello.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yep. Alexander,  
10 whenever you're ready.

11 ALEXANDER PINCUS: Hi, there. Good  
12 morning. My name is Alexander Pincus. I am an  
13 architect and restaurant tour based in New York City.  
14 My brother and I are the proprietors of Island  
15 Oyster, a full-service waterfront restaurant on  
16 Governors Island which opened in 2017. We have been  
17 operating during the island six months public season  
18 ever since, including during the pandemic. We also  
19 own and operate a number of other waterfront  
20 restaurants in New York City public parks, including  
21 Grab Banks, Drift In, and Pilot, both in Hudson River  
22 Park and in Brooklyn Bridge Park. And, in a  
23 volunteer capacity, I serve alongside Pete Malinowski  
24 on the Board of Directors of the Billion Oyster  
25 Project, a nonprofit organization dedicated to

restoring oyster reefs in New York Harbor through public education initiatives. As the owner of an independent business on Governors Island, I have been an early believer in its potential as a tremendous public destination in New York City. Governors Island gives you the space an opportunity not only to escape everyday life, but to reflect back on the rest of the city and appreciate its past, it's an enormity, and its possibilities. The first time I visited the island, I could not believe that I had lived in New York for 20 years and had not been there. Since then, it had become a cherished destination for me and my family. My brother was married there in the hills overlooking the Statue of Liberty. My son loves to circumnavigate the island by scooter and just lay in the open grass and, of course, I love to All for the weekend with a nice cocktail along the water overlooking New York Harbor. We are proud to have played a significant goal-- role in the islands transformation, drawing thousands of visitors to experience its rich history, extraordinary part, and unique connection to New York harbor. However, we believe that Governors Island has untapped potential. Currently, the island is

2 only open between May and October with the last very  
3 typically departing for lower Manhattan between six  
4 and seven. This does not leave much time for your  
5 everyday New Yorker to visit the island after work  
6 during the week. More activity on Governors Island  
7 will allow the trust to deliver on increased  
8 connectivity through the ferry service. This  
9 incredible play should be--

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You can wrap it up right  
12 now, if you'd like, Alexander.

13 ALEXANDER PINCUS: Sure. This incredible  
14 play should be weighed more accessible to every day  
15 New Yorkers. We are excited about the island's  
16 future and we encourage you to support the project.  
17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
20 will be Lili Chopra and then Sean Connell.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

22 LILI CHOPRA: Good afternoon. My name  
23 is Lili Chopra. I am the Executive Director of  
24 artistic programs at the lower Manhattan Cultural  
25 Council known as LMCC. And is one of the first

1 anchor tenants of Governors Island, LMCC is in favor  
2 and pleased to see an achievable proposal come  
3 together to provide the trust for Governors Island  
4 with a forward-looking plan to become economically  
5 sustainable and thrived for the long term. The plan  
6 outlines a holistic vision centered on sustainability  
7 and equity. The climate solutions center at the  
8 southern end of the island will create a pipeline for  
9 equitable job and educational opportunities in the  
10 city, enabling the trust to expand the islands public  
11 parkland and build upon its existing framework of  
12 cultural and environmental programming. The plan  
13 provides opportunities for creating critical  
14 infrastructure that allow more diverse New Yorkers  
15 access to an increasingly broad range of public  
16 opportunities and uses on Governors Island, including  
17 the art center. Finally, the proposal provides the  
18 trust with financial support to maintain the island  
19 as a year round destination for all New Yorkers.  
20 LMCC was in the first inaugural partners to redefine  
21 the island as a cultural destination back in 2010 and  
22 it is a testament that the long-term vision of the  
23 trust, that it's year-round tenants including the  
24 harbor school and our arts organization dedicated to  
25

2 connecting, serving, and making space for artist and  
3 local communities with programs focused on  
4 sustainability. We see the trust future plan for  
5 building scientific research and public engagement on  
6 the southern end of the island as fully intertwined  
7 and aligned with the island's current mixed-use of  
8 focus on the environmental stewardship. We are often  
9 asked is that the trust resilient plan ensures  
10 Governors Island cultural treasure, allowing it to  
11 grow into truly vibrant, sustainable, year-long  
12 community for and composed of all New Yorkers. Thank  
13 you so much for the opportunity.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you,  
15 Lili, for your testimony today.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear  
17 from Sean Connell and then Jainey Bavishi and then  
18 Pete Malinowski.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

20 SEAN CONNELL: Hi. My name is Sean  
21 Connell and I am the program manager for Grow NYC's  
22 teaching garden on Governors Island. We are a one  
23 acre urban farm and environmental education space  
24 that hosts free field trips each year for thousands  
25 of New York City public school students and summer



1 camp participants. We give young people the  
2 opportunity to plant and water and harvest and cook  
3 the gardens wide array of vegetables, herbs, and  
4 fruits. We have been doing this work on the island  
5 for the past eight years and in close partnership  
6 with the Trust for Governors Island. I am speaking  
7 in support of the proposal to attract a center for  
8 climate solutions to Governors Island. The proposed  
9 climate center aligns with Grow NYC's mission to  
10 improve our city's quality of life through  
11 environmental programs that empower all New Yorkers  
12 to secure a clean and healthy environment for future  
13 generations. The proposed climate center presents an  
14 exciting opportunity to expand learning, skills  
15 training, and public programming related to one of  
16 the most pressing issues of our time. All in a prime  
17 environment for research and public card and cultural  
18 programming in public engagement. Grow NYC's  
19 teaching garden is situated in the proposed  
20 redevelopment zone and while we do love our current  
21 location, we look forward to the opportunity to  
22 continue our teaching garden and a new parcel on the  
23 island. We are also speaking today in support of  
24 finding a new parcel for Earth Matters, whose  
25

2 composting facility is also situated in the proposed  
3 redevelopment zone and who are key partners in our  
4 joint commitment to food scrap collection and zero  
5 waste. We are eager to continue to work with the  
6 trust in our other partners on Governors Island to  
7 continue to make the island a valuable resource in  
8 the fight against the climate crisis. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Sean, for  
10 your testimony today.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker is  
12 Jainey Bavishi and then Pete Malinowski.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

14 JAINEY BAVISHI: Good afternoon, Council  
15 members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.  
16 Today. My name is Jainey Bavishi and I am the  
17 director of the Mayor's Office of Resiliency. My  
18 office is responsible for ensuring that New York City  
19 and its residents are prepared to withstand and  
20 emerge stronger from the multiple impacts of climate  
21 change now and into the future. This is no small  
22 task. New York City has over 520 miles of coastline.  
23 As hurricane Sandy tragically demonstrated, many of  
24 our coastal neighborhoods are vulnerable to flooding  
25 caused by storm surge. New York City also faces

1 additional flood risks from extreme rainfall which  
2 can impact inland areas in addition to coastal wands.  
3 Finally, many New York City neighborhoods phase high  
4 risk from extreme heat. These risks are especially  
5 severe in the South Bronx, central Brooklyn, in  
6 northern Manhattan. Since 2012, the city has  
7 invested more than \$20 billion to make our city  
8 stronger and more resilient. These investments and  
9 include over a dozen large-scale coastal resiliency  
10 projects, as well as countless other efforts spanning  
11 from restoring wetlands to painting millions of  
12 square feet of rooftop with reflective white coatings  
13 to provide resiliency-- to providing resiliency  
14 grants to businesses that were impacted by Sandy.  
15 Despite this progress, much more remains to be done.  
16 Climate adaptation is both a Sprint and a marathon.  
17 As we work to deliver flood and heat protections as  
18 quickly as possible, we are also planning for long-  
19 term challenges and needs. As long as the world  
20 remains addicted to fossil fuels, we will have to  
21 continually find new ways to manage growing threats.  
22 For this reason, climate adaptation will be an  
23 important function of governments for decades to  
24 come. This proposed rezoning of Governors Island is  
25

2 one important component of how we are preparing for  
3 the future. Creating a climate-- Center for climate  
4 solutions on Governors Island would allow New York  
5 City to leverage our considerable climate adaptation  
6 expertise to attract some of the brightest minds and  
7 most innovative companies in the world. Gathering  
8 these people and enterprises in New York Harbor would  
9 generate powerful new ideas, policies, and  
10 technologies that could be deployed across the five  
11 boroughs and around the globe. Also, this rezoning  
12 would also bring significant economic benefits that  
13 are especially important in this time of economic  
14 certainty and hardship. This proposal is projected  
15 to create 8000 direct new jobs and \$1 billion in  
16 economic--

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. We wrapping  
19 up there? Can you wrap it up in 10 seconds? Do  
20 that. There you go.

21 JAINEY BAVISHI: Thank you. The  
22 challenges we face are urgent. Addressing them will  
23 require creativity, innovation, and collaboration.  
24 Moving ahead with this rezoning is one vitally  
25 important step toward developing the solutions we

2 need to create a safer, stronger, more prosperous  
3 future for New York City. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The last speaker on  
6 this panel will be Pete Malinowski.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

8 PETE MALINOWSKI: Thanks so much for  
9 having me and hearing this briefly. I'm also here to  
10 speak in support of the Trust for Governors Island  
11 proposal for Governors Island. I have been working  
12 on Governors Island since 2008 and then starting in  
13 2010 as a teacher at the New York Harbor school and  
14 now as executive director of Billion Oyster Project.  
15 So, been going out to the island every day since 2010  
16 and we work to restore oyster reefs through public  
17 education initiatives. So, it is all about getting  
18 the public engaged in restoring New York Harbor. We  
19 do that citywide in our work on Governors Island is  
20 dependent on the location of Governors Island in the  
21 center of the harbor the access to the water. And  
22 so, for us and our work with the New York Harbor  
23 school, see the proposal for Governors Island that  
24 leverages the unique location of Governors Island and  
25 takes advantage of the access to water is very

1 encouraging. Additionally, part of our-- at least  
2 part of our mission to connect public school students  
3 in New York City with real, growing careers based  
4 around New York's maritime experience and there is,  
5 obviously, a huge opportunity with climate change  
6 preparedness and proactive planning for New York  
7 City's future to create all of these new jobs around  
8 the climate space. And so, having that direct  
9 connection in education and workforce development  
10 right on Governors Filing for Harbor school students  
11 and other students around the harbor is very  
12 exciting. Additionally, as a small-- We are a  
13 nonprofit, but as a small business operating on  
14 Governors Island, of the islands, you know-- our  
15 business would be a lot more effective and easier if  
16 there was a, you know, better access to the island.  
17 So, seeing a plan for Governors I laid that allows  
18 for enhanced public access for New Yorkers all across  
19 the city to the is very exciting. So, given that the  
20 player leverages the case should of the island, takes  
21 the adage of these blue-green careers that are going  
22 on, and allows us to continue to work as we have  
23 been, Billion Oyster Project is here to support the--

24  
25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

2 PETE MALINOWSKI: Almost got it in there.  
3 Support the proposal. I wrapped up.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. No worries.  
5 Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the  
7 last speaker on this panel and I do not see any  
8 members with questions for the panel.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you. There  
10 being no more questions for this panel, the witness  
11 panel is now excused. Thank you for your testimony  
12 today and, counsel, if you can, please call up the  
13 next panel.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
15 include Marisa DeDominicis, Christ Amatitla, Anita  
16 Chan, and Stacey Vasquez. The first speaker will be  
17 Marisa DeDominicis.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

19 MARISA DEDOMINICIS: Hi--

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Can you hear us?

21 MARISA DEDOMINICIS: Yes. Am I ready to  
22 go?

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yep. Whenever you're  
24 ready.

2 MARISA DEDOMINICIS: I'm ready. Thank  
3 you.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay.

5 MARISA DEDOMINICIS: I'm Marisa,  
6 cofounder and director of Earth Matter, a stakeholder  
7 who will need relocation based on the proposed ULURP.  
8 And 2008, I worked to create land trust operations  
9 committee for 64 New York City Gardens. I advocated  
10 for compost workshops and met with resistance and  
11 pushback from garden leaders who said their members  
12 were not interested in composting. 10 years later,  
13 one of these leaders asked if I would be a keynote  
14 speaker at their annual garden convention focused on  
15 composting. Last Friday, the Parks Department Green  
16 Foam told us Earth Matters spring compost  
17 apprenticeship had such a demand we would host-- they  
18 asked if we would host the second apprenticeship this  
19 fall. Council member, the number of foot soldiers  
20 who have shifted and who now support mitigation  
21 solution is a rapidly growing force. We believe we  
22 trust the trust proposal for climate study. It is a  
23 great fit for our work. The trust has shown  
24 incredible commitment to our zero waste island  
25 collaborations and to the New York City community



2 composting and we are excited to take the first step  
3 with the trust tomorrow to explore the location of  
4 where potentially Earth Matter can be relocated in  
5 the southern development zone. Our expectation,  
6 however, are tempered by example of what the city has  
7 supported and community to so for as land use or  
8 community scale composting. The lower East side  
9 ecology centers accomplish [inaudible 03:26:22] has  
10 been part of the East River redevelopment map plan,  
11 but it is not a dot on the map and it is hard for Her  
12 Matter to raise funds for the stable future when our  
13 physical home base of 1.5 acres, an acre and a half,  
14 is uncertain. We humbly request that the Council  
15 close the gap from an exploratory conversation--

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

17 MARISA DEDOMINICIS: Can I just finish  
18 one sentence?

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yep.

20 MARISA DEDOMINICIS: To a definitive  
21 designated space that will preserve Earth Matter's  
22 ability to assist in the trust goals and to serve the  
23 people of New York. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
3 will by Chris Amatitla followed by Anita Chan.

4 CHRIS AMATITLA: Hi--

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

6 CHRIS AMATITLA: Oh. Sorry about that.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: That's all right.

8 Whenever you're ready, Chris.

9 CHRIS AMATITLA: I'm ready.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay.

11 CHRIS AMATITLA: Hi. My name is Chris  
12 Amatitla. New York Harbor school alumni, Marina fair  
13 as alumni, and there were four First Matter.

14 Relocating Earth Matter is an interesting choice. It  
15 is like placing a majestic beast in a confined  
16 enclosure. They won't be able to roam free and do as  
17 they please. Now, I'm more than positive that they--

18 I'm positive that there's two reasons that Earth  
19 Matter is capable of doing so many things. Their  
20 educational outreach is phenomenal. I, as a student,  
21 was affected by it and started as an afterschool  
22 program is now a source of income as a young adult.

23 Relocating Birth Matter to the north part of the  
24 island is odd. It's like why would we place our  
25 facility next to office buildings in a public high

2 school in other locations like Parks Department?

3 Earth Matter deserves to have 2 acres of land so that

4 it can do the work that they do where they can have

5 New York City resident all services come to their

6 island and offload without having to disturb the

7 workflow of these other locations. That's about it.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thanks, Chris.

9 CHRIS AMATITLA: Yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your

11 testimony today.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear

13 from Anita Chan followed by Stacey Vasquez.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

15 ANITA CHAN: Hello. Good afternoon. My

16 name is Anita Chan and I am the coordinator of the

17 zero waste island initiative on Governors Island.

18 This initiative is a partnership between the Trust

19 for Governors Island and Earth Matter New York with a

20 goal of reducing the islands exported waste to zero.

21 Through this initiative and the space that we operate

22 in, we are able to educate the public, island

23 partners, island staff, students, aspiring resource

24 managers, and climate activists and we provide

25 training opportunities on zero waste practice is to

1 save more waste management, composting, and much  
2 more. All of the island generated organic waste is  
3 processed into compost at our composting center right  
4 on the island and we use the compost to grow food on  
5 our farm, nourish the Governor Island landscapes, and  
6 give back to the larger New York City community, as  
7 well. What we do actively helps to combat climate  
8 change and it offers a closed loop model that can be  
9 explored elsewhere. We have had so much success in  
10 the past year with the immense support of the trust  
11 that we want to be able to continue this partnership.  
12 I want to thank the trust for confirming that Birth  
13 Matter and other partners will not be displaced, but  
14 the next step is to ensure that we do get this  
15 adequate space. We need to operate in a capacity  
16 that, to meet the needs of community and to address  
17 the urgent crisis around climate change. We need the  
18 space for our compost sorting center, our solar farm,  
19 organic waste collection depot, sorting space, and  
20 space for processing all of the organic waste. I  
21 asked that the city Council vote to designate 2 acres  
22 of permanent space in the development zone for Matter  
23 to operate in the years to come in because we really  
24

2 want to ensure that we can continue our  
3 collaborations with the trust. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
5 for your testimony.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The last speaker on  
7 this panel will be Stacey Vasquez.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

9 STACEY VASQUEZ: Hi, everyone. Can you  
10 hear me?

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

12 STACEY VASQUEZ: Okay. Wonderful.  
13 Hi. My name is Stacy the schedules. I am a founding  
14 member of Island Bee Project. We have been providing  
15 programming teaching the public about the importance  
16 of preserving pollinators on Governors Island and  
17 throughout New York City since 2016. Today, I would  
18 like to express how important it is that Earth Matter  
19 is provided with the 2 acres of permanent land needed  
20 to maintain its operations. Earth Matter gave us our  
21 first beekeeping space in New York City and the work  
22 we have been able to do because of Earth Matter  
23 generosity has been impactful for us and the  
24 residents of New York City. To say this would be an  
25 absolute understatement. Teaching New York City's

2 family about the benefits of composting and food  
3 waste in its multiple benefits is absolutely  
4 essential to its residents. As our city grows,  
5 teaching zero waste principles can only improve the  
6 quality of life our residents experience. On top of  
7 that, the opportunity to get outside, experience  
8 nature, tend to chickens, walk baby goats, and  
9 experience honeybee importance is an invaluable  
10 experience that Earth Matter has provided individuals  
11 and families since its beginning. The Trust for  
12 Governors Island has always been amazingly supportive  
13 of ours and Earth Matters efforts. I thank you so  
14 much for listening to my testimony and we really  
15 appreciate the time taken to address this important  
16 matter. Thank you, everybody, for your continued  
17 support of all of our projects. We really appreciate  
18 you and Governors Island as a whole. Thank you so  
19 much.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Stacey.

21 Thank you for your testimony. Counsel, do we have  
22 any questions for these panelists?

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Chair. I see  
24 no members with questions for this panel.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. There being  
3 no more questions for this panel, the witness panel  
4 is now excused. Counsel, if you can please call up  
5 the next panel.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
7 include Merritt Birnbaum, Bruce Munro, Marissa  
8 Williams, and Robert Pirani. We will hear first from  
9 Merritt Birnbaum and then Bruce Munro.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

11 MERRITT BIRNBAUM: Hi. I'm Merritt  
12 Birnbaum, executive director of the Friends of  
13 Governor's Island. Our primary mission is to support  
14 expanded public access to and increased enjoyment of  
15 this extraordinary place. We strongly support  
16 rezoning. The trust proposal represents the  
17 culmination of more than 20 years of collaborative  
18 community-based planning that was initiated by our  
19 predecessor organization, the Governors Island  
20 Alliance. Since the mid-90s, we brought together  
21 hundreds of conservationists, urban planners, park  
22 managers, community members to envision a future for  
23 the island and every plan has always included  
24 responsible mixed use development in support of  
25 public use in public benefit. Right now, as we

1 speak, Governors Island spectacular new park is  
2 beginning to bloom, but no one is there to enjoy it.  
3 More than 1,000,000 ft.<sup>2</sup> of historic buildings are  
4 unheated, lacking occupants, and falling into greater  
5 disrepair and the two land parcels on the South  
6 Island are fenced off and filled with crumbling  
7 warehouses. In a city starved for space, this is a  
8 real tragedy. The reason that the island is empty  
9 right now is because Governors Island is much more  
10 than a park and a historic district. As the owner  
11 and operator, the Trust is wholly responsible for  
12 running public transportation network, public utility  
13 system, public Marine infrastructure, public  
14 facilities maintenance, and public parkland. And  
15 access to the park is not possible without all of the  
16 above mentioned services and those services are not  
17 possible without significant revenue. Currently,  
18 they only have a bare minimum to keep the island  
19 going six months a year and as their fundraiser, we  
20 know firsthand how difficult it is and how  
21 challenging it would be to use private philanthropy  
22 to fill out an enormous gap in making the island a  
23 year-round public resource. The proposed rezoning  
24 will increase the ferry service and connectivity to  
25



2 serve more New Yorkers. It will also allow for  
3 expanded amenities to support other long envisioned  
4 public uses such as education, arts and culture--

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

6 MERRITT BIRNBAUM: and limited commercial  
7 activity. We strongly urge you to approve the  
8 rezoning.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Bruce Monroe will  
11 be the next speaker, followed by Marissa Williams.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

13 BRUCE MONROE: Thank you for letting me  
14 testify today. As a volunteer for the Friends of  
15 Governors Island for the last 10 years since 2001, I  
16 have been working with visitor services and  
17 conducting walking tours on the island and it has  
18 been my great pleasure to see the trust process for  
19 planning and development on the island unfold. It's  
20 been a great education for me and I support their  
21 plans to proceed. In a perfect world, the South  
22 island would be a beautiful, resilient public space  
23 and all the buildings in the historic district would  
24 be repurposed for use by nonprofit organizations and  
25 educational organizations and generously funded by

2 the city, state, and federal government, but  
3 currently that's not going to happen. That is not  
4 possible in the current political and economic  
5 climate. It would be logical, I guess. A lot of the  
6 visitors seem to think so. There is a lot of  
7 pushback and a success of their public engagement is  
8 that this is such a great community investment and  
9 what happens on Governors Island, but I think it  
10 would be a mistake right now to restrict the zoning  
11 and restrict the development and impede the further  
12 access to the island year-round and the key to  
13 unlocking the potential of the historic buildings is  
14 to open up access all year round and get those  
15 development zones in play and bringing in money to  
16 support the island as soon as possible. Year-round  
17 access is key to all that happening. I firmly  
18 believe that. Even though I started out not thinking  
19 that was the case. I thought that they should fix up  
20 the old buildings first, but I think they should move  
21 on and do it all at once and get the process going  
22 and completed it. So, I have faith in the trust. I  
23 trust in the trust that their plan, moving forward,  
24 will play out and keep the island and unlock its  
25 potential for the future. Thank you very much.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
4 will be Marissa Williams and then followed by Robert  
5 Pirani.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

7 MARISSA WILLIAMS: Hi. Good afternoon--  
8 Sorry.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You can begin whenever  
10 you're ready.

11 MARISSA WILLIAMS: Okay. Good afternoon,  
12 Chair Moya and members of the committee. My name is  
13 Marissa Williams and I am here as a representative  
14 for 32 BJ. I am here on behalf of the 85,000  
15 building service workers 32 BJ represents in New York  
16 City to express our support for this rezoning. The  
17 Trust for Governors Island and the city have asked to  
18 rezone the South island sections while offering the  
19 development for Center for climate solutions for the  
20 study of climate change. The rezoning would unlock  
21 up to 4.2 million square feet of space and create  
22 over 8000 jobs. As you know, 32 BJ is the largest  
23 property service union representing thousands of  
24 property service workers across the city. We  
25 maintain, clean, and provide security services in

2 buildings like the ones being discussed on Governors  
3 Island. The development of this size will  
4 permanently be staffed by almost 120 commercial  
5 cleaners and over 50 security officers. We are  
6 pleased that the trust has made an early commitment  
7 to establishing prevailing wage jobs. The proposed  
8 project would provide per minute in, and would give  
9 opportunity for upward mobility, security, and  
10 dignity to working-class families. It is also an  
11 opportunity to support climate change in the city  
12 wall creating more than 1 billion in economic impact.  
13 The 32 BJ supports responsible developers who invest  
14 in this city. 32 BJ has thousands of members who  
15 live or work in community District 1. We know that  
16 this development on Governors Island will continue to  
17 uphold the industry standard and provide  
18 opportunities for working families to thrive in New  
19 York City. On behalf of 32 BJ SEIU, I respectfully  
20 urge you to approve this project.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
22 for your testimony today.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The last speaker on  
24 the panel will be Robert Pirani.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

2                   ROBERT PIRANI:        Good afternoon. My  
3 name is Robert Pirani. I am the former founding and  
4 Executive Director of the Governors Island Alliance  
5 and currently a board member of its successor, the  
6 Friends of Governor's Island. My testimony today,  
7 which is in favor of the proposed rezoning, is based  
8 on over 25 years of experience planning and  
9 advocating for this beloved resource. The island  
10 today is home to an extraordinary Park and it is  
11 enjoyed by almost 1 million visitors each summer.  
12 Success of city administrations and this Council  
13 really deserve much credit for transforming this once  
14 off limits federal facility to an extraordinary  
15 public place that I think is beloved by everyone who  
16 is going to speak here today. But that progress to  
17 date is only a partial fulfillment of the island's  
18 promise. The shared vision for the island always  
19 included new mixed use development in the service of  
20 the public interest. Making space available for new  
21 construction within the narrowly defined development  
22 parcels on the South island will help solve the  
23 island's infrastructure problems and the zoning  
24 process and passage of the zoning will both-- will  
25 define allowable uses and establish what can be built

1 and what the where. Important guidance and a measure  
2 of certainty for a real estate market that, to date,  
3 has not been willing to make needed investments on  
4 the island, despite multiple RFPs over the decades.  
5 The mix of uses proposed under the zoning, education,  
6 hospitality, and conference uses and offices reflect  
7 two decades worth of planning studies and they are  
8 precisely aligned with the terms of the federal deed  
9 restrictions. Of course, the Council should take  
10 this opportunity to ensure that appropriate  
11 guardrails are in place. The final zoning should pay  
12 special attention to the design guidelines, to  
13 viewing pedestrian corridors, and the park to  
14 Esplanade connection points that can reinforce the  
15 islands current campus like atmosphere. Public  
16 investments in the islands Parkland and historic  
17 district must also be protected. But now is the time  
18 to ensure that Governors Island is truly integrated  
19 with the fabric of the city. The proposed rezoning  
20 can help make that happen. Thank you for this  
21 opportunity to testify.

22  
23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
24 for your testimony. Now, I would like to ask our  
25

2 counsel if there any Council members have any  
3 questions for this panel?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Chair. I see  
5 no members with questions for the panel.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There be no more  
7 questions for this panel, the witness panel is now  
8 excused and if the Council can please call up the  
9 next panel.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
11 include Cary Oshins, Christine Datz Romero, Gwen  
12 Ossenfort, and Brenda Flatt. First speaker will be  
13 Cary Oshins followed by Christine Datz Romero.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

15 CARY OSHINS: Hi. Thank you for the  
16 opportunity to testify today. My name is Cary  
17 Oshins. I am the associate director of the US  
18 Composting Council. The US Composting Council is a  
19 national organization working on building the  
20 nation's composting infrastructure and growing the  
21 use of compost for the multiple environmental and  
22 economic benefits they bring, not least of which is  
23 helping to combat climate change by avoiding  
24 landfilling and sequestering carbon in healthy soils.  
25 The USCC words division of a center for climate

1 solutions on Governors Island, but we must oppose the  
2 proposed rezoning only because, on the face of it, it  
3 does not appear to allow for the continued presence  
4 and operation of the Earth Matter New York composting  
5 education and operations center. In my job, I've had  
6 the opportunity to visit many compost education  
7 centers all over the country and I can tell you the  
8 Earth Matter New York center is really one of the  
9 best anywhere. By combining whole man communities  
10 scale operations, providing educational opportunities  
11 for kids and adults, they are helping to build  
12 awareness and competence around reducing food waste,  
13 developing climate resilient soils, and growing in  
14 eating nutritious food. We support residential land  
15 commercial composting and organics collection at both  
16 the community and industrial scales around New York  
17 City and help with this preservation of Earth Matter  
18 New York composting can serve as a bellwether in the  
19 fight to preserve and expand community composting  
20 around the city. 2 acres of land all in one place,  
21 preferably on the southeastern tip of the eastern  
22 development zone is critical and required for Earth  
23 Matter to continue its compost operations and public  
24 programming that supports and promotes composting  
25



2 sustainable practices the trusts commitment to Birth  
3 Matter earlier in this. I look forward to seeing  
4 that commitment spelled out in future revisions of  
5 the zoning proposal. By preserving 2 acres of  
6 continuous land for Earth Matter New York, the trust  
7 in New York City will be demonstrating their true  
8 commitment to a zero waste island--

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

10 CARY OSHINS: and a climate resilient  
11 future for about the residents and visitors of this  
12 beautiful island.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
15 will be Christine Datz Romero followed by Gwen  
16 Ossenfort.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

18 CHRISTINE DATZ ROMERO: Good afternoon. My  
19 name is Christine Datz Romero and thank you for the  
20 opportunity to testify today. I'm testifying today  
21 on behalf of Save Our Compost Coalition, which is a  
22 group of organizations to save our compost in New  
23 York City while uplifting environmental and climate  
24 justice. We are testifying today against the  
25 proposed ULURP for Governors Island because it does

not include a long-term designated space for Earth Matter New York, one of our coalition members, and the proposed redevelopment zone. The Save our Compost Coalition firmly believes that community-based composting programs belong in public open space and, while we support the proposal by the Trust of Governors Island to create a center to address and study climate change, we would like to ensure that the ULURP explicitly provides 2 acres of space for Birth Matter compost Learning Center to ensure that the important work of Birth Matter on Governors Island, which began in 2009, will continue. Right now, small, community driven compost sites are the backbone of sanitation department newly restored food scrap recycling program. It is really the only program left right now for New Yorkers to practice this climate friendly daily habit of composting. Without robust composting programs, even more recyclable, organic waste is being hauled to landfills and incinerators and that, again, goes against the zero waste division that Governors Island and Birth Matter developed together. By allocating space for Earth Matter, you will not only ensure that all New Yorkers continue to have opportunities to

2 benefit from the educational programs offered by The  
3 earth Matter, preserve a unique closed-loop system as  
4 part of zero waste island vision, but also allow us  
5 to move forward in the urgent fight against the  
6 climate crisis. Composting is part of the climate  
7 solution. Please ensure that Earth Matter is able to  
8 continue the decade-long programs on Governors  
9 Eileen. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
12 will be Gwen Ossenfort followed by Brenda Platt.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

14 GWEN OSSENFORT: Hello. My name is Gwen  
15 Ossenfort. Thank you for accepting my testimony. I  
16 am the operations manager and a hauler at Paris  
17 Reclaimed Organics. Reclaimed Organics is a micro  
18 hauler for compost in Manhattan. We pick up food  
19 scraps from residence offices and storefront  
20 businesses from 110th Street all the way down to  
21 Battery Park City East to West. We use only electric  
22 assist cargo trikes that can all 600 pounds of  
23 material at a time. As a hauler, I can attest that  
24 this work is incredibly empowering because it is  
25 crucial to waste reduction in the city. Our tiny

1 company is diverging tons of food scraps from  
2 landfills every year, reducing methane emissions, and  
3 creating hearty, nutrient rich, warm loving compost  
4 and who doesn't love worms? What of our closest  
5 partners in this work is Earth Matter on Governors  
6 Island. Earth Matter accepts almost half a ton of  
7 food scraps from us each week. This material is  
8 processed at their site on Governors Island and this  
9 is the embodiment of the closed-loop system. New  
10 Yorkers put their food scraps in their buckets. We  
11 collect the buckets. Earth Matter turns it into  
12 compost. Closed-loop means that nothing is wasted,  
13 nothing is thrown away. Everything is reused or  
14 recycled. Closed-loop systems are climate positive,  
15 human positive, and city positive. With support from  
16 the TGI, Earth Matter is already teaching climate  
17 science on Governors Island at the Compost Learning  
18 Center. If you think about it, how better to  
19 demonstrate commitment to climate issues impacting  
20 assessment then to house the actual embodiment of  
21 climate change mitigation and a thriving compost  
22 processing site? It is all right they are and  
23 already happening. Why displace it? 2 acres of  
24 contiguous outdoor space for a living, breathing  
25

2 compost facility that processes the food scraps of  
3 New York City with a in New York City for use in New  
4 York City is the prototype of a closed-loop system.  
5 It is hyper local, it is smart, and if the city truly  
6 embraces zero waste goals, and that is not just lip  
7 service--

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

9 GWEN OSSENFORT: Earth Matter compost  
10 Learning Center and processing site at Governors  
11 Eileen should be the cornerstone of New York City's  
12 current and future of New York City zero waste  
13 initiatives. Thank you very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you,  
15 Gwen, for your testimony.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: In the next speaker  
17 on this panel will be Brenda Platt.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

19 BRENDA PLATT: Thank you for the  
20 opportunity to testify today. I am testifying in  
21 opposition because Earth Matter request to set aside  
22 2 acres of the proposed 33 acre development zone for  
23 its operations has yet to be formally incorporated.  
24 My name is Brenda Platt and I direct that composting  
25 program at the national nonprofit Institute for Local

1 Self and I can tell you unequivocally that Earth  
2 Matter is one of the best community composting sites  
3 in the country and it has served as an inspiring  
4 model for numerous programs across the US. We had  
5 our national cultivating community composting process  
6 in New York City in 2019 which included a full day  
7 training in Earth Matter composting and education  
8 center. I just wanted to tell you that community  
9 composting is essential and it brings countless  
10 benefits. It provides low cost composting  
11 infrastructure, educates and directly engage is with  
12 food waste generators on what, why, and how to  
13 compost and it demonstrates firsthand why compost is  
14 important for sustaining our food systems and  
15 enhancing soils and how urban green spaces are  
16 directly tied to our well-being and, as others have  
17 said, it builds local resilience to climate change.  
18 Earth Matter does all this and more, given the role  
19 of healthy soil and acting as a carbon sink. Earth  
20 Matter operations aligned perfectly with the planned  
21 center for climate solutions. I urge the Committee  
22 on Land Use and that trust of Governors Island, of  
23 course, to help Earth Matter secure a long term two-  
24 acre space either through zoning or a counsel  
25

2 requirement that its operations be included in the  
3 development RFP. It does sound like that trust is  
4 committed to Birth Matter and I hope that commitment  
5 includes a clear, long-term commitment to the two-  
6 acre space. Earth Matter needs the adequate space  
7 dedicated for its operation and to accommodate growth  
8 on the island. Again, thank you for this  
9 opportunity.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the  
11 last speaker on this panel.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Do we have any Council  
13 members with any questions for this panel?

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Chair. I see  
15 no members with questions.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: There being no more  
17 questions for this panel, this witness panel is now  
18 excused. Counsel, if you can please call up the next  
19 panel.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
21 include Marcel Negret, Emily Walker, Catherine Hines,  
22 and Laura Colacurcio. The first speaker on the panel  
23 will be Marcel Negret and that Emily Walker.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

25 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Do we have Marcel ready?

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I can see Marcel.  
3 Just getting his audio ready, perhaps.

4 MARCEL NEGRET: Hello. Is my microphone  
5 working?

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Oh. Now we can.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. Thank you.

8 MARCEL NEGRET: Sorry. Unmute it.  
9 Thank you. My name is Marcel Negret. I am a senior  
10 planner at the Regional Planner Association and. We  
11 are pleased to provide comments in support of the  
12 proposed rezoning and creation of the South Island  
13 special district. RPA played a major role in the  
14 transformation of Governors Island. Throughout the  
15 mid-90s, RPA led and incubated the Governors Island  
16 Alliance, a coalition of more than 45 organizations  
17 dedicated to transforming the island from an  
18 abandoned Coast Guard base into an urban park. The  
19 alliance later evolved into the current Friends of  
20 Governors Island. RPA celebrates an important  
21 milestone that have transformed Governors Island, but  
22 we also recognize that there is more work needed  
23 before completing the vision that was adopted over  
24 two decades ago. The framework that the trust has  
25 outlined, which is under great consideration, would



1 it improve the condition of 34 acres of underutilized  
2 land which was in the [inaudible 03:54:27] section of  
3 the island which faces today mostly a collection of  
4 vacant and historic buildings and warehouses. The  
5 proposed plan includes publicly spirit uses,  
6 including education, recreation, and hospitality  
7 which is always been the basis for the island's  
8 transfer to city control. Future development on the  
9 island would generate revenue to maintain civic  
10 spaces and infrastructure and insure year-round  
11 vitality. Not only will it establish a world-class  
12 climate center, but New York at the forefront of  
13 climate adaptation innovation, but the trusts plan  
14 would substantially enhance the public space benefits  
15 of the island for New Yorkers. This proposal would  
16 increase public connections between the park and  
17 waterfront Esplanade, enhancing the experience for  
18 active and passive recreation users. It would also  
19 go a long way toward securing the long-term financial  
20 security of the island, freeing up the city to devote  
21 funding to parks and public improvements in  
22 neighborhoods across boroughs that are in need of  
23 such funding. With a zoning framework, Governors  
24 Island trust is taking another bold step towards  
25

2 fulfilling their goals envisioned by the coalition  
3 nearly 20 years ago. As New York Harbor continues to  
4 become a flashpoint for the impact of climate change,  
5 RPA applauds the trusts decision of moving ahead with  
6 its planning--

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

8 MARCEL NEGRET: efforts. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear  
11 from Emily Walker and then Catherine Heinz.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

13 EMILY WALKER: All right. Thank you.

14 My name is Emily Walker and I am the director of  
15 outreach and programs at New Yorkers for Parks.  
16 Thank you for allowing us to submit comment today on  
17 the Governors Island rezoning. NY for P testifies in  
18 support of this proposed action. With a mission to  
19 be self-sustaining for the long term, the proposed  
20 rezoning will help allow for the development needed  
21 to ensure that Governors Island can become our year-  
22 round destination and remain a vital open space asset  
23 for New Yorkers for years to come. We are pleased to  
24 note that the rezoning will now breaking 9.85  
25 additional acres of open space to Governors Island,

1 bringing the total acreage of public open space on  
2 the island to 55.85 acres. Given the challenges in  
3 identifying land for new open space development  
4 throughout the city, this is a welcome opportunity to  
5 provide more public space for New Yorkers to enjoy.  
6 Additionally, the proposed rezoning would help  
7 Governors Island be, year-round destination, which  
8 would allow for more robust and regular utilization  
9 of the island. This goal has become all the more  
10 critical in light of the Covid crisis in the need for  
11 New Yorkers to have ample access to parks and open  
12 space as safe places to gather, recreate, and seek  
13 respite during these challenging times. We expect  
14 this rezoning to bring a reliable funding stream to  
15 provide for the maintenance and operations of  
16 Governors Island as well as vital investments in the  
17 transportation infrastructure that allows for ongoing  
18 median increased public use of inaccess to the  
19 island. We encourage the trust for NYCHA residents  
20 and low income New Yorkers and hope that the rezoning  
21 can be a way to secure the funding to ensure that all  
22 New Yorkers, regardless of ZIP Code or income can  
23 have access to Governors Island. Additionally, we  
24 encourage the trust to take serious consideration all  
25

2 feedback from the public process to ensure that the  
3 development this rezoning will bring will be  
4 approached in a thoughtful manner and one that is  
5 appropriately scaled to the island and it's open  
6 spaces. The building height and mass reductions that  
7 have recently been made to the rezoning application  
8 are in encouraging shift and we hope that the final  
9 results of the public process will result in site  
10 conditions that incorporate as much external feedback  
11 as possible. Additional site considerations for  
12 sunlight access, wind reduction, and wildlife  
13 habitability, particularly a bird friendly  
14 construction methods should be included in any final  
15 design. Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
17 will be Kathryn Heinz and followed by Laura  
18 Colacurcio.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

20 KATHRYN HEINZ: Good afternoon. I'm  
21 Kathryn Heinz, executive director of New York City  
22 Audubon, grassroots urban conservation organization  
23 in New York city. I serve on the trust community  
24 advisory Council all. We have operated a summerhouse  
25 on Nolan Park since 2017. Our scientists have

1 monitored nesting comaturns [sp?] on the islands  
2 piers since 2013 and our volunteers have collected  
3 census and breeding data since 28. So far, 217 bird  
4 species have been recorded. Most important,  
5 Governors Island provides critical foraging nesting  
6 and stopover habitat for tens of thousands of North  
7 American migratory birds. We had tremendous  
8 enthusiasm for the climate solutions theme and as  
9 global warming threatens nearly all North American  
10 bird species. We are in an urban conservation  
11 organization and expect that buildings will be part  
12 of our city for the foreseeable future. The new  
13 building is an opportunity for better building. New  
14 building on Governors Island has the potential to  
15 show the city, state, our country and the world what  
16 a green future city embracing wildlife looks like.  
17 New York City Audubon does not oppose sustainable  
18 development within the development zones that were  
19 established in the 2010 master plan. We do have  
20 concerns. We see no benefit to a very tall buildings  
21 on Governors Island. We prefer an absolute limit of  
22 no greater than 120 feet with most buildings limited  
23 to 75 feet. We ask that any buildings above 75 feet  
24 incorporate bird friendly building design for their  
25

2 full height, as otherwise required by local law 15.  
3 We ask that all new buildings have habitat friendly  
4 intensive green roofs. We ask that development is  
5 glued habitat quality landscape architecture with  
6 wetlands, grasslands, trees, and shorelines that  
7 provide the ecosystem services to wildlife. We  
8 oppose unnecessarily illuminating buildings and ask  
9 that the lighting plan followed dark skies lighting  
10 standards. That is safety lighting that reduces sky  
11 glow and minimizes glare and blue light in the  
12 nighttime environment. And we oppose installation of  
13 artificial turf fields and stadium style lighting. I  
14 would add we wholly support the Earth Matter group.  
15 We have a lot more to say in written testimony will  
16 be submitted. Thank you for your time and for the  
17 opportunity to appear today.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The final speaker  
19 on this panel will be Laura Colacurcio.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

21 LAURA COLACURCIO: Thank you for the  
22 opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the  
23 Association for a Better New York. My name is Laura  
24 Colacurcio and I am the vice president of ABNY. ABNY  
25 is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the healthy

1 growth and renewal of New York City's people,  
2 businesses, and communities. We already A 50-year-  
3 old organization representing corporations,  
4 nonprofits, unions, government authorities, and  
5 educational, cultural, and health institutions. We  
6 strive to promote connections between the public and  
7 private sectors to make New York City a better place  
8 to live, work, and visit. ABNY currently serves on  
9 the Community Advisory Council for Governors Island  
10 along with several other stakeholders. As a member  
11 of the Council, we have learned that the proposal to  
12 rezone Governors Island and allow for creation of a  
13 year-round center for climate solution will bring  
14 together opportunities for learning, skills training,  
15 and public programming related to one of the most  
16 pressing issues of our time. As ABNY focus is on the  
17 city's inclusive and equitable recovery from Covid  
18 19, we are eager to support a project that presents a  
19 bold vision for the city's future. The climate  
20 center provides an opportunity to prepare for the  
21 existential threat of climate change while creating  
22 more than \$1 billion in economic impact of more than  
23 8000 jobs and career training opportunities that will  
24 ensure New York City as the available workforce to  
25

2 take on this critical issue. Further, ABNY believes  
3 that every New Yorker should have access to public  
4 assets like Governors Island and year-round access  
5 and increased transportation connectivity are  
6 critical to achieving this goal. This proposal will  
7 create increased ferry service to more New Yorkers,  
8 allowing the island to serve a more diverse user  
9 base. This will make the island a more inclusive  
10 place to enjoy free and low cost access to open  
11 space, recreational opportunities, and arts and  
12 culture. Moreover, this proposal limits new  
13 development to specific areas and does not impact the  
14 islands beloved open spaces. In addition, the vision  
15 for climate center on Governors Island is aligned  
16 with its existing character and eat thousand. From  
17 its resilient award-winning Park to the work of its  
18 partners, the Harbor school, the oyster project,  
19 lower Manhattan cultural Council, and climate Museum  
20 and more. For these reasons, ABNY supports the  
21 rezoning.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

23 LAURA COLACURCIO: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you. Thank  
25 you, Laura, for your testimony today.



2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the  
3 last speaker on this panel.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Do we have any Council  
5 members who have questions that have questions for  
6 this panel?

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I see no members  
8 with questions.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no  
10 more questions for this panel, this witness panel is  
11 now excused and, Council, if you can, please call up  
12 the next panel.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
14 include Roger Manning, Ally Ryan, Adrienne Sosin, and  
15 Alex Herrera. First speaker will be Roger Manning  
16 followed by Ally Ryan.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

18 ROGER MANNING: Hello? Hello?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry.

20 ROGER MANNING: Sorry. I was bumped off  
21 just as you said my name. this is Roger Manning.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. Roger  
23 Manning should be the first speaker then on this  
24 panel. Apologies.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

2                   ROGER MANNING:     I'm sorry.  Now,  
3 everything on my computer is messed up.  Can you come  
4 back to me after one person?

5                   COMMITTEE COUNSEL:     Yes.  How about we  
6 move to Ally Ryan and then Adrienne Sosin.

7                   SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

8                   ALLY RYAN:  Hello.  I'm Ally Ryan.  Thank  
9 you, Chairman Moya, Council member Chin, and the  
10 zoning and franchises committee members for the  
11 opportunity to speak today.  I ask all city Council  
12 members to vote no on the Governors Island rezoning  
13 plan.  First, I would like to speak as the cofounder  
14 of the Metro Area and Governors Island Coalition,  
15 also known as MAGIC.  Chief Dwane Perry of the  
16 [inaudible 04:05:27] Lenape nation who has not been  
17 consulted in the plan for Governors Island, met with  
18 MAGIC and made the following statement:  When we have  
19 such a natural, open, breathable place such as this,  
20 it should be left for people and wildlife as it was  
21 originally intended.  It is a rare blessing to have a  
22 place like Governors Island in New York City.

23 Preserve the openness and sacredness.  In response to  
24 the trust, proposed Governors Island rezoning plan,  
25 MAGIC created an alternative cell pilot visualization

2 that provides for a Lenape facility and there is  
3 interest in holding the annual powwow which draws  
4 members from all over the Northeast as well as other  
5 traditional Lenape events. Now, I would like to  
6 speak as a New Yorker. A wife and a mother of two  
7 children. Governors Island is very dear to my  
8 family. My husband and I got married at Picnic Point  
9 on Governors Island 10 years ago on talk like a  
10 pirate day. Governors Island's parkland and public  
11 space allowed us to afford a New York wedding. This  
12 Governors Island rezoning plan was obviously created  
13 pre-Covid lockdown. I would like to suggest a  
14 paradigm shift away from the 15--

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

16 ALLY RYAN: year plan. Thank you very  
17 much for your time.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear  
19 from Adrienne Sosin and then Alex Herrera and then  
20 we'll come back to Roger Manning and hopefully having  
21 resolved any issues there. Adrienne Sosin.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

23 ADRIENNE SOSIN: Hello. Can you hear me?  
24 My name-- Hello?

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. We can hear  
3 you. Yes.

4 ADRIENNE SOSIN: Very good. Thank you.  
5 Good afternoon. My name is Adrienne Andy Sosin and I  
6 live in downtown Manhattan. I have visited Governors  
7 Island many times basically to walk around, to go see  
8 the artist statement, to hear the [inaudible  
9 04:07:56] practice on the lawn and in my best memory  
10 is of my grandsons third birthday party, picnic in  
11 the old historic area where [inaudible 04:08:08].  
12 Now, my idyllic memories may be unrepeatabe because  
13 of the specter of development of tall towers on the  
14 island. As a member of the Seaport Coalition, we  
15 want to protect another historic district from  
16 speculation and is beautiful, basically, unspoiled  
17 land is subject to runaway capitalism much like in  
18 the early 20th century when it took tragedies like  
19 the Triangle shirt waist fire to inspire activism  
20 that instituted governmental controls that regulated  
21 unrestrained private interests from taking advantage  
22 of public assets. There were four movements that  
23 generated out of the triangle fire that benefited  
24 everyone. If the progressive era ushered in by the  
25 Biden administration is really meant to benefit all

2 of the people, vulture capitalism needs to take a  
3 pause. Because where is the benefit to the public to  
4 allow Governors Island job but come denser with tall  
5 buildings or with a hotel? Even with laudable goals  
6 of expanding public uses, I am against these  
7 speculative and untimely efforts to monetize it with  
8 the trusts proposals. The Governors Island trust can  
9 seek other sources of support from the government,  
10 particularly without building tall and massive  
11 buildings and keep it in the public domain.

12 Governors Island is and should remain a public asset.  
13 Community board one has resolved appropriately,  
14 protecting public park lands and the MAGIC Coalition  
15 has proposed better solutions in my opinion.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

17 ADRIENNE SOSIN: on building. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
20 will be Alex Herrera and then we will come back to  
21 Roger Manning.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

23 ALEX HERRERA: Okay. I am Alex  
24 Herrera. I am with the New York Landmark Conservancy  
25 and the Conservancy opposes the proposed zoning

change that would allow 4,300,000 square feet of new building bulk on two sites just south of the Governors Island historic district. The proposal before you today would allow buildings up to 250 feet high with an additional 40 feet of mechanical bulkhead on top of that. Buildings of this height and bulk bear no relation to the special history and sense of place of Governors Island. We also question how such huge buildings can be sustained on a small island with limited infrastructure and with only ferry connections to the rest of the city. To give an example of how 4.3 million square feet is, one World Trade Center contains 3.4 million square feet, so it's almost a million square feet less than what is being proposed for this small harbor island made largely of landfill. The Conservancy is not opposed to new buildings on the south side, but the proposed zoning would allow for extremes in size and density. 25 story buildings would be grossly out of scale with existing buildings on the island. We believe the proposed scheme is driven by consideration of the suppose that financial return of the site with little thought given to the historic character or physical beauty of the island which welcomes over a million

2 visitors a year. This is public land. It is a  
3 popular public park. Other important considerations  
4 apart from financial return must be considered when  
5 planning future development there. The New York  
6 Landmarks Conservancy have a long history of  
7 involvement with Governors Island. For decades, we  
8 have worked with the trust and its predecessor  
9 organization to push for the preservation of the  
10 historic buildings on the island. Most of which are  
11 vacant. There needs to be equal emphasis on finding  
12 new uses for these existing buildings. In  
13 conclusion, the Conservancy believes very strongly  
14 that Governors Island is a valuable public amenity  
15 for all New Yorkers.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

17 ALEX HERRERA: Thank you very much.

18 So, we hope you protect to this public amenity.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. And now we  
21 will attempt to hear again from Roger Manning.

22 ROGER MANNING: Yeah. Can you hear me?

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

24 ROGER MANNING: Thank you. Hi. I am

25 Roger Manning, cofounder of MAGIC, Metro Area

2 Governors Island Coalition. We are against this  
3 financially and environmentally responsible up zoning  
4 for Governors Island. Now, the blizzard of details  
5 from the trust diverts from the actual issues which  
6 is what-- or the actual question which is, you know,  
7 what is Governors Island going to be? That is the  
8 conversation here. Is it going to be in your  
9 replaceable one-of-a-kind green urban refuge that  
10 essentially functions as a park even in areas with  
11 buildings and ongoing projects or another high-rise  
12 high density commercial urban district with a box  
13 stated value-added landscaping? You know, the any  
14 discussion here I have a climate research center is  
15 irrelevant. This is a proposal to upsell on the  
16 south island. Period. Trust for Governors Island,  
17 Alisha Glenn has referred to the island is, quote,  
18 and a nice piece of real estate. And that City  
19 Planning Commissioner has pointed out that there is  
20 nothing legally requiring that a climate center be  
21 built there and the rezoning for the South Island is  
22 blanket C4-1 rezoning which means that in the future  
23 of other areas of the South Island are subject to  
24 application for up zoning or changes. And Governors  
25 Island already functions as a climate hub and new



2 buildings on the island should not exceed the four-  
3 story Heights in the historic district. I mean,  
4 really. In the main rationale for this proposed up  
5 zoning, making Governors Island financially self-  
6 sufficient and accessible year round, aren't  
7 supported by this plan. Given the trusts breakeven  
8 day of 2050, it would be infinitely more cost-  
9 efficient to bypass subsidizing the real estate  
10 industry middleman and fund Governors Island directly  
11 with that money using a revitalization approach such  
12 as the MAGIC alternative visualization which it seems  
13 the trust woes referencing a few times today. And  
14 year-round access for what? You know, a backyard to  
15 Hudson Yards 2.0? That is not what people come to  
16 Governors Island for. You know? And this process,  
17 it has been going on for years in a sense, but this  
18 proposal just since last--

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

20 ROGER MANNING: and it is being rushed  
21 through during a pandemic. Anyway, thanks so much  
22 for the hearing.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

24

25

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the  
3 last speaker on the panel. I don't see any members  
4 with questions for this panel.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you. There  
6 being no more questions for this panel, the witness  
7 panel is now excused. Counsel, can you please call  
8 up the next panel?

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next  
10 panel will include Adriaan Geuze, Benjamin Kubany,  
11 Maranda Massey, and Karen Imus. Adriaan Geuze will  
12 be the first speaker and then Benjamin Kubany.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

14 ADRIAAN GEUZE: Yes. Can you hear me?

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yes.

16 ADRIAAN GEUZE: Dear Council members,  
17 thank my name is Adriaan Geuze. I am the founding  
18 principle of Westside Landscape Architects. Westside  
19 Landscape Architects [inaudible 04:16:09] park design  
20 of Governors Island. We were involved in the master  
21 planning from the beginning and later in 2018 and  
22 2019 we were also part of the team advising the trust  
23 for public spaces in order to develop [inaudible  
24 04:16:26] the part designed to the execution in 2010.  
25 In two phases, we worked together with the trust all

2 these years and the park is there. It is a beautiful  
3 and beautifully insulated and flood resistant park  
4 that offers scenic walks, exploring the unique harbor  
5 landscape. It is the beloved public open space and a  
6 magnet from people from all boroughs and since the  
7 early beginning, the master plan identified to  
8 developing sites to embrace this park. For this, the  
9 [inaudible 04:17:04] and is very relevant. The park  
10 has become an interface with positive, and inviting,  
11 and active [inaudible 04:17:12], and accessible with  
12 human skill. We support a climate center vision.  
13 This is the promise saying anchor institution that  
14 supports that you those of the island. It brings  
15 visitors year-round activities. It is the best  
16 guarantee for our economical sustainability or key  
17 utilities and the accessibility of the island and its  
18 park. Thank you.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
20 will be Benjamin Kubany and then Maranda Massey.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

22 BENJAMIN KUBANY: Good afternoon. My  
23 name is Ben Kubany. I am testifying on behalf of Eli  
24 Vorkin, editorial and policy director at the Center  
25 for an Urban Future, an independent think tank

1 focused on creating a more inclusive economy in New  
2 York City. I am here to testify in support of the  
3 proposed Governors Island rezoning amendment which  
4 will help realize the eyelids full potential as a  
5 vibrate year-round resource for all New Yorkers.  
6 This proposal builds on more than two decades of  
7 thoughtful planning around the islands future and  
8 regenerate new opportunities to address many of the  
9 city's greatest needs. More than a year end of the  
10 pandemic, the role that parks and open space play as  
11 a vital public infrastructure has never been clearer.  
12 This proposal will further expand the island's  
13 parkland and open space while serving as a catalyst  
14 to open the island's unique natural environment to 24  
15 seven year-round access. This proposal also has the  
16 potential to create thousands of permanent jobs, no  
17 small thing for New York given that the city ended  
18 the year with 560,000 fewer jobs than in December  
19 2019. In addition to cultivating the conditions to  
20 spark job creation, Governors Island has integrated  
21 educational and workforce development opportunities  
22 and partnerships into the planning process long  
23 before shovels hit the ground. While these important  
24 initiatives will require a new level of support from  
25

city and state leaders, philanthropy, businesses, and educational institutions like the City University of New York and the New York City Department of Education to reach their fullest potential as well as meaningful commitments from future tenants and vendors, the approach that Governors Island is taking can help ensure that the economic benefits that new development will bring will be shared widely with the community on the island and in neighborhoods across the city. This proposal will also further strengthen the islands key role as a hub for arts and culture, bringing new audiences to the island, supporting the development of new spaces to make and present cutting-edge work and continuing to provide arts education opportunities that fill a major void left by the pandemic which has taken a heavy toll on arts education funding. And for the city you still reeling from the near total loss of its tourism sector to the pandemic, with devastating effects on thousands of accessible jobs and industries for restaurants and retail to ground transportation and accommodations, this proposal can help contribute to the rebound of this vital sector while rooting the city's future appeal and the principles of sustaining

2 design and visitation. Perhaps most important of  
3 all, this proposal aims to provide New York City with  
4 a leading global upgrade--

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

6 BENJAMIN KUBANY: Can I finish my  
7 sentence?

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yes.

9 BENJAMIN KUBANY: Thanks. Perhaps most  
10 important of all, this proposal aims to provide New  
11 York City with an elite global hub for  
12 interdisciplinary research on climate solutions,  
13 building on the islands core assets from its unique  
14 geography to innovative educational institutions like  
15 the Harbor school to its [inaudible 04:20:26] living  
16 incubator of exemplary landscape architecture. This  
17 proposal can help Governors Island serve as an even  
18 brighter begin of environmental and economic  
19 sustainability in New York Harbor.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We will next hear  
21 from Maranda Massey and then Karen Imus.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

23 MARANDA MASSIE: Hello. Good afternoon  
24 and thank you, Council members and subcommittee  
25 members. My name is Maranda Massie and I am the

1 director of the Climate Museum, which is the first  
2 climate dedicated Museum dedicated in the United  
3 States and which has had a steady presence on  
4 Governors Island since we first started providing  
5 public programming in 2018. I first want to  
6 particularly thank Council member Ayala for  
7 supporting our initiative to help high school  
8 students at the International Community High school  
9 in your district create a beautiful climate justice  
10 mural in their playground in Council member Levin for  
11 support for various environmental and climate justice  
12 initiative over the years. We have seen firsthand  
13 the depths and intensity of the trusts commitment to  
14 this vision from the very first days when we started  
15 working with the extraordinary team that runs the  
16 programming on Governors Island and we can say that,  
17 not only in words, but in deeds, this vision has been  
18 vibrant and developing iteratively for the whole  
19 period of time during which Governors Island has  
20 supported us and really allow us to come into being  
21 as a new institution on New York City's cultural  
22 landscape. We have also, by being on the island, had  
23 the chance to observe both what is spectacularly  
24 precious and special resource that is and how much  
25

2 more accessible it could be. What a gift it could be  
3 to the people of the city. We encourage you to  
4 approve the rezoning on that basis. And then, in  
5 closing, I will just say that climate is the biggest  
6 threat we face. This would be a huge leadership move  
7 for the city of New York and the cultural and climate  
8 leadership of New York City will be absolutely  
9 essential to our recovery. Please vote in favor  
10 thank you so much for your time.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next and last  
12 speaker on the panel will be Karen Imas.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

14 KAREN IMAS: Good afternoon, Council  
15 members. Thank you. My name is Karen Imas and I  
16 represent the Waterfront Alliance, they New York New  
17 Jersey based organization focused on resilient and  
18 revitalized waterfronts. The water's edge of  
19 Governors Island represents untapped potential, while  
20 at the same time remains a landscape where the power  
21 of climate risk is undeniable. Waterfront Alliance  
22 is in favor of today's proposal to make Governors  
23 Island a year-round world-class destination with the  
24 climate research anchor and to strengthen in the  
25 future potential of this proposal, there are a number



1 of additional recommendations that we would like to  
2 highlight. With both development zones being located  
3 on a portion of the island that was created with  
4 filler material and located within the 100 year  
5 floodplain and facing sea level rise conditions,  
6 resiliency is the key consideration. And, in the  
7 trusts previous presentation, the design flood  
8 elevation varies between 13 feet and 15 feet across  
9 development zones. We would want to see the  
10 elevation strategies up to 17 feet and 18 feet,  
11 especially important as dormitories are listed as a  
12 potential use. Introducing housing, even if  
13 temporary housing, but into a complicated floodplain  
14 merits a more conservative approach for the design  
15 flood elevation and we strongly encourage the project  
16 team to work with the waterfront Alliance through our  
17 waterfront edge design guidelines verification  
18 process to meet a commitment to the resilience and  
19 public access and innovation at the water's edge. In  
20 2019, Manhattan community board one actually adopted  
21 resolution encouraging all waterfront ULURP  
22 applicants to use WEDGE and we are having some  
23 productive conversations with that trust about this  
24 process. We also encourage the use of natural  
25

2 shorelines in the design alongside Esplanade's and  
3 elevating structures. For example, we were  
4 encouraged to see the wetlands proposal for Picnic  
5 Point. We are also encouraged that the trust  
6 continues to cite the Waterfront Alliance's maritime  
7 activation plan for Governors Island is a resource  
8 for planning. This includes recommended direct and  
9 enhanced water access opportunity such as human  
10 powered boating, Marina, a boatlift, and his story is  
11 ship docking. Currently, except for restrictive  
12 access to Pier 101, there are no opportunities for  
13 visitors to touch the water at any other point in  
14 Governors Island.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

16 KAREN IMAS: shoreline. We will have a  
17 longer testimony to submit. Thank you for your time  
18 today.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
20 for your testimony today.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya, that  
22 was the last speaker on this panel. Excuse me. This  
23 panel.

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you. Are  
3 there any Council members with questions for this  
4 panel?

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: No, Chair. I see  
6 no members with questions.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no  
8 more questions for this panel, the witness panel is  
9 now excused and, counsel, if you can, please call up  
10 the next panel.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
12 include Thomas Devaney, Jeff Kroessler, Stephen  
13 Smith, and Jonathan Andrew Perez. First speaker will  
14 be Thomas Devaney and then Jeffrey Kroessler.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

16 THOMAS DEVANEY: Thank you. Governors  
17 Island is one of New York's most tourist  
18 destinations. It feels a world apart from the rest  
19 of the city, but all that could change dramatically  
20 if the current rezoning is allowed to move forward.  
21 While the trust has been very accommodating to the  
22 MAS and has presented before our planning and  
23 preservation committees, we maintain that the plan  
24 could irreparably transform Governors Island as we  
25 know it. The massive proposal, the equivalent of one

1 and a half Empire State buildings, is currently  
2 underpinned by a series of assumptions about  
3 financial self-sufficiency and how to achieve it.  
4 The trust has yet to clearly articulate how the  
5 dynamics of the short and long-term financial needs  
6 are manifested through the plan. Without a better  
7 understanding of the development trade-offs needed  
8 for the trust to achieve its goals, we cannot support  
9 the plan. We feel the trust has not adequately  
10 explored reasonable less on impactful development  
11 alternatives. MAS has urged the trust to explore  
12 adaptive reuse of the North Island 1.3 million square  
13 feet of historic buildings and substantially reducing  
14 the scale and density of development on the south  
15 island. M a S was a strong advocate in getting  
16 Governors Island into public control after the  
17 transfer in 2003. We have supported the trust  
18 investment in the preservation of the islands  
19 historic buildings and the creation of new parks and  
20 publicly accessible open space. MAS has maintained  
21 that plans for the South Island must prioritize and  
22 preserve open space while the North Island must  
23 support preservation and adaptive reuse. We urge the  
24 open space sub area to be designated as parkland.  
25

2 Without these protections, there is no assurances  
3 that the sub area will remain as open space in the  
4 future if the trusts financial projections don't go  
5 as planned. In addition, we find an in adequate  
6 disclosure of impacts on critical views of and from  
7 the development area and the effects on urban design,  
8 particularly interactions with the existing historic  
9 buildings and open space. We recognize that the  
10 trust [inaudible 04:28:12] in achieving critical mass  
11 to ensure a vibrant island system of activities and  
12 uses requiring substantial revenue sources for upkeep  
13 and maintenance of the island as it becomes a year-  
14 round destination--

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

16 THOMAS DEVANEY: Can I just finish my  
17 sentence, please? Any development of this scale  
18 would radically and unalterably change Governors  
19 Island and its pathway to self-sufficiency. The  
20 trust alternatives for creating the lively, resilient  
21 special place that Governors Island should be. Thank  
22 you.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

24

25

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: we will next hear  
3 from Jeffrey Kroessler and then Stephen Smith and  
4 then Jonathan Andrew Perez.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

6 JEFFREY KROESSLER: Hello. My name is  
7 Jeffrey Kroessler. I am the president of the City  
8 Club of New York and the City Club of New York is  
9 absolutely, without qualification, opposed to this up  
10 zoning of Governors Island. When Robert Moses said  
11 when you are on the side of the parks, you are on the  
12 side of the angels, what we have here is supercharged  
13 on the side of the parks because it is climate change  
14 as well as parks and who can be opposed to that?  
15 Well, the bottom line is that what we have is 4 1/2  
16 million square feet of development on this island.  
17 That is a massive up zoning and what will fill these  
18 buildings? How much space will acclimate center  
19 take? Have they created acclimate center? No. Have  
20 they tried putting acclimate center and its research  
21 arm in any of the existing buildings? No. This  
22 proposal at zero park land and zero public realm.  
23 What it does add is public space built, controlled,  
24 and defined by private developers. In other words,  
25 it is a corporate campus that is being proposed, not

2 a public amenity. Not public realm. And what the  
3 public gets will be little pieces of leftovers. Why  
4 not build Governors Island as a true public resource  
5 and then you will really be on the side of the  
6 angels, not the cynical side of the angels that  
7 Robert Moses stated. So, thank you. Just say no.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next will be  
10 Stephen Smith.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

12 STEPHEN SMITH: [speaking foreign  
13 language] These are words from the Munsee language,  
14 the original language of Manhattan in this area. I  
15 just find it interesting that there are over 800  
16 languages spoken in the region, but, up until  
17 recently, Munsee was all but extinct. But were  
18 bringing back the language. We are reviving it in  
19 that kind of reminds me of the need to also protect  
20 to these open spaces that are here in the New York  
21 City area and my concern is that, you know, we  
22 haven't really been involved in the planning process  
23 or consulted. I'm not even sure if we are identified  
24 in the environmental impact statement. I know that  
25 that was mentioned earlier the program. So, we're

2 just very concerned about preserving the openness of  
3 the space. Our partners have talked about this  
4 matter. I have just talked to one of our Mohawk  
5 allies and said that Governors Island has been a key  
6 point to, you know, the defense of the East Coast or  
7 a place for the nations to come together, as well.  
8 So, as it stands right now, we are definitely opposed  
9 to the project and I am glad to hear a lot of the  
10 good sentiments that are being put forward, but we  
11 have some real concerns as to the weight and  
12 sufficiency of those projects. And also the need to  
13 build the type of infrastructure that is currently  
14 being contemplated. So, thank you very much for this  
15 time to speak and so, on behalf of [inaudible  
16 04:32:35] Musee, Lenape nation, [speaking foreign  
17 language]. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
19 for your testimony today.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The last speaker on  
21 this panel will be Jonathan Perez.

22 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

23 JONATHAN PEREZ: Thank you, Chair Moya  
24 and Council member Chin. My name is Jonathan Perez.  
25 I also appreciate I think it was an hour ago the walk



1 in the park reference. It is very apropos, right, of  
2 our testimony. I am attorney by trade, as well as  
3 inequity and racial justice advocate. I've been a  
4 birdwatcher my whole life in New York City in  
5 Brooklyn for about 20 years. I am also a contributor  
6 on E-Birds which is run by Cornell as well as Rare  
7 Bird Alerts. For me, Governors Island represents one  
8 of the most important sites of equity as well as the  
9 shared experience in appreciation for nature. I am  
10 urging the city not to build on really our only  
11 remaining green pastoral island as well as the  
12 visibility for New York tourists kind of seeing it  
13 from afar the buildings that would be built. On  
14 equity, everyone remembers Christian Cooper in  
15 Central Park, a birdwatcher. An African-American  
16 birdwatcher was approached. Since that time, I have  
17 started Birders of Color. It's a group that has come  
18 together in different parts of the city and  
19 appreciate nature and have kind of a cultural  
20 experience together. Governors Island is a site for  
21 that. I'm not a scientist by trade, but very quickly  
22 Flora and fauna that should be affected or might be  
23 affected. There rare birds, including Wilson Snipe  
24 and American Woodcock that use the shores and the  
25

2 piers on the island. Common Turns are always on  
3 those piers on the south part of the island and  
4 there's a famous butterfly, the Variegated Furtulary  
5 [sp?] which I have only seen once in Brooklyn and  
6 I've seen him almost every summer in the flowering  
7 beds of the island. So, most importantly, the  
8 grasslands in New York are urgently kind of being  
9 encroached on. Shirley Chisholm Park is one place  
10 that still maintains it and Governors Island is  
11 another. So, I take great pride in the city's  
12 protection of this land. I urge everyone to vote no  
13 and hopefully remains an equitable site where we can  
14 all come together and appreciate nature. Thank you  
15 for your time--

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

17 JONATHAN PEREZ: thank you for having me.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
19 for your testimony today.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya, that  
21 was the last speaker on this panel.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Council. Do  
23 we have any Council members that have any questions  
24 for this panel?

25

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: I see no members  
3 with questions for the panel.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Seeing nine, this panel  
5 is now excused. Counsel, if you can please call up  
6 the next panel.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
8 include Eric Shiner, Michael Oppenheimer, Catherine  
9 Hughes, and Jessica Lappin. Eric Shiner and then  
10 Michael Oppenheimer.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

12 ERIC SHINER: Hello, everyone. Thank you  
13 for having me today. I am Eric Shiner, the Executive  
14 Director of Pioneer Works in Red Hook Brooklyn just a  
15 short ferry ride away from Governors Island. I'm  
16 very happy to support the trusts proposal today and  
17 want to remind everyone that culture is one of the  
18 best ways that we can bring people and dollars to our  
19 city. I first visited Governors Island in 2005 to  
20 see a great installation by the contemporary artist  
21 Allison Smith. That was a public art fun project and  
22 have visited many times since. So, the potential for  
23 cultural tourism and the dollars associated with it  
24 is, of course, huge and we, at Pioneer Works, want to  
25 make sure that we collaborate to make culture as

1 accessible to all New Yorkers as possible. This  
2 summer, we are cohosting with LMCC, wonderful  
3 expedition by the Nigerian American artist Onyetica  
4 Chuke [sp?] on Governors Island and I hope that  
5 everyone can come to visit that. But we are also  
6 very, very interested in the climate center being  
7 directly impacted by the realities of climate change  
8 in Redhook. During Sandy, we were under several feet  
9 of water is Pioneer Works, as well as most of  
10 Redhook. Our neighbors in the Redhook houses, the  
11 second largest public housing complex in New York  
12 City and the country, are still living with  
13 generators in many other hard realities of that  
14 storm. We want to make sure that people are  
15 empowered to fight climate change and we also see  
16 this development as a great source of new jobs for  
17 residents of Red how can we want to make sure that  
18 people are able to be trained in not only cultural  
19 related jobs, but also things related to climate  
20 change and remind everyone that it is a very short  
21 ferry ride across the water to Governors Island from  
22 Redhook. Thank you for having me today.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Will the Michael  
3 Oppenheimer and then Catherine Hughes and then  
4 Jessica Lappin.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

6 MICHAEL OPPENHEIMER: My name is Michael  
7 Oppenheimer. I am a professor of geosciences and  
8 international affairs at Princeton University and a  
9 resident of Greenwich Village. My research is  
10 devoted full-time to climate change, adaptation, and  
11 to its impacts and policies to stabilize our climate.  
12 I think the committee for the opportunity to express  
13 my views which apply only to the proposal to devote a  
14 portion of Governors Island to a center for climate  
15 solutions and not the issues like density your  
16 building height. The proposed center would provide a  
17 unique opportunity to study-- excuse me-- to study  
18 the interactions between people, a megalopolis, and  
19 climate change and sea level rise. Climate change is  
20 an urgent threat facing New York City in the entire  
21 world. When I was in elementary school student at PS  
22 162 in Queens, we practiced hiding under our desks in  
23 phase of the world shattering threat of a nuclear  
24 exchange with the Soviet Union. Today's children are  
25 worried about where to hide from climate change.

2 Just as with the nuclear threat, there is really no  
3 place that is safe from climate change. Escape means  
4 facing the threat and reducing our exposure and  
5 vulnerability to it by learning how to adapt to  
6 unavoidable warming while working quickly to reduce  
7 emissions from fossil fuel combustion and other  
8 sources. The proposed center could demonstrate these  
9 solutions in a publicly accessible and familiar  
10 environment, giving researchers like me and my  
11 colleagues the opportunity to test ideas and  
12 practical interventions by engaging with a truly  
13 diverse community. My experience on the Mayors New  
14 York City Panel on Climate Change taught me the value  
15 of developing research questions and solutions while  
16 drawing insights from the very public who would  
17 eventually implement days. A properly structured  
18 research program would make environmental justice in  
19 a changing climate a central focus. Adaptation has  
20 not yet received the focus it reserves, but as the  
21 impacts of climate change have become more apparent,  
22 all city, states, and countries are racing to catch  
23 up. New York City has an edge because, sadly,  
24 hurricane Sandy--

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

2 MICHAEL OPPENHEIMER: I will just finish  
3 with one sentence. This terrible experience now  
4 presents us an opportunity to the needle by engaging  
5 experts worldwide while also benefiting from the  
6 homegrown experience of people who know all too well  
7 the damage is climate change can impose, especially  
8 on frontline communities. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
11 will be Catherine Hughes and then Jessica Lappin.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

13 CATHERINE HUGHES: Good afternoon, Chair  
14 Moya and members. My name is Catherine McVey Hughes  
15 and I'm here today testifying in support of the  
16 climate solutions center proposed for Governors  
17 Island. When Governors Island was given to the city  
18 in 2003, it was like a miracle. 172 acres of grass  
19 and trees and beautiful historic buildings suddenly  
20 appearing in New York Harbor for the benefit of all  
21 New Yorkers. Governors Island has a unique character  
22 and location and, as a result, has unique needs.  
23 Every part needs upkeep and maintenance and Governors  
24 Island needs all that and more. Support for the  
25 fairies that make it possible and investment to

1 return it's beautiful historic buildings to public  
2 use. But the vision for Governors Island is even  
3 bigger. Not just to be a gem of a park, but to  
4 become the centerpiece of our cities recovery from  
5 Covid in our response to climate change and global  
6 warming. Surrounded by the waters of the harbor with  
7 the New York skyline and the Statue of Liberty as a  
8 backdrop and serenity of a great urban park. Is  
9 there anywhere in America or the world better suited  
10 to be the home to climate solutions center? As bad  
11 as Covid used today, climate change will be worse.  
12 As unfair and unjust as Covid is, placing the  
13 heaviest burden on those least able to bear them,  
14 climate change will weigh even heavier on those same  
15 communities. As the island looks to reach its full  
16 potential year round, increase open space on the  
17 island without touching existing park space or  
18 closing any of it during construction and solidify  
19 long term funding stream, it is clear now is the time  
20 to move ahead with this rezoning plan and it has  
21 responded to community input by lowering maximum  
22 heights, committed to ensuring that development  
23 incorporates innovative sustainability and resiliency  
24 practices and to work with the community for the  
25



2 signature climate solutions center which is at the  
3 center of the plan. One that truly demonstrate plat  
4 New York City can and will think big coming out of  
5 this pandemic. And just for the record, I was Chair  
6 of community board one during super storm Sandy, also  
7 firsthand the devastation of our--

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

9 CATHERINE HUGHES: climate change. Thank  
10 you very much.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Jessica Lappin.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Before we start, good to  
14 see you, Jessica. A former Councilwoman, as well. I  
15 hope you and your family are doing well.

16 JESSICA LAPPIN: Thank you so much. It's  
17 nice to see you, too, Council member Moya. So,  
18 Alliance for Downtown New York. As the Chair said,  
19 former Councilwoman who was very involved in the  
20 rezoning or the ULURP to allow Cornell Tech to come  
21 to Roosevelt Island which shares some similarities  
22 and was a real game changer. I am speaking in favor  
23 of the rezoning application for the climate solutions  
24 center on the south island. In lower Manhattan, we  
25 think of Governors Island as our unofficial backyard.

1 It has always been it away sales, but certainly  
2 nevermore then during this pandemic and we can't wait  
3 for the island to reopen just a few weeks. But the  
4 proposal of the use development sites that were long  
5 envisioned, as Claire explained as part of the  
6 master-planned following 20 years of advocacy and  
7 community planning don't impact the islands existing  
8 park. And what is only open now six months a year, I  
9 think we should all agree should be open and  
10 accessible year-round. In this plan will enable the  
11 trust to expand public access, ensuring a broader and  
12 more diverse community can visit. There have been  
13 several community meetings, a lot of feedback, and a  
14 lot of changes that were made to this proposal in  
15 response. Height reductions, density reductions,  
16 protections of Park uses, and those are some of the  
17 important changes I wanted to highlight in addition  
18 to the creation of an additional 7 acres of open  
19 space and the widening of the waterfront Esplanade  
20 and the restriction of development uses to park  
21 related amenities only. Thinking ahead, as Catherine  
22 said, climate solutions center seems like a very wise  
23 use of this space in this unprecedented moment when  
24 it is threatening lower Manhattan, the city, and the  
25

2 country. We did get too much of a taste of that  
3 downtown during super storm Sandy and a climate  
4 solutions center would help address these crises and  
5 really position us for the future as a city meeting  
6 on the global stage in addressing these issues. So,  
7 I will wrap up by just saying that I do urge you to  
8 support Governors By Lynn rezoning proposal that is  
9 before you today. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you,  
11 Jessica, for your testimony today. It was good to  
12 see you.

13 JESSICA LAPPIN: Nice to see you, too.  
14 Be well.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya, that  
17 was the last speaker on this panel and I do not see  
18 any members with questions for this panel.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no  
20 Council members for questions for this panel, this  
21 panel is now excused. Thank you, again, for your  
22 testimony. Counsel, can you please call up the next  
23 panel?

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel  
25 will include Lynn Ellsworth, Lucy Koteen, Bwana

2 Payeye Kizito, and Wendy Brower. First speaker will  
3 be Lynn Ellsworth and then Lucy Koteen.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

5 LYNN ELLSWORTH: Can you hear me? No.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you. Well,  
7 now we can't hear you. Hold on.

8 LYNN ELLSWORTH: Now?

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Now we can hear you.

10 LYNN ELLSWORTH: Okay. Great. I am Lynn  
11 Ellsworth, Chair of Human Scale NYC and the Tribeca  
12 Trust. We oppose this profoundly ill-conceived  
13 vision for Governors Island. We consider it to be  
14 speculative real estate fantasies in the climate  
15 center we see as just a red hearing that should not  
16 fool anyone. We need to not consider the trusts  
17 vision to be financially necessary or in the best  
18 interest of the city. We see it as disguised  
19 privatization. Other more low-key commercial uses  
20 for the existing buildings are possible and low rise  
21 contextual infill is enough. We call for an overhaul  
22 of the Governors Island planning and managerial  
23 structure with a new planning team in place, one less  
24 wedded to real estate speculation. We ask for the  
25 removal of the real estate dominated Friends of

2 Governors Island from any role on the island. We  
3 point out that the whole planning process for us has  
4 been somewhat laughable akin to the setting up a  
5 kangaroo court to share the plan through the system,  
6 ignoring the tsunami of opposition which tragically  
7 is how most of these rezonings happen. Last, we  
8 consider the rezoning in obvious violation of the  
9 spirit, intent, and letter of the original deed  
10 restrictions. We are amazed that others with more  
11 means than we have not launched a lawsuit to stop  
12 this disaster. We call on civic groups to get  
13 together to finance such a lawsuit. Last, we believe  
14 that Governors Island is a citywide asset and that  
15 Council members should ignore the tradition of  
16 Counsel member deference in this case. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
19 will be Lucy Koteen and then Bwana Payeye Kizito and  
20 then Wendy Brower.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

22 LUCY KOTEEN: Hello? Hello? Can you hear  
23 me?

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

2           LUCY KOTEEN: Okay. All right. Okay. Hi.  
3 My name is Lucy Koteen. I am an advocate for parks,  
4 natural space, natural open space, and the  
5 environment. Lenape language for watch over this  
6 land is [speaking foreign language]. In 1637, the  
7 Dutch West India Company purchased [speaking foreign  
8 language], Lenape Island, now known as Governors  
9 Island for to ask heads, a string of beads, and a  
10 handful of nails. The island was purchased for  
11 private use and real estate speculation. Sound  
12 familiar? The trust repeats the assumption over and  
13 over again that the island needs to be used by a  
14 large number and it needs to be financially self-  
15 sustainable. Neither is true. The trust repeats  
16 the-- Sorry. The Corporation throws out the do-  
17 gooder idea that we should have a climate research  
18 center there, but they have no institution in mind  
19 and no rationale that we need another climate  
20 research institution in New York or anywhere.  
21 Instead have any ITS, there is an FFSGEIS, a final  
22 second supplemental generic EIS because specific  
23 impacts cannot be known as there is no specific  
24 development. The process is backwards. Currently,  
25 the island is in use 12 months a year for useful

2 environmental functions and for the New York Harbor  
3 school. That is enough. We do not need to colonize  
4 every drop of land in every open space. To  
5 understand what is going on in this proposed up  
6 zoning, you must know who represents the Governors  
7 Island friend group. Some of the biggest developers  
8 in the city and the world. They have only one bottom  
9 line and it is not the needs of a healthier planet.  
10 A partial list: Blackstone, Tishman Spear, RAL,  
11 Amazon, MetLife Investments, Sidewalk Labs, AD Com,  
12 which is now AE Com Tishman, the largest receiver of  
13 contracts in the city. A glaring conflict of  
14 interest in the Friends group is the inclusion of Cal  
15 Golem, a Fried Frank [inaudible 04:50:17] and  
16 Jacobson, a 500 member international law firm with  
17 the contract--

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

19 LUCY KOTEEN: Almost done. Contract with  
20 the trust that recently added \$100,000 to their pay.  
21 Why? To shepherd through the ULURP process. This is  
22 a pre-pandemic plan. The city is currently filled  
23 with empty offices and apartments. We have no idea  
24 where the needs of the city will be post pandemic.

2 Let's keep this open green space for the current and  
3 future residents of the city forever. Reject--

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you so much.  
5 Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
7 will be Bwana Payeye Kizito and then Wendy Brower.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

9 BWANA PAYEYE KIZITO: Hello. My name is  
10 Bwana Payeye Kizito. I am the president of Bwana  
11 Foundation and I believe that the current rezoning  
12 proposal for Governors Island must be withdrawn.  
13 Bringing in high density, high-rise development is  
14 not the best use of this unique space that belongs to  
15 all New Yorkers and news visited by people from 99  
16 percent of NYC ZIP Codes. New Yorkers have a serious  
17 for the welcoming, opened, expensive apartment  
18 quality, even in areas with buildings that Governors  
19 Island provides and really isn't available elsewhere  
20 in the city. The main rationale for this intrusive  
21 project, financial self-sufficiency for Governors  
22 Island, is not justified. Trusts own speculative  
23 projections, based on pre-Covid conditions, state  
24 that financial self-sufficiency wouldn't be achieved  
25 until 2050. Meanwhile, it will cost taxpayers



2 billions. Also, as Manhattan community board one  
3 points out and there December 22, 2021 resolution,  
4 the trust has not provided enough information to  
5 evaluate the project. As the city planning  
6 Commissioner said at the March 1 public review, this  
7 project is akin to the city giving the trust a blank  
8 check for an unspecified project. In the road view  
9 of the rezoning plan, any discussion regarding a  
10 climate research center is a relevant, misleading,  
11 and should be termed off topic. So much.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
13 for your testimony.

14 BWANA PAYEYE KIZITO: Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The last speaker on  
16 the panel will be Wendy Brower.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

18 WENDY BROWER: Hi. I am Wendy Brower  
19 and I am inviting you to my birthday party on  
20 Governors Island in June. It is an annual tradition  
21 to gather far from the fumes of traffic on this  
22 peaceful green jewel with Ms. liberty a glow. I have  
23 30 years of sustainable design experience, but, last  
24 year, G.I. saved my life. I volunteered at Birth  
25 Matter and this zero waste nonprofit pivoted to

1 raising food for soup kitchens last spring and we  
2 grew a ton of produce on 1/8 of an acre. We need to  
3 preserve food security, so please support dedicating  
4 2 acres to the climate smart education program and  
5 ensure that composting is on G.I.'s list of future  
6 uses. We don't need a multi-year, I needed  
7 construction debacle. G.I. is already well on its  
8 way to becoming a citywide community green culture  
9 and climate center that can be rapidly expanded to  
10 build capacity for social resiliency and ecosystem  
11 services. Cultivate green jobs and stewardship  
12 skills with the programs already in place and add a  
13 public bike R&D lab, a riparian circularity center, a  
14 pool and water play area, a street tree farm, and  
15 benefit the whole city as visualized in the magic  
16 alternative plan. It is our country place in the  
17 city and it needs to be preserved for future  
18 generations of all species. Council member, Koo,  
19 Eugene, Lander, Levin, Manchaca, Rivera, and my rep,  
20 Council member Chin, your constituents visit  
21 Governors Island most often, so please keep their  
22 health and well-being prioritized. There really  
23 hasn't been time to include all voices in this rushed  
24 ULURP process. As a lower East side resident, I know  
25

2 I am going to see a search from this side as Esker  
3 and BMCR get underway, impacting our environmental  
4 Justice neighborhood for years. The whole city needs  
5 this open space for the pandemics to come, as well as  
6 to recuperate from this one. Don't let your legacy  
7 be marred by permanent overdevelopment on Governors  
8 Island.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, that was the  
11 final speaker on this panel and I see no members with  
12 questions for the panel.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Sorry. Thank you.  
14 There being no more questions for this panel, this  
15 witness panel is now excused. Counsel, if you could  
16 please call up the next panel?

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
18 include Jeff Sears, Andrews Zelter, and Mark Ricks.  
19 The first speaker will be Jeff Sears and then Andrew  
20 Zelter and then Mark Ricks.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

22 JEFF SEARS: Good afternoon, Chair and  
23 council members. My name is Jeff Sears. My company,  
24 Blazing Saddles, has operated the bike rental  
25 operation on Governors Island for the last eight

2 years. We feel very fortunate to have our operation  
3 there and to see all the improvements made over the  
4 recent years. It has been great to see the growth in  
5 visitors to Governors Island as the public becomes  
6 more knowledgeable about the recreational offerings  
7 and the other-- from families with small children to  
8 avid cyclists. Each year, the volume increases as  
9 more visitors tell their friends and family what a  
10 world class venue this is for all level of writers.  
11 Even last season that was shortened due to the  
12 pandemic, we experienced record amounts of business  
13 due to the desire of New Yorkers to enjoy all the  
14 open space that Governors Island has to offer.  
15 Opening up the south side of the island will only  
16 increase that open space, provide additional year-  
17 round recreational opportunities. It has been our  
18 pleasure to be a part of Governors Island community  
19 and we look forward to the opportunity of helping  
20 expand the islands recreational offerings. All year-  
21 round for all New Yorkers. We hope you will support  
22 the rezoning of the south side of Governors Island.  
23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
25 for your testimony.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
3 will be Andrew Zelter.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Do we have Andrew  
6 Zelter? Andrew Zelter, if you can hear me and you  
7 can see in unmute request, you need to accept that in  
8 order to begin speaking. Andrew Zelter, if you can  
9 hear me, you need to accept the unmute request. If  
10 you can hear me, maybe you can raise your hand and we  
11 can try to get your testimony on an upcoming panel.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Why don't we go to the  
13 next speaker and then we will come back to Andrew at  
14 the end of this panel?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. We had a  
16 Mark Ricks who I believe we also may have lost. Mark  
17 Ricks? Okay. We seem to of lost Market Ricks and we  
18 will try once again. Andrew Zelter, if you can hear  
19 me, you could give us a raise hand, accept the unmute  
20 request. Okay. We are having some issues with  
21 Andrew Zelter, but we will try to bring them back in  
22 an upcoming panel. That makes this panel complete,  
23 Chair. And I don't see any members with questions.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Let's move to the  
25 next panel.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. The next  
3 panel will include Lori Nelson, Jack Robinson,  
4 Caroline Parker, and Carol Ashley. Andrew Zelter, we  
5 will attempt to bring you in and in upcoming panel.  
6 First speaker on this panel will be Lori Nelson and  
7 then Jack Robinson.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

9 LORI NELSON: Hi. Can you hear me?

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

11 LORI NELSON: Okay. Hi. My name is Lori  
12 Nelson and I am an artist working with the [inaudible  
13 05:1:19] nonprofit. Thank you for this opportunity  
14 to voice my opposition to the overdevelopment of  
15 Governors Island. As an artist with [inaudible  
16 05:01:27], the producer of the Governors Island Art  
17 fair for the last 13 or so years, you will understand  
18 that the ED and we call Governors Eileen is deeply  
19 important to me. Our organization is responsible for  
20 a lot of the growth of the arts on the island and the  
21 excited crowds and the fall fair on Colonels Road.  
22 Many summers and fall as an artist, I found the  
23 island inspiring for my work, but my main concern is  
24 not about art. It's about kids. My children grew up  
25 for over a decade spending summers with me on

2 Governors Island as I worked with my heart community  
3 in preparing for the fair. Governors Island was the  
4 old lady one solitary place in New York City that I  
5 felt comfortable setting my kids free on their bikes  
6 and scooters. It was during these summers that my  
7 children and discovered Marissa and Charlie at Birth  
8 Matter and jumped ship from the art fair to The earth  
9 Matter, eventually committing their summers to  
10 interning with the Compost Education center, tending  
11 goats, and driving the garbage bike. This working  
12 farm was all the education center my children needed.  
13 Eventually, my daughter committed to the Rocky  
14 Mountains Youth Conservation Corps and my son is  
15 preparing to study environmental law. The steps to  
16 these paths can be traced directly to their  
17 experiences on the island and counterpoint to their  
18 life seven minutes, but a world away in Brooklyn.  
19 The emptiness of the island was absolutely key. I  
20 understand growth is always of interest to the  
21 government and the city, but I question the  
22 interpretation of growth retail, impact varies. I  
23 applaud the spirit behind an environmental center,  
24 but question the accompanying density--

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

2 LORI NELSON: problem.

3 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You can finish up.

4 LORI NELSON: Okay. And am concerned for  
5 the children who can be inspired by low density  
6 landscapes away and out of the shadows of tall  
7 buildings and away from the city culture. Please  
8 rethink your concept of growth. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
11 will be Jack Robinson followed by Caroline Parker.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

13 JACK ROBINSON: Hi. I'm Jack Robinson.  
14 I am the Executive Director of Foreheads. We run  
15 portal Governors Island, formerly Governors Island  
16 Art Fair. This is our 14th year on the island. I  
17 would like to thank the city Council members and the  
18 Trust for Governors Island for their ongoing support.  
19 But we cannot support this proposal. The islands  
20 main mandate is for public purpose. It has been  
21 revenue neutral a healthy model for venues of public  
22 purpose? How does the hotel benefit the public? By  
23 definition, hotels are for out-of-towners and  
24 developers. Couldn't the climate center be in  
25 Liggett Hall? Liggett Hall was the biggest military



2 building in the US before the Pentagon was built. I  
3 think that they probably have room for that. What is  
4 more environmentally friendly than using an existing  
5 building and not building a new one? Small nonprofit  
6 orgs like ours have helped make the island what it is  
7 today in my testimony is meant to defend it. I urge  
8 the Council not to approve the proposal. Thank you  
9 so much for your time and service on the Council.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
11 for your testimony today.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear  
13 from Caroline Parker and Carol Ashley.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

15 CAROLINE PARKER: Good afternoon. My name  
16 is Caroline Parker. I am here on behalf of the  
17 environmental justice program at New York Lawyers for  
18 the Public Interest. And I am testifying today to  
19 urge you to ensure that Earth Matter composting and  
20 education center has a long term hold in the planned  
21 rezoning of Governors Island. We support the trusts  
22 vision for a global center on climate solutions, but  
23 we believe that Earth Matter New York should anchor  
24 this plan as a concrete model of closed-loop, green  
25 infrastructure that works. As New York faces down

1 the existential threat of climate change, organics  
2 recycling is a critically important pillar of the  
3 city's emissions reductions policy. The city  
4 currently sends more than 3.2 million tons of solid  
5 waste to landfill and in consideration each year,  
6 much of which could be diverted to composting. Like  
7 all dirty industries, this waste moves through the  
8 system of truck routes and transfer stations that  
9 spew pollution and historically overburdened  
10 communities of color. For these reasons, composting  
11 has repeatedly been highlighted in the cities climate  
12 and emission reductions zero waste goal and the  
13 updated One NYC 2050 framework. Sadly, due to recent  
14 budget cuts, the cities nascent composting system has  
15 been severely delayed. Only a handful of community  
16 organizations, including Birth Matter, are doing this  
17 critical work on behalf of the entire city. As the  
18 city looks to restart and expand its organics  
19 recycling program, we must lift up and learn from the  
20 grassroots projects that have spent years building an  
21 extensive knowledge base and deep connections in the  
22 community. We cannot afford to re-envision them out  
23 of existence. For over a decade, Earth Matter has  
24 operated a publicly accessible compost facility that  
25

2 is an internationally recognized working model of  
3 environmental justice principles. The facility  
4 cycles all of the organic resources on the island and  
5 returns them to compost to the landscape. Today,  
6 they also accept food scraps from more than 400  
7 residents as part of the Grow NYC compost program.  
8 Earth Matters learning center brings residents  
9 together with local students, urban farmers, and  
10 grassroots organizations to learn about sustainable  
11 waste management and other green jobs. Their  
12 dedicated staff and volunteers play a pivotal role in  
13 making Governors Island the living laboratory that it  
14 is today. We know that the Trust for Governors  
15 Island shares our vision--

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

17 CAROLINE PARKER: Fred green, resilient  
18 city and we believe that Earth Matter, which unites  
19 you New Yorkers together in the name of stewardship  
20 and sustainability is fully aligned with that vision.  
21 Thank you so much.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you so much for  
23 your testimony.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The last speaker on  
25 this panel will be Carol Ashley.

1                   CAROL ASHLEY:       I'm trying to-- Okay.

2

3   Thank you. Thank you, Committee members and Council

4   member Chin for the opportunity to speak. I am a

5   lower Manhattan resident and Governors Island member

6   opposed to the zoning plan. Last Thursday, Mayor de

7   Blasio said, quote, governors Island is one of New

8   York City's crown jewels. It is the kind of

9   beautiful, open public space that we will rely on to

10   drive our recovery this spring and summer, close

11   quotes. I think we rely on it for much longer than

12   this spring and summer. We need tranquil green space

13   to mitigate the urban stress we all experience.

14   Please consider that many, if not most New Yorkers,

15   don't have the country retreat and can't afford to go

16   to the country outside of the city. Governors Island

17   is a place that helps our mental, as well as physical

18   health. Not only during a pandemic, it is also the

19   safest and healthiest park in the city for young

20   children to run free. The park has also become a

21   bird sanctuary yet it is full of other wildlife which

22   must all be taken into serious consideration. We

23   need large green spaces with a lot of trees to

24   mitigate our cities polluted air and we need to make

25   Governors Island as all green as possible to help

2 mitigate global warming and be a part of the  
3 sustainable city. Earth Matters should definitely be  
4 expanded to 2 acres. The climate center, as  
5 described is a vision. Don't we need a solid  
6 commitment from a participated institution and  
7 funding before this plan can even take shape? Any  
8 development needs to primarily enhance the Harbor  
9 school and its educational facilities, but why can't  
10 existing buildings in the historic district be  
11 restored and used instead of a new construction? The  
12 plan proposed by the group, MAGIC, would keep the  
13 islands character intact while expanding planted  
14 areas in providing entertainment and recreational  
15 zones. And it includes input from the Lenape people,  
16 the original inhabitants of the island. Please also  
17 note that this year's Prankster architecture prize  
18 was awarded for creative restoration and  
19 refurbishment, and not new construction.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

21 CAROL ASHLEY: Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya, that  
23 was the last speaker of this panel and I and see no  
24 members with questions for the panel.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. There being  
3 no more questions for this panel, the witness panel  
4 is now excused, but before we call up the next panel,  
5 I just want to take this opportunity to thank  
6 everyone. We really appreciate your patience. I  
7 know that this has been a long hearing, but, you  
8 know, we want to try to get to everyone as best as we  
9 can. So, thank you so much for your patience.  
10 Counsel, if you could please call up the next panel.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
12 be Emily Hellstrom, Susi Schropp, Brad Vogle, and  
13 Howard Branstein. The first speaker will be Emily  
14 Hellstrom and the Susi Schropp.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

16 EMILY HELLSTROM: Hello? Hello?

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Emily?

18 EMILY HELLSTROM: Hello? Can you hear me?

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

20 EMILY HELLSTROM: Oh, great. Sorry. I  
21 must be on some type of mute on my phone. Thank you  
22 for giving me a chance and opportunity to speak today  
23 about Governors Island. My family and myself enjoy  
24 going there so often to ride bicycles or just get  
25 away from city life. It feels truly like a vacation.

2 My name is Emily Hellstrom. I have lived in lower  
3 Manhattan for most of my adult life and I just want  
4 to say we really need to keep our public spaces  
5 public in our private spaces private. Public-private  
6 partnerships, by design, are not public. It is so  
7 important that we keep this open space for our  
8 community. I know that many people bring up things  
9 like, oh, you wouldn't build on Central Park, but,  
10 really, this is so much our Central Park of lower  
11 Manhattan. These public spaces must be Sacred. They  
12 are-- Obviously, we must grow and adapt and we need  
13 resiliency and climate change in all of our  
14 incredible 501©(3)'s and nonprofits that thrive on  
15 Governors Island, but we need to be able to do that  
16 in a way that keeps this public open space in  
17 perpetuity. So, I urge you to vote no on this  
18 proposal. There are many ways that we can move  
19 forward in a slow pace that involves the community.  
20 So, thank you so much for listening to me today  
21 please vote no.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
24 will be Susi Schropp and then Brad Vogel.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

2                   SUSI SCHROPP:       Hello, everybody. Oh.  
3 Camera. All right. I am Susi Schropp of [inaudible  
4 05:13:12] tenants in block Association. I am also  
5 County committee member EDAD 10666 and an avid  
6 composter. I am here in opposition to the proposed  
7 rezoning by the deposit you administration and in 100  
8 percent support for the Metro Area Governors Island  
9 Coalition alternatives South Island visualization.  
10 The MAGIC plan proposes a use of the public lands  
11 that is genuinely beneficial to the public. The  
12 current rezoning proposal for Governors Island must  
13 be withdrawn. The main rationale for this intrusive  
14 project, financial self-sufficiency for Governors  
15 Island, is not justified. MAGIC outlines this in  
16 detail and they are in opposition. The trusts  
17 proposal is akin to the city getting a blank check  
18 for unspecified project. Any discussion regarding a  
19 climate research center is irrelevant, misleading,  
20 and should be termed off topic. It has nothing to do  
21 with the proposed ups zoning of the South Island.  
22 Period. It is an upzoning. While a worthwhile  
23 project, it mainly serves as a potential anchor  
24 tenant in order to attract developers to sell the  
25 upzoning to the public. As a 30 year plus lower



2 Manhattan resident, I have seen the public land  
3 pillage. It always begins with an upzoning that is  
4 favorable to aggressive overdevelopment. Past  
5 proposals for luxury hospitality and I gambling Mecca  
6 for the island and now the proposal of hotels and  
7 boat-tels indicates the direction this trust proposal  
8 is taking. Absolutely no development of this kind  
9 should take place on Governors Island. If the  
10 Commissioner is truthful about making this a  
11 fantastic public park, it will deny this upzoning in  
12 lieu of the MAGIC proposal. Thank you, everyone, for  
13 your undivided attention and for the opportunity to  
14 speak. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next, we will hear  
17 from Brad Vogle and then Howard Branstein.

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

19 BRAD VOGLE: Thank you, Chair. My name is  
20 Brad Vogel and I am here today as an and also as a  
21 representative of Voice of Gowanis. We are a  
22 grassroots community coalition and Gowanis Brooklyn  
23 and we are here today to oppose this proposed  
24 rezoning for Governors Island. We, too, are facing a  
25 rezoning that would lead to overdevelopment in a

1 floodplain and that would fundamentally change the  
2 nature of a place. We are here today in solidarity  
3 with MAGIC, the Metro Area Governors Island  
4 Coalition, fellow member of the Citywide People's  
5 Landuse Alliance. One of the chief issues that we're  
6 concerned about in Gowanus in particular is the fact  
7 that increased development of Governors Island stands  
8 to increase the overall load on the sewage system  
9 and, while it may not seem like it on the face, we  
10 are directly connected through the Redhook sewage  
11 treatment plant sewage shed, so we are concerned that  
12 all this additional development will further load  
13 that sewer shed which we know full well in Gowanus  
14 flows directly into the Gowanus canal in many places  
15 when there's not sufficient capacity in the system.  
16 It is a long running problem and one that will likely  
17 also be exacerbated by the proposed Gowanus rezoning.  
18 We are also concerned that this rezoning is going  
19 forward using virtual ULURP or remote hearings. We  
20 also know full well that ULURP is the one chance for  
21 the public to hold public officials accountable and  
22 walls and you may bring in more people, it does not  
23 necessarily provide the community with the same  
24 ability to hold public officials accountable face-to-

2 face in the same room about major land use decisions.  
3 We have many concerns along the lines that MAGIC does  
4 about the finances, about the sort of what is the end  
5 result? The egalitarian park like, haven like nature  
6 of Governors Island that would be impacted by this  
7 proposal? So, again, we ask you to vote no on this  
8 proposal to up zone Governors Island. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
10 for your testimony.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next and last  
12 speaker on this panel will be Howard Branstein.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Howard Branstein,  
15 you are the next speaker on this panel. If you can  
16 hear me and if you see an unmute request, you need to  
17 accept the unmute request in order to begin speaking.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I do we come back?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

20 Unfortunately, I think we are having some issues with  
21 Howard Branstein. Howard Branstein, we will attempt  
22 to bring you back in an upcoming panel. That does  
23 that for this panel, Chair, and I see no members with  
24 questions at this time.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you. There  
3 being no more questions for this panel, the witness  
4 panel is now excused and, counsel, can you please  
5 call up the next panel?

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
7 include Gregory Thompson, Jenny Low, Lindsay Boylan,  
8 and Megan Malvern. The first speaker will be Gregory  
9 Thompson followed by Jenny Low followed by Lindsay  
10 Boylan.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

12 GREGORY THOMPSON: Good afternoon. My name  
13 is Gregory Thompson. I am a media lawyer and native  
14 New Yorker. I also work for Cornell University where  
15 I study remote work and its impact on startup  
16 business ecosystems. I testified today in opposition  
17 to the proposed ups zoning due to its outsize height  
18 and bulk and general overdevelopment. The breakeven  
19 point, 2050, is of dubious public benefit and the  
20 supposed requirement of a climate center use appears  
21 tenuous and uncertain. We lifetime New Yorkers have  
22 heard it all before. The lottery was supposed to  
23 fund education. Remember that one? We are all  
24 grateful that are spectacular Central Park was not a  
25 development site, that those that planned New York

2 City did not force it to break even financially. The  
3 counterexample is a much larger Van Cortland Park in  
4 the Bronx, New York's Hampstead Heath. Part of the  
5 1950s, the major Deegan Expressway was rammed through  
6 what. Today's issue is not simply one of total open  
7 space, but of the impact that that development has on  
8 what open space there is. Ugly as it may be, the  
9 major Deegan is still a public use. Before us today  
10 is an essentially private use that, with its 25 story  
11 height and bulk and hotels and maybe even gambling  
12 will degrade what is special about Governors Island.  
13 We know our city is hurting economically post  
14 pandemic. We know that with the rise of remote work,  
15 workers can work for New York City companies, but  
16 live elsewhere. Today, we have to think about what  
17 it is that will continue to make New York City  
18 attractive and worth living in. So, to those who  
19 blithely say we can't afford it when speaking of the  
20 world's richest city, and that is what we are in. I  
21 replied we cannot afford not to protect Governors  
22 Island. Staffing high-rise buildings on the  
23 Governors Island would be like rehabbing the BQE  
24 through Prospect Park. It would be like improving an  
25 ugly utilitarian Brooklyn Bridge designed to save

2 money instead of Jon Roebeling's enduring masterpiece  
3 that has inspired millions. If we had approved such  
4 plans in decades past, we and our grandchildren would  
5 not be proud. They and we would be profoundly  
6 ashamed of us all. Thank you.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
8 will be Jenny Low followed by Lindsay Boylan followed  
9 by Megan Malvern.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

11 JENNY LOW: Good afternoon. Thank you,  
12 Chair Moya, for allowing me to testify. I am Jenny  
13 low, a lifelong resident of lower Manhattan and a  
14 candidate for city Council. First, I would like to  
15 thank the Trust for Governors Island for taking such  
16 good care of the island for all these years.  
17 Governors Island is a unique and beloved public space  
18 in our city. The islands long and fascinating  
19 history and the important role it plays for residents  
20 today makes it especially important that any  
21 development on the island is done right and that  
22 community voices in the center of this process.  
23 There are several concerns about this proposed  
24 project that needs to be addressed and, as it  
25 currently stands, I cannot support it moving forward.

1 As many community leaders have stated, including  
2 borough president Gail Brewer, and members of  
3 community board one, it is critical that any new  
4 development on the island preserves its unique  
5 landscape and prioritized protection of open space.  
6 Many New Yorkers see Governors Island as an escape  
7 from the city. The proposal is, unfortunately, out  
8 of sync with the existing infrastructure on the  
9 island, including low scale structure, open parkland,  
10 and would overwhelm the carefully preserved space.  
11 Some community members have proposed low density  
12 development and a For the height so that new  
13 buildings are consistent with existing structure.  
14 Others have called for a more vigorous environmental  
15 study of the impact of this new project and many  
16 members have expressed a wish for Governors Island to  
17 continue functioning as the public park. It is clear  
18 that this project cannot move forward until these  
19 voices are heard and have a real seat at the table in  
20 this process. So, until these concerns are  
21 addressed, I strongly oppose the current plan. Thank  
22 you very much.  
23  
24  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Jenny.

3 Always good to see. Hope you and your family are  
4 doing well.

5 JENNY LOW: Thank you. Thank you, Chair  
6 Moya.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
8 will be Lindsay Boylan followed by Megan Malvern.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

10 LINDSAY BOYLAN: Thank you, Chair Moya  
11 and members of the Subcommittee on Zoning and  
12 Franchises. My name is Lindsay Boylan and I have  
13 spent my career and urban planning and make concerned  
14 Manhattan resident and I stand with the Metro area  
15 Governors Byline coalition in urging you to reject  
16 the proposed ups zoning of South Island. New Yorkers  
17 have far too little access to green space which was  
18 felt even more painfully in the past year than ever.  
19 While some affluent families fled the city for  
20 vacation homes, most families remained trapped in  
21 their apartments as they tried to survive the  
22 pandemic. Preserving green space for the enjoyment  
23 of all New Yorkers should be a top priority of the  
24 city Council. The proposed ups zoning of South  
25 Island will change the character and experience of



2 Governors Island forever. Open space should be open,  
3 not boxed in by massive corporate style facilities  
4 presenting themselves as a climate change metropolis  
5 of sorts that doesn't consider resiliency. The  
6 Governors Eyelid website counts itself that the  
7 proposed rezoning would allow for a mix of academic,  
8 commercial, nonprofit, cultural convening, and  
9 hospitality uses. That sounds like an extension of  
10 the city, which is exactly what people are trying to  
11 escape when they visit Governors Island. 99 percent  
12 of New York City ZIP Codes use Governors Island.  
13 Even as it becomes increasingly safe to travel again,  
14 many New Yorkers do not have the means to explore New  
15 England or even Long Island. I ask you to reject  
16 this plan and, instead, consider MAGIC's alternative  
17 South Island visualization which doesn't essentially  
18 privatize the island for out of scale high density  
19 high-rise development that is not resilient. Thank  
20 you very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
22 for your testimony today.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next and last  
24 speaker on this panel will be Megan Malvern.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

2 MEGAN MALVERN: You can hear me?

3 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

4 MEGAN MALVERN: Great. Chair Moya and  
5 the commissioners, thank you for the opportunity to  
6 add to the discussions. Oh. I should turn my camera  
7 on. Hang on. There I am. Hi. Sorry, everybody.  
8 Thank you for the opportunity to add to the  
9 discussion. My name is Megan Malvern and I live in  
10 lower Manhattan and I love Governors Island. First,  
11 I had to address the elephant in the room. I had no  
12 idea what Council member Chin would say and I find it  
13 incredibly disingenuous since that CM Chin was  
14 champion the saving the views and protecting it, as  
15 she put it herself, the almost like feeling as you  
16 approach the towers and the arch on Governors Island  
17 while at the same exact time, she is supporting the  
18 absolute annihilation and the views of the Oz  
19 experience and the Seaport historic district. And  
20 also I thought it was crazy that to hear Brewer  
21 insist that there be no more than 125 foot tall  
22 buildings on the same island where in the Seaport she  
23 is advocating blowing out 120 feet tall zoning that  
24 exists. Ignoring the public's wishes not only risks  
25 unappealing projects, it also undermines a sense of

2 Commonwealth that makes democracy function and gives  
3 legitimacy to government. But back to the Governors  
4 Island. At this moment, I am sitting across this  
5 table sort of thing from my son who brought up today  
6 that he wanted to go on a play date on the island all  
7 on his own. He wanted me to call up Layla and Tycho  
8 and Tristan and I asked him why Governors Island. He  
9 said, I don't know, mom. It's the only place where  
10 it doesn't feel like New York City. It's where I can  
11 crawl on a rock, I can throw a ball, laying in the  
12 grass, go on a scooter ride and I am just with my  
13 friends having fun outside. There is no other place  
14 like it in the world. My son agrees. This place is  
15 like Oz and the wizard here is in the details.  
16 Please do not allow this blunt zoning to ruin  
17 Governors Island. It needs so much more work. And  
18 please do not depend on zoning limitations to save  
19 the island from being overdeveloped in the future.  
20 The Seaport historic district is more than a  
21 cautionary tale. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
23 for your testimony.

24

25

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya, that  
3 was the last speaker on this panel and I see no  
4 members with questions for the panel.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no  
6 questions for the panel, the witness panel is now  
7 excused. Counsel, can you please call up the next  
8 panel?

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
10 include Stacy Shub, Phyllis Waisman, Kirsten the Otis  
11 and Nora Breen. The first speaker will be Stacy Shub  
12 and then Phyllis Waisman.

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

14 STACY SHUB: Hi. Thank you for allowing  
15 me to speak. I am a resident of lower Manhattan. I  
16 am opposed, angry, and saddened. Opposed to this  
17 proposal that includes an appropriate, out of scale  
18 development, angry that this development is being  
19 punished through under the guise of climate change  
20 research. Can you not do research without destroying  
21 that which you are trying to protect? Can you not  
22 use existing buildings? You know, repurpose? The  
23 climate center then, somehow, will need a hotel and  
24 then restaurants, shops, Starbucks, deliveries,  
25 maintenance, care, traffic, and trash. On one thing,

2 I agree with Council member Chin. All these  
3 amenities already exist downtown a quick ferry ride  
4 away. Why do you need to replicate it on the island  
5 when we could use the business for the starting  
6 businesses here? We don't need more. Saddened, this  
7 island is a gift precisely because it is largely  
8 undeveloped. I am saddened to think that Governors  
9 Island would cease to exist as it is and would be  
10 barely recognizable to future generations. My family  
11 has made it an annual event to get into our tutus and  
12 wings and halos and glitter and ride the fairy with  
13 equally quirky people of all ethnicities and economic  
14 backgrounds coming from every zip code in the five  
15 boroughs. It's one of the few places that is truly  
16 accessible and affordable to anyone. While some  
17 people may leave the city bound to the Hamptons on  
18 Long Island, the rest of us go to our island,  
19 Governors Island. To escape the city without leaving  
20 the city. Well my daughter be able to share this  
21 with her children? When I hear the words attempt  
22 potential and need to activate, do you know what I  
23 hear? Corporate speak, codewords for corporate led  
24 development and corporate profits. The island is  
25 vibrant. It is vibrant with visitors, birds, skies,

2 sodden, grass, trees. We do not need a corporate  
3 campus on Governors Island. MAGIC and others have a  
4 plan. Please slow down. What you do or do not do  
5 will impact the island forever. Please review  
6 alternatives. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
9 will be Phyllis Waisman and that Kiersten Theodos.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

11 PHYLLIS WAISMAN: Good afternoon and thank  
12 you for devoting such a long time to this critical  
13 issue. I am speaking against the rezoning of  
14 Governors Island to make it a 24 seven community with  
15 commercial development. I think that the financial  
16 sustainability plan needs to be further reviewed. I  
17 live near Hudson Yards and that was a city project  
18 where we were refurbishing a very dire and bleak area  
19 of Manhattan. But today it's become a ghost town, an  
20 oasis for the rich, and New York City has to provide  
21 massive tax credits in order for Hudson Yards to  
22 continue to survive in the upcoming years. I am  
23 concerned that the financial plan, which the trust  
24 says is only sustainable with building a hotel and  
25 other commercial development, needs to be further

2 examined and I agree with the other speakers that  
3 there should be a height limit on building and,  
4 basically, the rehabilitation of the existing  
5 building for educational and nonprofit use. I hope  
6 that the Council will vote no on the current proposal  
7 and that the trust will continue to refine its  
8 redevelopment plan as it has been doing all along.  
9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
11 for your testimony today.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
13 will be Kiersten Theodos and Nora Breen will be the  
14 last speaker on this panel.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

16 KIRSTEN THEODOS: Hi. Can you hear me?

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

18 KIERSTEN THEODOS: Hi. How are you?

19 Thank you. Okay. So, you know, the city is trying  
20 to privatize Governors Island limits the islands used  
21 to be for public benefit. In 2018, the de Blasio  
22 administration announced a massive rezoning for this  
23 incredibly unique green urban refuge in New York  
24 City. Kicking off the process for the rezoning, the  
25 CEO of the trust that operates Governors Island, a

1 former executive from related companies of Hudson  
2 Yards, stepped down and former Deputy Mayor Alicia  
3 Glenn was installed. Glenn quickly got the trusts  
4 mission changed to be about poll divisions and full  
5 potential. In partnered with the Friends of  
6 Governors Island, nonprofit dominated by big real  
7 estate firms such as Tishman Spire, Related, and  
8 Blackstone. In September, amidst the Covid 19  
9 pandemic, the city resumed ULURP and began fast  
10 tracking rezonings for Governors Island, Flushing,  
11 SoHo, NoHo, and Gowanus. The city's proposal for  
12 apps zoning Governors Island southern half will allow  
13 buildings as high as 300 feet where none of the  
14 buildings currently exceed five stories while  
15 dangling a climate center is bait. Part of the deed  
16 agreement, the permanent residential development is  
17 barred, but hotels and dorms are permitted. The  
18 rezoning proposal, which is three times as large as  
19 what was originally proposed in 2013, also paves the  
20 way for department stores and other commercial and  
21 office uses. The purported goal is to create  
22 financial self-sufficiency, but that is something  
23 that likely won't be achieved until 2050, according  
24 to the trust's own projections. Yet today, the  
25



2 island is already mostly self-sufficient in terms of  
3 basic maintenance. More alarming is a suspicious  
4 timing of key ULURP hearings taking place on days  
5 when the community is distracted from voicing  
6 opposition. On the evil of election day, Manhattan  
7 CB one held its first public hearing regarding  
8 Governors Island. On December 14, the day of the  
9 electoral College vote, CB one voted on rezoning  
10 Governors Island. More recently, Manhattan borough  
11 president Brower announced she was holding a panel  
12 discussion about the rezoning on Inauguration Day.  
13 The ULURP public review process during Covid has been  
14 utilizing a deficient virtual platform causing  
15 equity, access, and transparency issues. Recently,  
16 New York State Supreme Court judge--

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

18 KIERSTEN THEODOS: I'm sorry. I ran out of  
19 time?

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yes.

21 KIERSTEN THEODOS: Okay. I'm sorry.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: That's okay. Thank you.

23 Thank you for your testimony.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The last speaker on  
25 this panel will be Nora Breen.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

3 NORA BREEN: Hi. Thank you for your time  
4 today and I would also like to thank Council member  
5 Chin and borough president Brower and CB one Pres.

6 Metzler for their opposition to this project.

7 Firstly, no plan should move forward during a

8 pandemic in an election year. The current trust

9 president was appointed in 2019 by the Mayor and has

10 a background in development. I would like to repeat

11 the concerns about corporate interests and echo the

12 press for transparency as to who these entities are

13 and what tax incentives are being offered to private

14 corporations. Gambling, I had no idea. I mean, I

15 really need to look into that. I didn't even know

16 that that was a possibility. Really? Gambling? I

17 can even believe it. It seems outrageous that there

18 is so much testimony about the climate center as if

19 there is a clear vision or affiliation for the center

20 and agree that it seems that it appears to be a

21 smokescreen for the entry of private interests. East

22 River Park is closing at the same time. I cannot

23 begin to understand why two major green spaces would

24 be proposed to be demolished at the same time. It

25 seems crazy. Public trust. Public trust. Public

2 trust. It is always shocking to me how these Friends  
3 of and corporate interests seem to supersede the  
4 public trust. This is public taxpayer money and this  
5 is our Park. It's our Park and as the work moves  
6 remotely, we need time to settle and see which-- as  
7 people keep saying, let's repurpose whatever real  
8 estate there is empty and, as Jack Robinson said,  
9 there is already a huge structure on the island.  
10 Let's occupy what is there and not-- like climate  
11 sustainability? What building is not sustained--  
12 you know, the new construction is not quiet met--

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

14 NORA BREEN: Okay. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
16 for your testimony today.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And that was last  
18 speaker on this panel, Chair Moya. And I see no  
19 members with questions for the panel.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no  
21 questions for this panel, the witness panel is now  
22 excused. Counsel, can you please call up the next  
23 panel?

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
25 include Irene Van Slyke, Jonathan Ruben, Bonnie

2 Weber, and Joel Kupferman. The first speaker will be  
3 Irene Van Slyke and then Jonathan Ruben.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

5 IRENE VAN SLYKE: My name is Irene Van  
6 Slyke. I am representing the Sierra Club. The  
7 Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest  
8 grassroots environmental organization and, in New  
9 York City, the is a volunteer led entity of the  
10 national organization. We recognize that the opening  
11 of Governors Island to the public is making vital  
12 park space available to New Yorkers who desperately  
13 need it. No doubt, Governors Island presents our  
14 generation with a rare opportunity of creating a park  
15 in the harbor, a unique space and one-of-a-kind  
16 setting. Let's not squander this opportunity. The  
17 Governors Island deed does not require that the  
18 island or its Park be financially self-sustaining.  
19 The Sierra Club calls on the city Council to reject  
20 that requirement. This would set a terrible  
21 precedent for current and future park spaces. So  
22 far, the city has contributed to the park from  
23 general revenue and they should continue. The Trust  
24 has not released its fiscal model for public review,  
25 as requested by the local community board and borough

2 president Gail Brewer. The Council ought not to  
3 approve a plan without full transparency and public  
4 scrutiny. So filings should be an entire park  
5 experience founded only by the harbor area in the  
6 adjoining North Island historic district. The  
7 rezoning proposal, however, establishes development  
8 zones in the South with oversized buildings. New  
9 Yorkers deserve and desire to experience a waterside  
10 to waterside full Park without the intrusion of high-  
11 rise development and continue to give us a full  
12 escape from the urbanization we daily experience  
13 elsewhere and we will be submitting written  
14 testimony, as well. Thank you.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
18 will be Jonathan Rubin and the Bonnie Weber.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

20 JONATHAN RUBIN: I appreciate the work of  
21 the trust and stewarding the park opening thus far.  
22 I have been to Governors Island a number of times  
23 since 2010, mostly for water festivals. I implore  
24 the committee to reject the real estate development  
25 for Governors Island in favor of Park development,

1 leaving the south part as part only. I am a 50 year  
2 member of the Sierra Club who has enjoyed the best of  
3 our national parks as our national wealth. I ran New  
4 York City Friends of Clearwater for two years. I am  
5 a member of the New York City Sierra Club urban  
6 sustainability committee. This development of  
7 Governors Island should be Park development, not real  
8 estate development. Firstly, I personally make the  
9 conditions concerning the height of Governors Island  
10 buildings as for stories only compatible with pre-  
11 existing historic buildings regenerated through  
12 adaptive use, but not rezoned for hotels and  
13 dormitories of an anchor center as the proposed  
14 climate center not yet approved. I reiterate the  
15 south part of Governors Island must remain Park  
16 rather than dormitories and hotels, largely vacant  
17 citywide right now. The approval height of rezoning  
18 of Governors Island prior to an RFP approved for the  
19 climate center is illogical and not considerate of  
20 those who cherish parks in New York City. The  
21 Climate Center or any center must be approved prior  
22 to the rezoning. More is not always better. At a  
23 time when dormitories and hotels are largely vacant,  
24 enhancing the earth and preserving parks makes space.  
25

2 The park first was settled by the Lenape Native  
3 Americans where Lenape means the people. But the  
4 city people are not really part of this proposal with  
5 members of the Friends of G.I. maximizing real estate  
6 development for hotels and dormitories. Not even for  
7 city residents. The trust respects the false  
8 assumption over and over again that--

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

10 JONATHAN RUBIN: the island needs to be  
11 used by a large number of people throughout the year.  
12 Thank you very much.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
15 will be Bonnie Webber and then Joel Kupferman.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

17 BONNIE WEBBER: Hi. My name is Bonnie  
18 Webber. I am also testifying for the Sierra Club New  
19 York City group. We urge you to reject the two  
20 Governors Island applications before you. Despite  
21 community board one, as well as Manhattan borough  
22 president's request, the trust has not released its  
23 physical model, thus the public and the city Council  
24 will not be able to review or critique it. The  
25 Council ought not to approve a plan without full

2 transparency and opportunity for public comment.

3 This is a unique and very important an opportunity to  
4 save valuable open space. Future changes should not  
5 become an exclusive top-down process, but incorporate  
6 a bottom-up method. The North Island height limit  
7 should be a maximum of 120 feet as also proposed by  
8 community board one and the borough president. The  
9 city should maintain the current 35 foot height limit  
10 in the South Island. High-rises on the South side  
11 will take up park land and obliterate the opportunity  
12 to escape from our high density urban environment.

13 The plan foresees upwards of 3000 permanent residence  
14 that will need clean water and waste disposal,  
15 including sewage treatment. The city must assure  
16 that the islands waste does not overload the Redhook  
17 wastewater treatment plant where Governors Island  
18 sewage would be transferred. The Redhook plant,  
19 during heavy rain, already regularly overflows with  
20 raw sewage into the Gowanus canal, which is already  
21 an environmental disaster. Thank you very much,  
22 Councilman. Chair Moya, I really appreciate your  
23 style.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
25 for your testimony today.



2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next and last  
3 speaker on this panel will be Joel Kupferman.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

5 JOEL KUPFERMAN: Hello. Thank you very  
6 much. Joel Kupferman, environmental Justice attorney  
7 for Environmental Justice Initiative. I think this  
8 is the fourth or fifth copy of my talk that I wrote  
9 after hearing all the concerns. What concerns me, as  
10 an environmental just is attorney that this is one of  
11 the worst plans that I have seen. Not just a plan,  
12 but also the process. I am in support of that MAGIC  
13 plan. The present plan is a false opening. Many red  
14 flags going up. The first red flag was raised in the  
15 presentation by the trusts Executive Director who had  
16 to be corrected by the trusts attorney. The  
17 education section will not be protected by the deed  
18 provision in perpetuity, she said., But only for 30  
19 years. This isn't a minor error. The trust plan, as  
20 was presented to the city Council and to all of us  
21 that spoke today was presented by someone who doesn't  
22 really know what the plan is and how, as a lawyer  
23 representing all these community groups and the work  
24 that we've done, it's very, very hard when we have a  
25 moving target. We definitely want to know what the

2 plan is. There is a major misrepresentation and,  
3 moreover, we cannot just rely on the deed. The deed  
4 restrictions along, but must insist on clear,  
5 distinct language and transparent terms that it might  
6 take a little longer to do and definitely has to take  
7 longer to do, but we can't rely on a deed that we  
8 don't even know what the deed says if there is  
9 disagreement among the project sponsors. And  
10 misleading. The second flag that came up to me was  
11 Council member Chin's reference to the East River  
12 Park as a model of resiliency. Not only in the East  
13 River Park did we face a tree massacre, but we are  
14 also, basically, had a miscarriage of the ULURP  
15 process. After weeks of--

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

17 JOEL KUPFERMAN: Can I just finished my  
18 statement, please?

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: If you can wrap it up  
20 right now, that would be great.

21 JOEL KUPFERMAN: Okay. I just want to  
22 say, as a lawyer, this is really, really bad. The  
23 city keeps on terming open space as less and less  
24 green and smaller protections. They always end up  
25 defending the developer in terms of private public

2 partnerships. We have to be concerned about-- And  
3 number three, most of this is being done for the  
4 financing. We just have to remember that just a few  
5 billion dollars have been passed in Washington and  
6 much of that money is available through very  
7 different departments in terms of resiliency and  
8 natural resource protection that we don't have to  
9 depend on a private-public partnership here.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you for  
11 your testimony today.

12 JOEL KUPFERMAN: Okay. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That was the last  
15 speaker on this panel, Chair Moya. I currently see  
16 no members with questions.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you. There  
18 being no questions for this panel, the witness panel  
19 is now excused. Counsel, if you can please call up  
20 the next panel.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
22 include Michael Davis, Marcos Spindleman, and E  
23 Campbell, and Will Kurtz. The first speaker will  
24 be Michael Davis and then Margo Spindleman.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

2                   MICHAEL DAVIS:     My name is Michael  
3 Davis. I was born and raised in New York City and I  
4 have lived in Brooklyn for the last 32 years. I  
5 oppose the proposed rezoning of Governors Island.  
6 Anyone who has lived in New York City for any period  
7 of time knows that this proposal is just another real  
8 estate deal and the selling of a valuable public  
9 asset to raise money for the city and enrich the  
10 private interests involved. Any plan must include  
11 Portal Governors Island art Fair. I visited this  
12 important art fair twice and I have seen countless  
13 artists and art lovers make their way there every  
14 summer. This art fair has been on the island for  
15 more than 12 years and is an essential anchor. They  
16 must remain on the island. The idea of economic  
17 self-sufficiency is a ridiculous burden to place on a  
18 boat loved already functioning Park, education, and  
19 cultural center. The island should be publicly  
20 funded through increased taxes on those who can  
21 afford them. I suppose we could put Hudson yards and  
22 Central Park, too. The most alarming part of this  
23 proposal, after the part of about ruining the islands  
24 character entirely, is the way it completely ignores  
25 the climate crisis that is now upon us. Buildings in

2 New York City account for somewhere around 70 percent  
3 of our carbon emissions. New York State passed the  
4 climate leadership and community protection act in  
5 2019. This is New York State law. It calls for the  
6 reduction of greenhouse gases by 40 percent by 2030  
7 and that Governors Island trust wants to increase the  
8 carbon footprint of the island by who knows how many  
9 percentage points. This takes us backwards.  
10 Dropping a climate study center in the middle of this  
11 project won't change the fact that it is illegal and  
12 immoral. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
15 will be Margo Spindelman and then Emmie Campbell.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

17 MARGO SPINDLEMAN: Hi. My name is Margot  
18 Spindelman. I am an artist living in New York City  
19 and a past participant in the Governor island art  
20 fair which was my introduction to this unique and  
21 beautiful place. Before my initial participation  
22 with the fair in 2012, I had never visited this  
23 gorgeous piece of wilderness a five minute ferry ride  
24 from Manhattan. I was shocked by the island and  
25 moved by it, too. The police that is wide open,

scrollable, surrounded by water, quiet. I spent three days a week on the island in the month of September 2012 and was just struck by this unusual gem that offered so many ways to sit on some grass, look up at the sky, listen to the water. I have been coming back ever since, both as an artist in the fair and I one of those New York City residents who feels the tremendous luck in finding a cheap and easy way to get out of the city without actually leaving. I know about developers and open space. I live in Greenpoint. As 40 story luxury condos metastasize in my neighborhood, you built a discontinuous skinny green ribbon of what has been called open space which you can get to by navigating your way around and between gigantic sky blocking towers. How something similar can be proposed for Governors Island is beyond comprehension. The plan, as currently presented, lacks the rigor and specificity that would protect Governors Island from future voracious overdevelopment, reducing building height to 250 feet from 300 feet is utterly insufficient. I fully support work that seeks to address the climate emergency we are in. I just fail to see how building massive new buildings accomplishes this. Actually, I

2 wonder if they will be mandated to use 100 percent  
3 renewable energy. Since Covid, we have acres of  
4 vacant office buildings in Midtown Manhattan. I  
5 would suggest exploring options to reconfigure that  
6 space instead A now Governors Island at the expense  
7 of air and light and wild habitat. Please say no to  
8 this disastrous rezoning. This terrible  
9 privatization of our glorious public space. Thank  
10 you for your time.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
13 will be Emmie Campbell and then Will Kurtz.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

15 EMMIE CAMPBELL: Hi. My name is Emmie  
16 Campbell and I am in solidarity with the indigenous  
17 voices I have heard today, amongst others. I speak  
18 in opposition to this proposal. Climate solutions do  
19 not include erecting steel behemoths on some precious  
20 little wide open green spaces in our city which--  
21 spaces which are home to a number of seabirds that  
22 will be displaced with this development. You talk  
23 about year-round use, neglecting to recognize that  
24 nature is a year-round phenomenon. Your development  
25 threatens to devastate the free and natural feeling

2 of Governors Island, all in the sordid name of  
3 capital. You conveniently largely left out details  
4 of your hotel operations in your presentation. This  
5 craven behavior shows that you know that we do not  
6 want more walled gardens for the elite in our city.  
7 We want real green space, not conciliatory shrubbery  
8 wedged between yet another stand of dreary, hulking  
9 monuments to our need to colonize every corner of the  
10 map. Please consider saying no to this proposition.  
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The last speaker on  
14 this panel will be Will Kurtz.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

16 WILL KURTZ: Hello? Am I on?

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: We hear you.

18 WILL KURTZ: Okay. I am an artist and I  
19 have been going to Governors Island for several years  
20 and have attended the art fair and I remember riding  
21 my bike across the bridge and taking a fairy there  
22 and it was so unique to have that space next to an  
23 urban area like New York you really can't find it  
24 anywhere else and when I was over there, I would look  
25 back at the city and I would just think, wow. Look



2 at this open space. I live next to Central Park and  
3 I can imagine Central Park had buildings put on it  
4 now. And for the fact they are talking about 200 D  
5 foot tall buildings going there, it is unbelievable.  
6 I mean, when you are out there, there are all these  
7 huge buildings that are empty and they are not even  
8 being used. Why would you put new buildings up when  
9 you can just revitalize the existing buildings that  
10 are there? And even if you couldn't do that, if you  
11 put the new buildings up, why do they have to be 250  
12 feet tall? Why can't they just be for stories like  
13 the existing buildings that have the same character?  
14 I mean, I don't even want to go out there anymore if  
15 you're going to start changing it and it's going to  
16 become like a regular city park. What's unique about  
17 it is it's all open. You know, I lived out in  
18 Vancouver and they had this beautiful park right by  
19 the city and they left it alone. It's just massive  
20 trees. They just left it alone. Why does everything  
21 have to be developed? I just don't understand.  
22 That's all I have to say about that.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you so much for  
24 your testimony today. Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya, that  
3 was the last speaker of this panel. I see no members  
4 with questions for the panel.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no  
6 questions for this panel, the witness panel is now  
7 excused and, counsel, if you can please call up the  
8 next panel.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next panel will  
10 include Gabriel Willow, [inaudible 05:58:02], Dan  
11 Campbell, and Maria Roca. The first speaker on the  
12 panel will be Gabriel Willow followed by Patty  
13 Hefley.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.  
15 You may begin. Mr. Willow, you can begin.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Gabriel, can you--  
17 Yeah. Can you unmute yourself?

18 GABRIEL WILLOW: Can you hear me now?

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Now we can hear you.

20 GABRIEL WILLOW: Good. I've been  
21 visiting Governors Island since it first opened to  
22 the public and I have worked out there in various  
23 capacities for several years now, including with some  
24 environmental organizations that have spoken earlier,  
25 but I'm speaking just as a private citizen. On

2 behalf of myself and how I feel about the island--  
3 and it's a magical place that so many others have  
4 mentioned and I think there is this ineffable quality  
5 of openness and green space and sky that so many New  
6 Yorkers don't have the opportunity to experience and,  
7 you know, Richard Louvre in his book last child in  
8 the woods talks about this quality of nature deficit  
9 disorder where, you know, so many children  
10 increasingly don't have the opportunity to experience  
11 the outdoors and experience nature. I am an  
12 environmental educator, so this is what I do. I take  
13 people outside to experience nature and there is  
14 something so unique about Governors Island and all of  
15 New York City where you have this open sky and that  
16 is something that so few New Yorkers and so few  
17 children in York have the opportunity to experience.  
18 This feeling that you can breathe and see this open  
19 skyline and see the Statue of Liberty and see the New  
20 York City skyline and while there has been a lot of  
21 talk about preserving the footprint of the existing  
22 Park and only building on the footprint of the  
23 designated zones, they haven't really discussed how  
24 much that will still change one's perception and  
25 experience of the island. So, if you go to hammock

2 Grove and you laying in a hammock right now, you look  
3 and you see trees and you see sky and how different  
4 will that experience be if you go to Hammock Grove  
5 and you lay in a hammock and you see a skyscraper  
6 instead? And so I think maintaining one place in New  
7 York City where you have open skies and open air that  
8 feeling that you can really breathe and unwind and  
9 there's no cars and no traffic, it's just remarkable  
10 and so unique and so special on a global level to  
11 have something like that in New York City. I mean, I  
12 take people out there on tors from all over the world  
13 and they are amazed.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

15 GABRIEL WILLOW: They are astounded. If  
16 he may just finish up here.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: That would be great.

18 GABRIEL WILLOW: I just ask you to  
19 maintain that quality. I think everybody agrees that  
20 a climate center would be amazing, but Liggett Hall  
21 is nearly the size of the Empire State building lying  
22 on its side. It's over 1000 feet long and it is  
23 standing empty. Please use existing structures.  
24 Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
3 for your testimony today.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
5 will be Patty Heffley followed by Dan Campbell.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

7 PATTY HEFFLEY: Hello.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Hi, Patty. How are you?

9 PATTY HEFFLEY: Okay. Hello. I'm Patty  
10 Heffley. I'm a 43 year old resident in Chelsea  
11 living adjacent to the Highline Park and near Hudson  
12 Yards. As a newer member of the County committee, I  
13 say no to these proposals. I oppose the Governors  
14 Island real estate construction and all manner of  
15 graft from New York City's budget in future tax  
16 revenue pot. We all know what this is. It's a  
17 giveaway from the taxpayer pockets know we need is  
18 2050 before it may be mighty than breakeven. The  
19 whole time, taxpayers are paying taxes and upkeep and  
20 expense as well the above grifters are getting giant  
21 tax breaks right out of the box. New York City can't  
22 afford another Hudson Yards boondoggle. Hudson Yards  
23 has failed and we, the taxpayers, are paying for it.  
24 Enough people will not go to Governors Island enough  
25 for the trusts stated its profitability and won't

1 want to take a fairy every day to work. They want  
2 grass, open skies, and little did you. The Highline  
3 works because it is accessible by walking and trains  
4 and buses. It's a small commitment. It's New York  
5 City when you step off the stairs. How many people  
6 do you need to be constant users of the island to pay  
7 for itself by 2050? And how will they get there?  
8 Will Governors Island be like the Hudson Yards? A  
9 giant failure of ideas and a waste of money?  
10 Taxpayers money. We need affordable housing on a  
11 massive scale. We need Covid ventilation citywide.  
12 We need better schools in every quarter of the city.  
13 We need to tax the rich to pay for their own mistakes  
14 like Hudson yards, not the taxpayers paying. There  
15 are other proposed appropriate plans that are in  
16 scale to the island and won't hold the taxpaying  
17 citizens hostage. The MAGIC plan seems to conserve  
18 the island and, very importantly, as well the  
19 migrating birds that need the park should be  
20 considered. No on this taxpayer graft boondoggle.  
21 Thank you.

22  
23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

24

25

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: The next speaker  
3 will be Dan Campbell who will be followed by Maria  
4 Roca.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

6 DAN CAMPBELL: Hi. Do you hear me  
7 okay?

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We hear you.

9 DAN CAMPBELL: Okay. I'm Dan Campbell  
10 and I am a New Yorker. I am one of the many people  
11 who visit the island every year. I look forward to  
12 it all year long and I think I probably speak for all  
13 of those thousands of people when I say that we are  
14 not coming despite Governors Islands lack of  
15 commercial development. We are coming precisely for  
16 its lack of commercial development. I'm not sure I  
17 would want to still come if I just felt like more of  
18 what I've already got plenty of an encounter on a  
19 daily basis as I go about my routine in the city.  
20 Governors Island has always been a special place and  
21 special for how proximate it is to the city, but you  
22 can just take a ferry across the buttermilk Channel  
23 and suddenly you feel like you are so far away. The  
24 current proposal destroys that and it seems like a  
25 gift to the planters and the developers. The

2 commercial interest that would all seem to benefit  
3 from this and not for the people who live there in  
4 the history of the island and the people like myself  
5 who have been going there for 10 years and support  
6 this special path that we would like to see  
7 preserved. So, while I and others, we are all in  
8 favor of good things like education and bathrooms in  
9 the environment. I don't think I need to add high-  
10 rises in a hotel to get that. That just shouldn't be  
11 a requirement. So, I urge you to please not approve  
12 this upsell would keep it for the people. Something  
13 special that is worth preserving down through the  
14 generations as a park. So, I implore you to save  
15 Governors Island. It is worth saving. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Next and last  
18 speaker off panel will be Maria Roca.

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

20 MARIA ROCA: Okay. Here we are. Ready?

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We're ready.

22 MARIA ROCA: Okay. I am Maria Roca. One  
23 second. There we go. I am Maria Roca and I'm here  
24 as a 60 year resident of New York City, founder of  
25 the Friends of Sunset Park, and advocate for all New



1 York City public parks. In particular, the ones in  
2 Southwest Brooklyn. One of many New York City areas  
3 sadly and severely lacking and adequate-- and that  
4 is in quotes, adequate, because even adequate is less  
5 than we should tolerate, environmentally safe, green  
6 open space for each and all of its residents and  
7 visitors. To anyone who has lived and/or is living  
8 near the waterfronts of the archipelago that is New  
9 York City, the proposal plan here we have discussed  
10 is clearly another major predatory thrust against a  
11 livable New York City again for each and all of us.  
12 All you need to look is at-- and I'm thinking  
13 Brooklyn. Downtown Brooklyn and what has been coming  
14 south on Fourth Avenue. And here in Sunset Park, it  
15 is knocking at our door. And we know it. People  
16 know it and it is the same predatory thrust that we  
17 have seen all around New York City. This is very  
18 personal, very-- to all New Yorkers. All these  
19 people here have spoken eloquently and, why? Because  
20 they have personally felt the abuse, the predatory  
21 energy of all of this as we are discussing here will  
22 be thrust upon Governors Island. It is without  
23 precedent, what we have seen. It's a long time  
24 coming, but--  
25

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

3 MARIA ROCA: but, you know, when you go  
4 after a place like Governors Island, I don't know  
5 what else? Can you say? You have no soul. Thank  
6 you.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, Maria. Thank  
8 you for your testimony today.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: That was the last  
10 speaker for this panel, Chair Moya. I see no hands  
11 for members for the panel.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no  
13 questions for this panel, this witness panel is now  
14 excused, counsel, if you can please call up the next  
15 panel.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. Chair, the  
17 next panel will include Jayda Fabrizio and Judith  
18 Canepa. Jayda Fabrizio will go first and then we  
19 will hear from Judith Canepa.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

21 JAYDA FABRIZIO: Hello. Hello? Can you  
22 hear me?

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

24 JAYDA FABRIZIO: You can hear me?

25 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you.

2 JADA FABRIZIO: Okay. For over a  
3 decade, community arts groups have enhanced the  
4 experience of Governors Island. I have been  
5 listening all day to people talking about the  
6 cultural experience of Governors Island and I really  
7 haven't heard much about local community legacy  
8 artist groups being supported. I also oppose this  
9 development because New York has enough hotels and  
10 enough high-rises. It does not have enough open  
11 space. As an artist who has participated in the Four  
12 head Gov. Island art fair, I can tell you that being  
13 an artist and getting that opportunity was like a  
14 once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. I am concerned that  
15 the rezoning of the Governors Island will create an  
16 environment in which community-based arts and culture  
17 will eventually suffer and fade. I hope the trust  
18 will continue to support community-based arts  
19 organizations and I hope that the people will oppose  
20 this development. I guess that's all I have to say.  
21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We will now hear  
24 from Judith Canepa.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

2 JUDITH CANEPA: Hi. My name is Judith  
3 Canepa and I am calling about the-- my opposition to  
4 the proposed plan for Governors Island. I think that  
5 it is out of scale development for such a bucolic  
6 treasure, as they silent, with a history of this  
7 place and how it succeeded its original mission of  
8 being a military base and became a haven for wildlife  
9 and for people who appreciate it. For those of us  
10 who can just jump on that theory and in a quick 5 to  
11 7 minutes, we were in another world and tall  
12 buildings and workout centers and commercial office  
13 buildings, how was that supposed to fit in with the  
14 plan that was originally thought of? That  
15 beautifully conceived plan for this island? And, as  
16 Mr. Kupferman alluded to earlier, there is now  
17 funding to restore such places without burdening New  
18 York City with overdevelopment just to catch a few  
19 bucks to create half of the dream. Thank you very  
20 much.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your  
22 testimony.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Moya, that  
24 was the last speaker on this panel. I am not seen  
25 any members with questions for this panel.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. There being no  
3 more questions for this panel, the witness panel is  
4 now excused. Counsel, can you please call up the  
5 next panel?

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, Chair. We  
7 actually have a couple of holdover panelists that we  
8 are going to try to hear from now. We will start  
9 with-- well, they include Howard Branstein and  
10 Andrew Zelter. We're going to first try to hear  
11 again from Howard Branstein. Howard Branstein?

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time will begin now.

13 HOWARD BRANSTEIN: Okay. One second,  
14 please. Can you hear me?

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We can hear you, Howard.

16 HOWARD BRANSTEIN: Okay. Thanks. So, my  
17 name is Howard Branstein. I am the Executive  
18 Director of Sixth Street Community Center in the East  
19 Village lower East side. So, every summer for the  
20 past 10 years, we bring our kids and our summer  
21 program to Governors Island on bicycle trips and as  
22 everyone has said, it's an incredibly beautiful,  
23 bucolic Park. New York City has been pointed out  
24 right now is incredibly overbuilt and currently very  
25 under occupied. So, we want to preserve the pastoral

2 character and open space of those areas like  
3 Governors Island that remain. The Trust for  
4 Governors Island planned changes the character  
5 dramatically with its proposal for 25 story buildings  
6 and millions of new square feet. I think even 125  
7 foot buildings are too much and I think we should  
8 stick with the existing heights. The climate center  
9 proposed by the trust is really just a Trojan horse  
10 for overdevelopment, including a hotel, which is  
11 completely inappropriate for that beautiful space  
12 and, in fact, this exacerbates the climate crisis.  
13 We don't need the so-called climate center, as  
14 proposed by the Governors Island. We need to fight  
15 climate change by expanding open space and reducing  
16 our greenhouse emissions and, in that regard, yes.  
17 Of course. We should support the existing  
18 organizations on Governors Island to do more of the  
19 great work that we are doing. So, let's renovate and  
20 repurpose the existing structures or remove those  
21 structures that are not usable in create more open  
22 space. So, I urge the city Council to vote no on  
23 this very misguided proposal. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you,  
25 Howard, for your testimony today.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. And for our  
3 remaining holdover panelists, Andrew Zelter. We are  
4 going to try to see if we can get Andrew Zelter's  
5 testimony. Andrew Zelter, if you can hear us, please  
6 accept the unmute request in order to begin to speak.  
7 Okay. Chair, it appears that we, unfortunately, are  
8 continuing to have trouble getting through to Andrew  
9 Zelter and were not able to get his testimony. We  
10 will have an announcement later regarding submission  
11 of written testimony. But, for now, that is the last  
12 witness name on this last panel. We will now see if  
13 there are any other members of the public who wish to  
14 testify on the Governors Island rezoning proposal.  
15 If so, please press the raise hand button now. Okay.  
16 It appears that we do have someone doing just that.  
17 Okay. We're going to try to take a witness  
18 identified as Ally Ryan. We are going to bring that  
19 individual in. Ally Ryan. This is someone who is  
20 not already testified, we will take that testimony.  
21 In the event that it is someone who has already  
22 testified, we will do not.

23 CHRIS RYAN: Hello. Chris Ryan here. It  
24 must have signed in with my wife's name, but okay.  
25 Hi. Sorry. This is Chris Ryan, husband of Ally

2 Ryan. I would like to testify, as well. She had  
3 mentioned earlier that we were married on Governors  
4 Island and it was dear to our hearts. We are  
5 concerned that we do not need it to be lost. We  
6 would like it to be preserved like Central Park. We  
7 have a very unique opportunity to have a central Park  
8 from our generation that we have preserved. I  
9 believe the lower half of the island should not be  
10 built at all. I know some people are willing to go  
11 up to four stories, but I think we can come up with a  
12 plan with the bottom half being left undeveloped  
13 until all housing or both structures on the upper  
14 half are occupied. Renovate those first, occupy, and  
15 then see if we still need more space. We probably do  
16 not, as far as I am concerned. I thought it was  
17 ironic that the plan proposed by the trust ended with  
18 an image of the island untouched with a view of  
19 Manhattan and the whole plan seems to be eliminating  
20 that image. We don't need the hotels. We don't  
21 need-- if we need a climate center, then, great.  
22 Put it in some of these buildings that are already  
23 built and make that happen and what was touched upon  
24 earlier about bike lanes, yes. I think there should  
25 be a somewhat protected bike lane protecting the



2 pedestrians that can go around the whole of the  
3 island so people can cycle without worrying about  
4 hitting older people are young kids running in their  
5 way. And, hey, I don't think profitability is a  
6 goal. I think we need to keep our parks free from  
7 pressure a profit. We seem to find money for  
8 everything. There are ferries going there year  
9 round. They are just not for the public. You know,  
10 if we need more ferries, great. It may not be so  
11 many people in December, January, February. So,  
12 until we find out what we need, let's just keep  
13 working with what we have which is a beautiful  
14 island, half of it undeveloped, the other half of it  
15 already itching to be filled up with a real estate  
16 and developers or whoever you want to put in these  
17 other buildings, let them put their money to work  
18 into those buildings. But, let's keep--

19 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

20 CHRIS RYAN: this unique space available  
21 for our families. Thank you.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We are now going to  
23 attempt to get testimony from Daniel Reynolds and  
24 after Daniel Reynolds, we will also hear from Gerald  
25 Forsburg. But first, we'll begin with Daniel

2 Reynolds. Daniel Reynolds, if you can hear us,  
3 please press the raise hand button. Okay. We're  
4 going to give Daniel Reynolds a couple more minutes,  
5 during which time we will now try to hear from Gerald  
6 Forsburg. Gerald Forsburg is going to be brought  
7 into the meeting to testify.

8 GERALD FORSBURG: There we go. Can you  
9 hear me?

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Yes. Your time will  
11 begin now.

12 GERALD FORSBURG: Thank you. Okay. Yeah.  
13 So, I want to challenge the city of New York to  
14 consider a less myopic view of Governors Island as a  
15 single entity separate from the other islands. As I  
16 see the problem here, the island is disconnected from  
17 the city as a whole, regardless of very service.  
18 Underlying the trusts request for review zoning is  
19 the desire, though not a mandate, for the island to  
20 be financially independent. One problem that has  
21 been presented as a block to this financial  
22 independence has been year-round access to the  
23 islands. What has been meant by this or suggested is  
24 that year-round financial support for the island is  
25 what is missing. And I would provide that year-round

2 access to the island could be had without that actual  
3 financial support. In fact, I challenge the trust--  
4 I challenge that the trust-- Excuse me. I'm sorry.  
5 I was writing this very quickly. Instead of  
6 speculative build it and they will come approach, why  
7 not use data that is readily available? Walkable  
8 cities, pedestrian friendly cities, open spaces.  
9 These are what make a city livable. I propose that  
10 the city of New York take a more proactive approach  
11 to preserving the openness of the island, financial  
12 viability of the island, and access to the island by  
13 considering a completely different approach that is a  
14 construction of a pedestrian only bridge to connect  
15 Governors Island to both lower Manhattan and  
16 Brooklyn. Covid has shown each of us the need for  
17 social distancing and outdoor open space. There's a  
18 push in urban planning for more walkable cities. Why  
19 rely on a ferry to get us to the island? The Lenape  
20 used canoes. Why not build a walkable, pedestrian  
21 and bicycle friendly connection to permit the Hudson  
22 Greenway to continue across the harbor, encompass the  
23 island, and continue to the Brooklyn waterfront  
24 thereby giving year-round accessibility to New  
25 Yorkers and visitors alike equally. Such a structure

2 would also possibly spur development at the Brooklyn  
3 waterfront which may, incidentally, be a better  
4 place--

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

6 GERALD FORSBURG: for a climate research  
7 center? Elements of the MAGIC plan could be  
8 incorporated. Thank you very much. I urge the  
9 Council to really consider the island as the heart of  
10 the harbor. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you  
12 for your testimony today. Counsel, do we have any  
13 other panelists?

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair, there are no  
15 more witnesses on this panel, however, I understand  
16 that we are getting in some additional registrations.  
17 So, as I get that information, we will be introducing  
18 some new names. But as for this panel, they can be  
19 excused. I see no members with questions.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Seeing that  
21 there are questions for this panel, this panel is now  
22 excused we will call up the next--

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. Yes. As we  
24 continue to wait for the new registrations, we are  
25 also now going to hear from the individual logged in

2 as Ally Ryan. Once again, we are taking testimony  
3 from individuals who have not already testified, so  
4 the person Ryan in as Alley Ryan, we are going to  
5 turn on the microphone and hear the testimony  
6 provided it is from a new speaker.

7 ALLY RYAN: Hello, again. My daughter  
8 just saw her father speak, so she now wants to speak.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Hi. How are you?

10 VIRGINIA RYAN: I really like Governors  
11 Island and also, when I first went there and it was  
12 very fun going on the slide and also why would the  
13 Governor destroy an island named after him? The  
14 Governor wants to destroy Governors Island.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: What's your name?

16 VIRGINIA RYAN: Virginia.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Virginia. Well, thank  
18 you, Virginia, for coming on and testifying. We  
19 really appreciate it.

20 ALLY RYAN: Can you share how old you  
21 are?

22 VIRGINIA RYAN: I'm eight going on nine.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You're eight going on  
24 nine? Look, I remember when I was eight going on  
25 nine. I wish I was back there. Well, thank you,

2 Virginia. Would you like to add anything else before  
3 we go?

4 ALLY RYAN: No or yes?

5 VIRGINIA RYAN: No.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: No? All right. Well,  
7 thank you so much, Virginia, for coming on. We  
8 really appreciate it. I'm sure your dad is very  
9 proud of you right now. So, thank you.

10 ALLY RYAN: This is our other daughter.

11 UNKNOWN: Hi.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: The whole family's on.

13 ALLY RYAN: Yes. Thank you very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you to  
15 the Ryan family for coming on. Take care.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: All right, Chair  
17 Moya, I do understand that we were getting some light  
18 registrations, but we are going to now-- So we are  
19 going to wait a little bit for those to come in. I  
20 will ask once again if there any members of the  
21 public who wish to testify on the Governors Island  
22 rezoning proposal and have not already done so,  
23 please press the raise hand button or if you are  
24 watching and have not already testified, registration  
25 must be completed at the Council's website. We will

2 stand at ease briefly while we check for those  
3 members of the public might've registered. Okay.  
4 Chair Moya, we just have one potential last  
5 individual to testify. That would be Dan Reynolds.  
6 Dan Reynolds, if you can hear me, please press the  
7 raise hand button now and we will take your  
8 testimony. Dan Reynolds.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Do we have Dan?

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sorry, Chair. It  
11 appears that we may have lost our last person, so I  
12 see no other members of the public seeking to testify  
13 on this item at this time.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: If there was anybody  
15 that might have dropped off, you can always email  
16 your testimony to the Council and, Arthur, if you  
17 want to read off the email?

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Written testimony  
19 should be emailed to  
20 landuse[testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov). Land use  
21 [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov).

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. There being  
23 no members of the public who wish to testify on the  
24 preconsidered LU items under ULURP numbers N 210126  
25 ZRM and C 210127 ZMM for the Governors Island

2 rezoning proposal, the public hearing is now closed  
3 and the items are laid over. That includes today's  
4 business. I will remind the viewing public, for  
5 anyone wishing to submit testimony again you can  
6 always do so by emailing us at land use  
7 [testimony@Council.NYC.gov](mailto:testimony@Council.NYC.gov) and I would like to take  
8 the opportunity to thank the members of the public  
9 for your patience and I know it might've been a bit  
10 of a long hearing, but thank you so much for coming  
11 on. My colleagues, of course, the subcommittee  
12 counsel, land-use and the Council staff and, of  
13 course, the sergeant-at-arms for helping us get  
14 through this and for participating in today's meeting  
15 and, as always, thank you to my copilot, Arthur, for  
16 helping shepherd this thing through and Angelina as  
17 well. Thank you so much, everyone. This meeting is  
18 hereby adjourned.

19 [gave]

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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 \_\_\_\_\_ April 30, 2021 \_\_\_\_\_