

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

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February 7, 2018
Start: 10:02 a.m.
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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: FRANCISCO P. MOYA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

STEPHEN T. LEVIN
RORY I. LANCOUNCIL MEMBERAN
COSTA G. CONSTANTINIDES
BARRY S. GRODENCHIK
ANTONIO REYNOSO
DONOVAN J. RICHARDS
CARLINA RIVERA
RITCHIE J. TORRES

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

Jay Segal

Land Use Attorney with Greenberg Traurig,
Representing Applicant, Arun Alagappan

Simon Bacchus

Director of Development at the Arker Company

Jaclyn Scarinci

Associate of Real Estate at Akerman LLP

Emmanuel D'Amore

Director of Land Use and Feasibility at Aufgang
Architects

Bryant Brown

Member of 32BJ SEIU

Carol Samol

Director of the Bronx Borough Office of the
Department of City Planning

Michael Parkinson

Senior City Planner of the Bronx Borough Office
Of the Department of City Planning

Leila Bozorg

Deputy Commissioner for Neighborhood Strategies
With the Department of Housing Preservation and
Development

Michael Blaise Backer

Deputy Commissioner with the Department of Small
Business Services

Nicholas Molinari

Chief of Planning for the Department of Parks

Nivardo Lopez

Bronx Borough Commissioner from the Department of
Transportation

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

Melanie La Rocca
Vice President of Operations at the New York
City's School Construction Authority

James Rausse
Director of Planning and Development Representing
Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Junior

Dr. Bola Omotosho
Chairperson/Housing Committee Chair for the New
York City Bronx Community Board 5

Paul Philps
District Manager for Community Board 4

Ken Brown
Disttrict Manager of Community Board 5

Alex Feldman
Senior Program Manager for Community Development
At WHEDco

Lee Kallman
Bronx Coalition Member and Organizer of Community
Alliance for Workers Justice

Karla Cruz
Legislative and Policy Coordinator for the
Laborers Union

Daphne Hart
Member of Laborers Local 79, Bronx Resident

James Coakley
Representing Cayre Equities

Nora Martins
Akerman LLP, Speaking on behalf of Jorge Madruga
Of Maddd Equities

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

William Bollinger
Principal of JCAL Development Group

H.J. Lee
Representing the New York Hotel Trades Council

Katie Moore
Representing the New York Hotel Trades Council

Jocelyn Taylor
Face of Homeless and Housing Insecurity

Sandra Mitchell
Leader at the Parent Action Committee, Leader at
The Community Action for safe Apartments, CASA

Ramon Catala
Resident of the Bronx, Leader at the Community
Action for Safe Apartments, CASA

Carina Brown
Representing Kingspoint Heights, Developer in the
Bronx

Michael Cramer
Representing Property Owners at Jerome, Inwood
Bound by West 169th Street on Block 2855

Allison Gangi
Member of Development Team at Bronxworks

Carmen Vega-Rivera
Representing CASA and the Bronx Coalition for
Community Vision

Pedro J. Estevez
Founder and President of United Auto Merchants
Association

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

Adrien Weibgen
Attorney at the Community Development Project at
The Urban Justice Center

Chris Walters
Rezoning Technical Assistance Coordinator at the
Association for Neighborhood and Housing
Development, Technical Assistance Provider for
The Bronx Coalition for Community Vision

Elena Conte
Director of Policy at Pratt Center for Community
Development

George Sotiroff
Resident of 901 Walton Avenue in the Bronx

Anita Long
Member of CASA and Bronx Resident

Robert Joseph
Project Manager at the Municipal Art Society of
New York

Enrique Colone
Member of CASA and the Bronx Coalition for
Community Vision, Bronx Resident

Marco Neira
President of Sunrise Cooperative

Dave Subrin
Representing CASA

Esti Agolie
Displaced Resident of the Bronx

Shala Garcia
Director of CASA, Tenant Representative

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

Yesenia Perez
Resident of the Bronx

Spanos Patrice
Residential Doorman and Member of the Building
Service Worker Union, SEIU Local 32BJ

Tammy Rivera
Professional Carpenter for 24 Years

Alton Anderson
Retiree from the New York City Housing Authority

Narciso Salcedo
Representing CASA

Antoinette Rose
North Bronx Coalition and Resident of the Bronx

Lourdes Delacruz
Resident of the Bronx and CASA Member

Izzy Doudy
Worked for Bronx Community Board Four

James Fairbanks
Resident of the Bronx

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Good morning. Good morning, I want to welcome everyone to the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchising. I am Francisco Moya, I'm the chair of the subcommittee and I'd like to also acknowledge that we are joined by Council Member's Carlina Rivera, Barry Grodenchik and Donovan Richards, and... oh I'm sorry, Council Member Treyger is here, yes, thank you. Today we will be holding hearings on three items, a special permit application, the Sea Park North rezoning and the Jerome Avenue rezoning. We will start with hearings on the special permit application for the Sea Park North before moving on to Jerome Avenue hearing. We will be laying over all items except for LU 6, which we will be voting on after the hearing. Our first hearing will be on LU 6, the 350 East 88th Street special permit application. This application is for a special permit under Section 74-711 of the zoning resolution granting waivers of the use... of, of use regulations and rear yard requirements. Approval of the applications would facilitate the operation of an educational tutorial and test preparation services in an existing four-story building. As a requirement of

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the special permit approval, the application would also make repairs and restorations on the neighboring Holy Trinity Church Rectory. This application is in Council Member Kallos's district. I will now open the public hearing on LU 6 and I'd like the speakers... we have Jaclyn Scarinci and... that's okay... John Beddingfield, Arun Alagappan, did I say that correctly? Thank you and Jay Segal to testify and you can begin now, thank you.

JAY SEGAL: Good morning Chair Moya,

Council Members. My name is Jay Segal and I'm a land use attorney with Greenberg Traurig and I represent the applicant, Arun Alagappan, the owner Advantage Testing is to my immediate left and, and Father John Beddingfield is further to the left. As you accurately said the application involves two buildings, one is the Rhineland building which is the building in blue which is the building that Advantage wants to occupy for its commercial educational use and the Rectory that Father John lives in and that performs church functions is the building to it's left. The reason the special permit is needed is because although Advantage testing's use is very community facility like in that it teaches and

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2 educates children because it's for profit, it's a
3 commercial use and it's not permitted in a
4 residential district hence the special permit which
5 entailed restoring the Rectory to the satisfaction of
6 landmarks would be required. This special permit
7 would allow Advantage's use and it would also allow
8 the reordering enclosure that's presently above the
9 terrace... terrace above the first floor and right now
10 what it looks like is it has a lot of wire mesh and
11 steel rods that you can see in that drawing to be
12 enclosed as a regular room would be enclosed and that
13 requires a special permit because it's included... its
14 increasing the re-un-enclosure issues. That's the
15 application and I'm here and Arun and Father John are
16 here to answer any questions any Council Member may
17 have.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Any, any questions?

19 No, okay. Thank you very much.

20 JAY SEGAL: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We will now be moving
22 to the public hearings. So, are there any members in
23 the public who wish to testify on this item? Seeing
24 none I will now close the public hearing on this
25 item. We will now move on to public hearing on LU 15

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and LU 16, the Sea Park North rezoning. This application would establish a 5R/56... R6... R6A and R7A C2-4 district on a block bounded by Neptune Avenue, West 28th Street, Mermaid Avenue and West 29th Street. The new zoning would allow for the development of two new buildings with a total of 153 residential units affordable to families making between 30 and 100 percent of the areas median income. This rezoning is located in Council Member Treyger's district and he has a statement before we get going on this hearing. Council Member Treyger.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: First and

foremost, I want to thank Chair Moya as well as the Land Use Chair, Salamanca, my colleagues and the council land use staff for their assistance. The application which we'll hear about shortly has... that's under review that has, has many merits. The proposed development would provide a significant number of units of affordable housing at deep levels of affordability in line with a median income of Coney Island and would activate a currently underutilized piece of property. However, while I'm broadly supportive of the development of much needed affordable housing, I cannot consider this project in

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2 isolation from the greater neighborhood context.
3 Aside from a 2009 rezoning in the amusement area,
4 Coney Island has received very little serious
5 planning attention from the city despite urgent
6 infrastructure, open space, retail and economic
7 development needs. As such many of my questions today
8 will focus on ongoing issues not only directly
9 related to this development but the surrounding
10 blocks in the greater Coney Island community beyond
11 the amusement district as well. I'd like to clarify
12 that for the record that while community board 13
13 initially voted to approve the project they were
14 unaware that the proposed rezoning extended beyond
15 the proposed development site, the board later
16 conducted a second vote during which they voted
17 against the application with 11 votes in favor, 15
18 votes opposed and one abstention and with that Mr.
19 Chair I would like to listen to the.. to the
20 applicants testifying, thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Councilman
22 Treyger. Yeah, now I will open the public hearing on
23 LU 15 and LU 16. We are joined by Jaclyn Scarinci,
24 did I say it correctly, thank you; Emmanuel D'Amore
25 and Simon Bacchus. Thank you and welcome.

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2 JACLYN SCARINCI: Good morning Chair Moya
3 and Council Members, Jaclyn Scarinci of Akerman LLP
4 on behalf of the applicant, SP North of SP North
5 Limited Partnership which is an affiliate of the
6 Arker Company. The Arker Companies own, manage, and
7 develop a considerable amount of affordable housing
8 both within the Coney Island, Sea Park community and
9 throughout New York City. I'm joined here today by
10 Simon Bacchus to my right who is the Director of
11 Development of the Arker Companies and Emmanuel
12 D'Amore, the Land Use Director of Aufgang Architects,
13 the project architect who will speak more about the
14 design and layout of the building. The applicant here
15 is requesting two actions, a zoning map amendment to
16 block 7011 from the existing R5 and R5/C1-2 zoning
17 districts to the proposed rezoning which will be an
18 R6 and an R6A and an R7A/C2-4 zoning district. This
19 block is located between West 28th Street and West
20 29th Street on the block bounded by Neptune Avenue to
21 the North and Mermaid Avenue to the South. The second
22 action we are seeking is a zoning text amendment to
23 designate the rezoning area a mandatory inclusionary
24 housing area. We worked with Council Member Treyger's
25 office to select option one where 25 percent of the

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2 residential floor area will be permanently affordable
3 at an average of 60 percent of AMI with ten percent
4 of the units permanently affordable at 40 percent
5 AMI. The purpose of these actions is twofold, the
6 first is there is an existing 15 story Mitchell-Lama
7 building located on the site that is owned and
8 operated by the Arker Company with 122 affordable
9 housing units, the proposed R6 height factor district
10 will grandfather and bring the existing building into
11 compliance. Additionally, the proposed R6A district
12 on the mid, mid-block will facilitate the development
13 of two new 100 percent affordable housing
14 developments pursuant to HPD and HGC's ELLA Program
15 with extremely low affordable rents. There will be
16 153 dwelling units and 68 at-grade parking spaces.
17 The existing site conditions here show the existing
18 15 story building and the proposed development will
19 be on an existing underutilized area with hardscaped
20 basketball courts that's been currently in disrepair.
21 A lot of the tenants do not use this area because the
22 site is located directly across the street from Leon
23 Kaiser Park, which is a major open space in this
24 area. And this is the proposed building, the unit
25 distribution here has 15 percent studios, 44 percent

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2 one bedrooms and 41 percent of the units will be two
3 and three bedrooms to accommodate family sized
4 dwelling units as well as smaller units for seniors
5 or singles within the communities that are in need of
6 affordable housing. The proposed affordability levels
7 are consistent with ELLA, ten percent of the units
8 will be at 30 percent AMI, ten percent at 40 percent
9 AMI, ten percent at 50 percent AMI, 50 percent at 60
10 percent AMI and 20 percent at 80 percent AMI. And
11 these are the proposed... the rents based on the 2017
12 rents. And then I'll turn it over now to Emmanuel
13 D'Amore to give you a brief overview of that site
14 plan.

15 EMMANUEL D'AMORE: Good morning, thank
16 you for having us here. Emmanuel D'Amore from Aufgang
17 Architects. So, like Jackie mentioned it before the
18 existing site has a 15-story building all affordable,
19 has 43 on-grade parking surfaces on West 28th Street
20 adjacent to a, a surface playground area. Now we are
21 intended to relocate the existing 43 parking spaces
22 on West 29th Street, yeah, I give you my... the next
23 slide... with the 45 on-grade parking space for the
24 existing tenants, we are going to relocate their
25 existing playground area within the same site and

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2 then on the surface parking that we have existing
3 we're proposing to have two eight story buildings so
4 on the next slide we can see the intended grade.. no,
5 sorry, the, the... next slide, the intended first floor
6 diagram so we are proposing, we are conscious about
7 the, you know requirements about parking on this site
8 so we are proposing as much parking as we could fit,
9 we have 68 parking spaces intended on-grade as a
10 self-serve and then we have an on-grade outdoor
11 recreation areas as well as of course bicycle storage
12 and residential entrance on ground because of the
13 height water table level of the, the flood zone we
14 decided to raise the building as much as we could to
15 use the entire first floor as a nonresidential area,
16 it's only four stories. So, on the next slide we see
17 the massing compare it... the height versus the
18 existing adjacent building, we are proposing a 79
19 feet, four inches high building to fit within the
20 context and then on the next slide we can see the
21 section that shows where the flood elevation is which
22 is about six feet from ground and we intended to have
23 our first... or actually second floor with other
24 residential and mechanical rooms way above it, about
25 10 foot, six inches to, again have a, a major

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2 resiliency measure against the, the flood conditions
3 in the area. And then on the next slide we have our
4 proposed elevations which actually have very durable,
5 easy maintained materials that would age very well in
6 this area and also have a context that will match
7 within the community with... the intention is to
8 provide a design that it, it, it give the effect that
9 it was built over time and not just one monolithic
10 façade so we intended to have this break on, on the
11 façade as well. Thank you.

12 SIMON BACCHUS: Good morning Council
13 Member Moya, Council Member Treyger, members of the
14 subcommittee. My name is Simon Bacchus, I'm the
15 Director of Development at the Arker Companies. Thank
16 you for, for having us today. As Jackie and Emmanuel
17 have gone through our application and our proposed
18 building we've been working closely with Council
19 Member Treyger's office to ensure that our project is
20 not only a project that the community can be proud of
21 that's fully affordable, we've also been actively
22 working with some local entities within the community
23 including a nearby church, a nearby JCOMMITTEE CLERK
24 to ensure that when we do eventually get up and
25 running we'll have the resources to make sure we get

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2 the word out to the local community about the new
3 building to be developed. We've additionally spent
4 some time with the community board working with them
5 to try an explain the application as well as the
6 project. In addition to that we've met on a couple of
7 occasions with the local Workforce One, it is, you
8 know certainly our intention to have as much local
9 hiring on site for the project as possible and we
10 look forward to continuing to work with Council
11 Member Treyger to make sure this is a project that he
12 can hopefully support. Thank you.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. before we
14 move on to questions for this panel I will pause to
15 take a vote to approve LU 6, the 350 East 88th Street
16 special permit application. Council Member Kallos
17 submitted a statement of his support for the approval
18 of this application. Are there questions from members
19 of the subcommittee? Okay, I will move now to vote on
20 the approval of LU 6, Council please call the roll.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Chair Moya?

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Aye.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member
24 Constantinides?

25 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Lancman...

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Sorry...

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Lancman.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Lancman, I apologize,
sorry about that, yes, Council Member Lancman?

[off-mic dialogue]

COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Levin?

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: With
congratulations to Council Member Kallos who
hopefully is not watching this at home, I vote aye,
he's got a little baby.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member
Richards?

COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Council Member
Kallos if you are watching this hope you're getting
some sleep and I happily vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Rivera?

COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: [off-mic] Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member
Grodenschik?

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.

COUNCIL MEMBER LAN
COUNCIL MEMBER AN:
That's the first time I've been confused with
Constantinides, though we're making progress, it's
okay.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of six in the
3 affirmative, zero in the negative and zero
4 abstentions Land Use Item, Item Six is approved.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We, we will hold the
6 vote open for the remaining portion of, of this
7 meeting and I will go back to questions. I know
8 Council Member Treyger you had some questions.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: [off-mic] Yes.
10 Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, this development as stated
11 will be 100 percent affordable housing if financed
12 through the HPD's ELLA Program, how much of this
13 housing will be permanently affordable?

14 JACLYN SCARINCI: Twenty-five percent of
15 the residential floor area which is approximately 36
16 units.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And what happens
18 after 25 years?

19 JACLYN SCARINCI: The... all the units will
20 be subject to a regulatory agreement, a 30-year
21 regulatory agreement and I believe it's the, the
22 developer's intention to extend that regulatory
23 agreement once the period is over in 30 years.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Alright, we, we
25 will strongly revisit that. How long does the

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2 regulatory agreement last for the rest of the
3 housing?

4 JACLYN SCARINCI: So, all of the housing
5 will be subject to the 30-year regulatory agreement...
6 I'm sorry, the 20... the 38 units will be permanently
7 affordable, that's for the life of the building, they
8 will be restricted at an average of 60 percent AMI
9 with ten percent of those units being at 40 percent
10 AMI and then through the ELLA Program the remaining...
11 all of the 153 units will be subject to the 30-year
12 regulatory agreement with the option to extend the
13 regulatory agreement with HPD.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And as, as
15 you've noted we just want to again confirm that there
16 is an iron clad commitment to the MIH option one, is
17 that correct?

18 JACLYN SCARINCI: That is correct.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: The existing Sea
20 Park North building is affordable originally through
21 the Mitchell-Lama Program, what is the status of
22 affordability at this building, does it expire and is
23 it locked into any type of long term vision program?

24 JACLYN SCARINCI: So, the building was
25 subject to a new regulatory agreement in 2006, the

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2 Arker Company is committed to extending affordability
3 and they also substantially rehabilitated all the
4 units as a part of the commitment with the state
5 agencies.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Uh-huh. I also
7 just want to be crystal clear about this because this
8 came up during discussions and we're going to have
9 continue... more discussions on this, with the ten
10 percent set aside we said for 30 percent AMI, is that
11 exclusively for folks who are formally homeless or is
12 that include, that captures residents in my district
13 who are at that AMI level?

14 SIMON BACCHUS: So, that band at 30
15 percent AMI does not include the formally homeless
16 residents that we expect to house here, those 30
17 percent AMI units would be subject to the lottery and
18 as such there's a 50 percent community board
19 preference via the lottery. So, those 30 percent AMI
20 units would be available for members of your
21 community.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Because I want
23 to be clear, I want to make sure that we're housing...
24 there, there are folks who, who are in, in, in the
25 shelter system that we want to definitely address,

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2 address their needs, there are folks from Coney
3 Island who are, are going through difficult periods
4 and, and challenges in their lives and we want to
5 make sure that they have a shot, an opportunity of
6 returning to the neighborhood which they've called
7 home for many years so that's, that's very important
8 to me. I understand that Arker will be serving as its
9 own administer, administering agent for affordable
10 housing, can you explain your outreach plans to make
11 sure the community is aware of and prepared to apply
12 for these units?

13 SIMON BACCHUS: Yeah, sure. So, our plan
14 that we are still developing we plan to incorporate
15 local community groups including the JCOMMITTEE CLERK
16 as well as the church located on the block as well,
17 Coney Island Gospel Assembly, we anticipate working
18 with those organizations to make sure that we are
19 providing seminars explaining what our project is and
20 also probably more importantly the application
21 process, the lottery process and we look forward to
22 working with those two organizations as well as any
23 other organizations the Council Member would be
24 interested in us reaching out to.

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COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Alright and you know I think Coney Island is in a unique, in a unique position that due to re-zonings even before my tenure there, there's ways to receive thousands of units of housing and don't you agree would make sense if HPD worked with the community to conduct workshops, informational seminars to inform them of the process in advance rather than wait until things were being built, you, you agree with that?

SIMON BACCHUS: We do, and we'd be happy to work with HPD and, and with the council member's office.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Why are areas outside of the development site namely the Neptune and, and Mermaid Avenue portions of the block included in the rezoning application?

JACLYN SCARINCI: So, the applicant teamwork's closely with the Department of City Planning to develop the zoning districts proposed for block 7011 and Neptune Avenue is a 120 feet wide street in this section and Mermaid Avenue also is a wide avenue that has mixed use development currently with the rezoning the R7A/C24 was seen as a district that would promote more mixed use development on both

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of these wide avenues and also now with the MIH text amendment any new development would, would be subject to this mandatory inclusionary housing requirement. Also, the site's location directly across the street from a major public open space, Leon Kaiser Park supports the additional density on, on the wide avenues.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: But to be clear can the application proceed... could the development site move forward if for example the Neptune Avenue portion is removed from the application?

JACLYN SCARINCI: So, we've, we've worked with city planning on developing these districts and because this site we would have to split the zoning lot for the existing building, we have the height factor building and then also we're, we're going to have the two new developments within the R6A portion, a portion of the building is located within the proposed R7A district so some floor area from the building would be lost and we've looked at different scenarios and we would lose some units if the rezoning was... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: But the... but the project site can still move forward, it will be

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effective, but it could still move forward, is that correct?

EMMANUEL D'AMORE: No... [cross-talk]

JACLYN SCARINCI: On... [cross-talk]

EMMANUEL D'AMORE: Actually... I'm sorry to interrupt you... [cross-talk]

JACLYN SCARINCI: On, on Neptune... [cross-talk)

EMMANUEL D'AMORE: On Mermaid... [cross-talk]

JACLYN SCARINCI: Avenue... [cross-talk]

EMMANUEL D'AMORE: On, on... I think... the question was, was on Mermaid, correct?

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Well the first is on Neptune.

EMMANUEL D'AMORE: Oh you were... on Neptune, I'm sorry, so Neptune, yes we would lose units.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I, I can't hear... [cross-talk]

EMMANUEL D'AMORE: We were losing a, a considerable number of units.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: How many units?

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EMMANUEL D'AMORE: How many units did we say, 30... [cross-talk]

JACLYN SCARINCI: Seven or eight, if it... if it goes down to an R6A we would lose seven or eight and then if, if, if it remains an R5 we would lose 15 or 16 units.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Did you meet with the other property owners included within the rezoning area, are they aware of the rezoning, are they supportive, namely you mentioned the church I'm curious to hear your, your thoughts on that?

SIMON BACCHUS: So, we did meet with the church... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: When?

SIMON BACCHUS: About a month ago, we had a good conversation but under the rezoning the church would move to an R7A, they are not interested in being rezoned is, is my understanding even though it would not, you know obligate the church to do... to do anything under that rezoning but we had a conversation with them, their initial feedback was that they were not interested in being rezoned, you know certainly we would be happy to continue that conversation with them but if we were not able to

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2 rezone along, along Neptune as noted we would lose
3 some units, it would not necessarily kill the project
4 but it would be unfortunate to lose those units
5 especially given the affordable, affordability
6 crises... [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: When you...

8 [cross-talk]

9 SIMON BACCHUS: ...that we're facing.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: You said you met
11 with the church about a month ago?

12 SIMON BACCHUS: That's correct.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Was that your
14 first meeting with the church about this application?

15 SIMON BACCHUS: Yes, that was our first
16 meeting with the church about this application.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And when did
18 this application first... originate?

19 SIMON BACCHUS: At the beginning of last
20 year.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: So, at the
22 beginning of last year and you only sat down with the
23 church last month, I could understand the anxiety of
24 the church and that's something that we're going to
25 have to still work through because this is a

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neighborhood that has not been treated fairly and equitably by developers and by the government in the past and so this is a conversation we, we still have to continue to have. Now Mermaid Avenue, are you aware that SBS recently released a commercial district needs assessment for Coney Island?

SIMON BACCHUS: I'm not familiar with that study.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: SBS, Small

Business Services City Agency, my office has been in touch with them because people think of Coney Island sometimes just as the beach and the rides and as much as we love them it is a neighborhood of... where over 50,000 people go home every day and they don't live on the beach, they live in the buildings and the homes and they matter to me a lot and their commercial corridor which is namely Mermaid Avenue matters to me a lot and it has not historically received the same attention and love and resources as other areas and that's going to change with me, that's going to change, that is changing now. So, SBS conducted a study to assess the commercial needs of Mermaid Avenue how to beef up... beef up the corridor to make it more attractive and appealing to invite

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2 retail stores and they need funding and that's
3 something that we are... we're, we're going to work,
4 work to, to, to do. Do you agree that this
5 development and others would be well complimented by
6 improving the Coney Island commercial corridors
7 namely Mermaid Avenue?

8 SIMON BACCHUS: Yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right and again
10 I had to work with EDC and other agencies to make
11 sure that as we're pushing for historic lighting and
12 streetscape improvements that they were not just
13 going to be on Surf Avenue that they would be on
14 Mermaid Avenue where the people live and shop every
15 single day and your application hits on that
16 sensitive commercial corridor that means a lot to the
17 neighborhood and to me and so I... that's why I will
18 never treat zoning applications in isolation, I look
19 at applications in the... holistically at how it
20 effects an entire neighborhood and that's going to be
21 my approach and my vision as the council member now.
22 Kaiser Park is located directly across Neptune Avenue
23 from this development site, have you considered how
24 future residents would access the park?

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SIMON BACCHUS: Well as you've noted there is no current crosswalk at West 28th Street, they would have to, to be safe walk down several blocks in order to use the crosswalk to get to Kaiser Park.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I'm happy you acknowledge that because the nearest crossings are... to get to the park are very... two to three long blocks away and if we're building a building for families they have a nice view of the park but there's no safe way to cross a major street to get to the park and that's where again I look at applications holistically and not just in isolation. Will you work with us to advocate for a crosswalk and other safety improvements around the site? I guess the old teacher in me is used to sometimes hearing a cell phone go off during class sometimes. Parking, how many parking spots are proposed, you know to be... I, I know that you had mentioned that, but can you just repeat that one more time, how many spots are proposed to be included in, in the application?

ENMANUEL: Sixty-eight cars.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Sixty-eight, okay.

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2 EMMANUEL D'AMORE: For the proposed
3 development, yes.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: And how many
5 parking spots are... does the zoning require?

6 EMMANUEL D'AMORE: Thirty-seven.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I'm sorry?

8 EMMANUEL D'AMORE: Thirty-seven.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: So, you're
10 basically almost doubling that?

11 EMMANUEL D'AMORE: Correct.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay. Sewer...
13 sewage and infrastructure, the EAS indicates that
14 there may be an issue with sewage capacity in the
15 area as we have heard anecdotally as well, can you
16 explain the process for ensuring that this
17 development will not overstress the local sewer
18 system?

19 JACLYN SCARINCI: So, based on the EAS
20 we, we did not trigger impacts that require
21 additional study for the sewer systems in this area
22 however we do note your concerns with the sewer
23 capacity in this area and when the development goes
24 for a site connection proposal we will be required to
25 meet any of DEP's requirements to ensure that we're

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not adding any additional burden that the sewer system cannot withstand. In addition, the site is including... will include bioswales and storm water detention tanks as well as a total landscaping plan that will reduce storm water runoff from the site.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right, I just want the record to state that the sewers in Coney Island are highly problematic and even with some of the investments the city is making in sections of, of the... of the peninsula it, it... we, we need a lot more work on this part of the peninsula to increase capacity and, and to deal with chronic sewage, whenever it rains it constantly floods in that part so I, I'd like to follow up with DEP about that as well. Will there be a backup power generate, generation system on site?

SIMON BACCHUS: Yes, we will have a backup generator.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: That makes sense for, for us particularly after what, what happened with superstorm Sandy. Local hiring which, which is very critical to me, what are your plans to ensure local hiring in good jobs with good benefits both for construction and for permanent building service jobs?

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SIMON BACCHUS: We've, we've met with the, the local Workforce One out on Coney Island, we've advised them about the project, about what we feel like our timing on the project is going to be, we are planning to follow up with them again to ensure that they're able to work with us as a resource to, to get local hires on our project. We work on all of our projects to bring in local hires and that certainly is our plan here as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: So, you do have a plan to hire locally from the community not just temporary jobs but permanent jobs in the building once it's built as, as well, is that correct?

SIMON BACCHUS: Yes, that is our plan.

COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Because again before my time there were construction sites and development sites in my district where residents had to witness the development but were not participants in it and that is unacceptable to me, we have many skilled, qualified, interested residents who want to be a part of the development sites of their own neighborhood, they're, they're deeply invested more than people who come in from New Jersey or other parts of the country, they want to build up their own

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2 neighborhood and see it flourish. So, local hiring
3 with good paying jobs is very, very important to me
4 and will you commit as well to working with our
5 community on holding job fair seminars to inform
6 residents of these opportunities?

7 SIMON BACCHUS: We'd, we'd be happy to do
8 so.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Okay, so we, we
10 do have to circle back, and we have some, some more
11 work to do and discussions and negotiations and, and
12 I look forward to having, having those discussions.
13 Thank you, Mr. Chair, for your time.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Council
15 Member Treyger. Council Member Richards?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Just had two
17 questions on jobs, so how are you working with local
18 organizations on jobs, have you set a percentage of
19 local jobs that are going to be set aside for the
20 local community and also wanted to hear a little bit
21 more about MWBE procurement as well?

22 SIMON BACCHUS: Absolutely. So, you know
23 we, we, you know take the issue very seriously, we
24 want to support the local community and, and one of
25 the, the best ways to do that besides building

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affordable housing is to do local hires. We are a developer but also a GC and on this project as we've done on other projects we try to work with local, local organizations or in some cases more citywide organizations that have expertise in tapping into the local community to find hires, you know to start with and the construction trades, we definitely take people on as, you know a GC, we work with our subcontractors to also make sure they have local hires as well. As to MWBE, subcontractors we also work with a couple of different entities that help us connect with MWBE's to work with during the construction process, I think we have a good record of that to date and you know we're continuing to get better at it, but we take it very seriously.

COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: And you don't have any percentage goals so... I think HPD, do they require 30 percent I believe MWBE procurement or no?

SIMON BACCHUS: It's, it's shifted a bit, but I believe it's 25 percent... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Right... [cross-talk]

SIMON BACCHUS: ...currently.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay, so just
3 love to ensure that that's put in writing and then
4 also, you know for jobs we normally like to at least
5 see a standard of 30 percent local hiring so really
6 working with Council Member Treyger to identify a
7 local organization before we pass this application
8 would be good.

9 SIMON BACCHUS: That makes sense, we have
10 started working with the Workforce One and we're...
11 [cross-talk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Okay, good..
13 [cross-talk]

14 SIMON BACCHUS: ...you know certainly happy
15 to, to work with any other organizations that the
16 council member... that has the council member's
17 support.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Yeah and I
19 appreciate the work you've done in the Rockaways, so
20 I know you have a good track record and hope that
21 you'll bring it to Coney Island as well.

22 SIMON BACCHUS: Well we... [cross-talk]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you...
24 [cross-talk]

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2 SIMON BACCHUS: ...certainly appreciate all
3 our work with you in, in, in Rockaway as well and so...
4 [cross-talk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you.
6 Thank you Chair.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, are there
8 any members of the public who wish to testify on this
9 item? Yeah, we... the panel can be excused, you're
10 excused. Thank you.

11 SIMON BACCHUS: Thank you very much
12 Council Member Moya, Council Member Treyger and, and
13 the subcommittee, I really appreciate it.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

15 BRYANT BROWN: Hello, good morning.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Good morning, will,
17 will you please introduce yourself?

18 BRYANT BROWN: Sure, gladly. My name is
19 Bryant Brown and I'm here speaking on behalf of my
20 union, 32BJ SEIU. 32BJ is the largest property
21 service workers union in the country, many of us work
22 in residential buildings like the one... an affiliate
23 of the Arker Companies is proposing to develop at
24 2828 West 28th Street. I'm here to make sure that
25 this... the development team at Sea Park North is

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committed to creating high quality jobs at the site. The Arker Companies has a track record of providing good building service jobs across the city. We also understand that this project is important to Council Member Treyger, our union hopes to work with the applicant and with the Council Member to extent the Arker Companies good jobs track record to 2828 West 28th Street. My union and I understand how important new affordable housing is for this neighborhood, a good jobs commitment is an important step towards ensuring that this development truly benefits our neighborhood. We also understand that the city is supporting the financing for this project and we call on the city to support prevailing wage for building service workers at this project as well. We would like to thank the subcommittee for it's time and attention to this matter.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

BRYANT BROWN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Is there anyone else that would like to testify? Seeing none I will now close the public hearing on this item and we will pause now to allow Council Member Constantinides to vote on LU 6.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Continued roll call on LU 6, Council Member Constantinides?

COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: I vote aye.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

COMMITTEE CLERK: The vote stands at seven in the affirmative, zero in the negative and zero abstentions.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay. The last hearing for today is on the Jerome Avenue rezoning, LU 17, 18 and 19. This application submitted by the Department of City Planning would establish a new zoning district along Jerome Avenue and on several cross streets between McClellan Street and 184th Street. The new zoning would allow for increased residential density with a mix of R7A, R7D, R8A, R9A and C4,4D districts. Several areas were also left out of the rezoning to allow for retention areas for the neighborhood, auto businesses, the text amendment application would apply the mandatory inclusionary housing program and establish the special Jerome Avenue district. The special district regulations would establish a special height set back and street scape regulations along portions of the rezoning

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2 area. Lastly the related amendment of the city map
3 would map blocks 2520, lot 19 as park land to allow
4 for a new Corporal Fischer Park. The Southern portion
5 of the rezoning is located in Council Member Gibson's
6 district and the North portion is located in Council
7 Member Cabrera's district. I know both Council
8 Members are working hard to ensure that the rezoning
9 will be accompanied by a neighborhood plan for
10 investment...

11 [off-mic dialogue]

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Sure... so, let us... let
13 us pause because we are waiting for Council Member
14 Gibson and Council Member Cabrera who are making
15 their way here now. Thank you. Okay, thank you and
16 now that we're joined by Council Member Gibson and
17 Council Member Cabrera before we move to the public
18 hearing I would like to give Council Member Gibson
19 and Council Member Cabrera their time to make their
20 statements on the rezoning, Council Member Gibson?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Good morning,
22 good morning ladies and gentlemen, welcome to the
23 city council to our chambers. I first want to welcome
24 each and every one of you here today despite the snow
25 outside you realized how important today's public

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2 hearing is, so I welcome you. I want to thank the
3 administration for being here as well and I'd also
4 like to congratulate and thank our new Chair of the
5 Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises, Council Member
6 and Chair Francisco Moya and I want to thank everyone
7 for being here today. Certainly, I am Council Member
8 Vanessa Gibson of district 16 in the Bronx and I am
9 grateful to serve as a member of the New York City
10 Council as someone who has worked very closely with
11 many of you on the Jerome neighborhood rezoning
12 proposal. Many of you recognize that in this plan we
13 have a very, very important and unique opportunity to
14 really shape this proposal into a plan that truly
15 benefits our community, uplifts our families and
16 invests in our residents of today. We all recognize
17 that the city of New York is growing in population
18 and many are looking towards the Bronx as the borough
19 with the greatest potential at economic growth. I am
20 extremely proud of the work we have done in the Bronx
21 and I am truly grateful that the Bronx is finally
22 getting the attention that we rightfully deserve, it
23 is long overdue and truly necessary. Through the
24 neighborhood rezoning proposal, we have a unique
25 opportunity to have a voice in the future of our

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2 community and truly provide the services that are
3 needed to strengthen our families and preserve the
4 character of our neighborhoods. Our community cannot
5 be expected to accept additional density without
6 seeing significant investments made in our
7 neighborhood that we truly need today, we needed
8 yesterday and the day before and the day before that
9 and this plan cannot and must not move forward
10 without real investments and protections for our
11 residents and their families and our small
12 businesses. The Jerome neighborhood plan has changed
13 dramatically since it was first introduced to us in
14 the community. I've been very proud to host numerous
15 round table discussions in my office and joined many
16 of the advocate led discussions to ensure the
17 inclusion of all voices as this process has moved
18 forward. Together we have leveraged this proposed
19 rezoning to create one of the strongest tenant
20 protections that this city has ever seen, and I am
21 very proud of the historic and groundbreaking right
22 to counsel legislation that all of you fought so hard
23 for as well as the certificate of no harassment
24 legislation which are both direct results of many of
25 your efforts. I am proud that organizations that were

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2 led by tenants and advocates, many of you are here
3 today and certainly I want to recognize CASA Bronx,
4 tenants and neighbors, housing court answers and many
5 of the legal service providers and members of the
6 Labor Workforce and small business community that
7 really made sure that right to counsel was
8 implemented to protect many of our tenants facing
9 eviction and leveled the playing field in many
10 housing court proceedings. I am proud that the
11 certificate of no harassment, the new law we created,
12 will begin in our district in community boards four
13 and five. This work is truly reflective of how
14 organized movements that are focused with a plan and
15 a purpose can truly make a difference. Today as the
16 first hearing here in the council takes place we have
17 arrived at this proposal which is supported by Bronx
18 Community Boards four, five and seven, the Borough
19 Board and our Bronx Borough President, Ruben Diaz
20 Junior and the City Planning Commission. I am
21 grateful of the recognition that progress has been
22 made however we have much, much more to accomplish
23 before we can claim victory. It is clear that the
24 Jerome Plan truly must benefit the residents and
25 families living in our community today while making

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2 key investments in many projects that will enrich the
3 lives of everyone living in the Bronx. I join with
4 many of you and have joined in demanding concrete
5 investments in deep affordable housing, investments
6 in our parks, job creation, public education, as well
7 as ensuring that much of the new construction of
8 housing achieves deep affordability for extremely low
9 and low-income families and those on fixed incomes.
10 In addition to local hiring provisions, MWBE
11 requirements and truly providing opportunities of
12 economic diversity and economic mobility for the
13 residents of our district. I remain dedicated as I
14 always have been from day one to creating a plan that
15 not only benefits our community today but leaves a
16 legacy of community driven development that benefits
17 residents and families for generations to come. This
18 is not about us, but this is about the future of the
19 Bronx and sadly we know that our beloved borough has
20 not seen a zoning change since the 1960's and that is
21 unacceptable and here we are decades later trying to
22 achieve significant investments that our borough has
23 been starving for, for a very long time. I refuse to
24 accept that our community is unwilling to accept
25 change but rather improvements that benefit us today,

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2 there is absolutely no guarantee that future elected
3 officials in the next administration will take a
4 second look at investing our community if we allow
5 this opportunity to pass us by. Despite the real fear
6 and anxiety that many feels that I hear every day I
7 realize the risk we are taking, and I also realize
8 how much is truly at stake. Many of our seniors have
9 lived in our community, raised their children and
10 their families during challenging times in the Bronx
11 when there was severe disinvestment and real neglect,
12 those dark days are behind us and we have brighter
13 days ahead and as one of your council members along
14 with Council Member Fernando Cabrera, I will now
15 allow our community to be shortchanged, we need
16 capital investments, better mass transit, better
17 schools, resources for our youth and seniors, more
18 park space, good paying jobs, affordable housing and
19 a real clear purpose to ensure that we prevent
20 displacement and harassment of our tenants and small
21 businesses. So, this is a unique opportunity ladies
22 and gentlemen for this community to receive much
23 needed and much deserved capital investments.
24 However, we cannot let these investments come at the
25 price of our vibrant neighborhood and its longtime

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2 residents and small businesses. Our constituents
3 realize the challenges of living in the city of New
4 York, we're not resistant to change but we want
5 investments to benefit us rightfully so. This plan
6 has the ability to achieve significant resources for
7 residents in the areas of deep affordable housing,
8 families living at 30 percent AMI and below as well
9 as those living in other income bands, set asides for
10 formally homeless families is a major priority,
11 supporting housing for our veterans, those that have
12 mental illnesses and special needs and making sure we
13 address children aging out of the foster care system.
14 We have to recognize the severe overcrowding we have
15 in our school districts today, in school districts
16 nine and ten, district nine over 600 unfunded seats,
17 district ten 1,800 unfunded seats. So, we need more
18 schools, we need to address the overcrowding issue
19 now before it's magnified even more. I believe that I
20 have made my priorities very, very clear to this
21 administration on improved parks, improved bus access
22 on the BX-11 and 13 and 36 as well as ADA compliance
23 on the number four line along Jerome Avenue. With
24 this rezoning we have an opportunity to really make a
25 lot of this investments happen. Once again I stress

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2 that any, any final plan that comes to this city
3 council in which all of my colleagues will vote on
4 must achieve significant investments in housing
5 preservation, affordable housing, parks, education,
6 mass transit, dealing with the health inequities we
7 have and as this process continues over the next few
8 weeks I renew my commitment and pledge to work with
9 my colleagues, with the administration, with all of
10 the stakeholders as we all want to achieve the same
11 end results. I am grateful for all of you joining us
12 today, members of the community, members of
13 community-based organizations, members of labor, our
14 community boards, my fellow elected officials, I
15 thank you for your presence and look forward to
16 today's conversation. Once again, I thank Chair Moya,
17 I want to thank the Land Use Division who's walked
18 with me for three years in this process, our Director
19 Raju Mann, Amy Levitan, Jen Uen, Dillon Casey and I
20 also want to recognize in my office my staff who's
21 facilitated a lot of the meetings that all of you
22 were a part of; my Chief of Staff Dana Wax and my
23 Deputy Chief of Staff Wendy Gallegos. I look forward
24 to today's conversation, please recognize that there
25 have been commitments that have been made which we

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will get into, but I truly know that we have a lot more to achieve and in today's discussion I hope to outline many of those concerns that remain outstanding. I want to thank Council Member Cabrera for being my partner in this process as a team moving forward, we are committed to achieving all of the results that we know that our community needs today. Thank you, Chair Moya, looking forward to today's hearing and I thank you all for being here.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Councilwoman Gibson, I now turn it over to Council Member Cabrera.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so much Chair Moya and again I want to congratulate, congratulate you on your new position and also the members of the Zoning and Franchise Subcommittee especially the new members. I want to thank everyone that is here today, all the advocates, our community leaders and constituents. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today on the Jerome Avenue rezoning. And I also want to give a special thanks to Council Member Gibson for the collaboration, for the many, many, many hours that you have dedicated and your staff and my staff together in moving forward. As Council Member of... for

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2 district 14 I take a very personal interest in the
3 Jerome Avenue rezoning. When we began this project
4 the original study area included 46 blocks which I
5 believe was not enough, I approached city planning
6 about expanding the footprint as a result the
7 rezoning area now expands 92 blocks which will
8 benefit more people and support greater economic
9 expansion. The Jerome Avenue corridor is the crucial
10 part of my district, the proposed rezoning comes at
11 an important time when my district and entire city
12 has... have a critical need for affordable housing but
13 this is only part of the story and true district 14
14 is an extreme one of the basic amenities that are
15 crucial to community survival and which provide
16 essential elements of civic life and enable
17 neighborhoods to thrive in the long term. Well let's
18 start with affordable housing, 70 percent of
19 constituents visiting my office have housing
20 challenges and I have allocated close to two million
21 dollars to affordable housing in my district, but we
22 need more high quality permanent affordable housing
23 with options for tenants at a wide range of income
24 levels. We need provisions to ensure that current
25 rent stabilized apartments are preserved with a goal

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2 of increasing permanent housing and decreasing
3 temporary and shelter housing. Local higher practice
4 and union labor must be part of the redevelopment we
5 require utilization, the New York State Department of
6 Labor register and approve apprenticeship programs
7 and highest levels safety training to ensure work
8 sites and community.. and community safety. Local
9 construction training must begin soon enough that
10 workers will be ready once construction projects
11 start to ramp up. The addition of 4,000 affordable
12 housing units will bring more families with children
13 into our community district nine and ten, the most
14 overcrowded school district in New York City why I
15 have allocated a total of 20 million dollars in
16 capital and discretionary funding to renovate and
17 rebuild school auditoriums, gymnasiums, libraries and
18 computer labs, these improvements will be rendered
19 woefully inadequate without the new state of the art
20 21st century schools and classroom space in district..
21 in school districts nine and ten. I have called for
22 the construction of brand new schools in district
23 nine and ten and increase in the allotment of
24 universal pre-k and daycare slots to accommodate
25 additional families with children. Our youth

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2 desperately need a neighborhood facility to offer a
3 safe constructive and meaningful alternative to
4 street activities which all too often lead to
5 promising young people into a dead end cutting surely
6 any opportunity to develop talents and potential yet
7 to be discovered. Employment and skills training are
8 desperately needed in my district, the constituents
9 who come daily to my office seeking to find
10 employment at a living wage test to their desire to
11 work and support themselves and their family. I've
12 allocated almost three million dollars in my district
13 for police security cameras which have had a major
14 impact on reducing violent crime, increased
15 population in our neighborhood demands more resources
16 for public safety and additional cameras throughout
17 the area. Public transit especially important to
18 district 14 where most residents are transit
19 dependent. The construction of an elevator at Jerome
20 Avenue at Burnside is most critical where everyday
21 elder, elderly and disabled passengers and mothers
22 with strollers, small children and, and packages
23 struggle dangerously to navigate the steps to the
24 elevator station mezzanine and then again to the
25 platform which must be made accessible to those with

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2 disability. The number of buses and timeliness of
3 service must be increased to accommodate the
4 residential and commercial population increase to the
5 area. We need bicycle infrastructure and handicap
6 accessible streets. Parking for private vehicles is
7 currently inadequate, they has... this has a chilling
8 effect on our schools which struggle to attract and
9 retain good teachers because there is no parking. The
10 rezoning must address this issue for community
11 residents, schools and businesses. While I have
12 allocated almost six million dollars to rebuilding
13 parks, district 14 still has a famine of parks and
14 usable green space to encourage healthy and safe
15 outdoor activities and school interaction among
16 neighbors. Park play... parks play an important role in
17 the reduction of air pollution by reducing the urban
18 heat island effect which aggravates the already high
19 rate of respiratory illness in district 14. The
20 direct exposure to nature through parks has also been
21 shown to provide mental health benefit by reducing
22 stress. Rebuilding our parks also requires additional
23 park staff to maintain and protect investment of this
24 asset well into the future. Finally, I envision
25 Jerome Avenue with major streetscape improvement,

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greenery, lighting, link expansions, small benches and NYC Plaza Program. I'm happy to be here to hear today and to listen to everyone who's here today, I look forward to callusing around shared goals and finding the best role of man to achieve them. I want to give a special thanks to the Land Use staff for their tremendous amount of time on... to this rezoning for three years and to my staff. Thank you so much Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Council Members. Just before I, I open the hearing I just want to thank everyone for being here, I know that we are very passionate about this issue and you've made it here from very far away in, in, in this weather but I, I really ask that you please be respectful of the members who are testifying, we want to get everyone's ability to get up there and say their piece and we can only do that with everyone's cooperation so I ask that you keep any applause or comments or anything like that to yourselves and, and allow everyone the opportunity to give their testimony and we would really appreciate that and I thank you in advance. With that I will now open up the public hearing for the Jerome Avenue rezoning. We

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now have Carol Samol, Michael Parkinson, did I say it correctly? Leila Bozorg, am I saying it... thank you, Michael Blaise Backer and Nicholas Molinari. I would now ask, you to please raise your right hand and do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before this committee and in response to all Council Member's questions? Thank you. Before we begin our testimony please identify yourselves for the record.

CAROL SAMOL: My name is Carol Samol and I'm Director of the Bronx Borough Office of the Department of City Planning.

MICHAEL PARKINSON: Michael Parkinson also with the Bronx Borough Office of City Planning.

LEILA BOZORG: Leila Bozorg with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: Michael Blaise Backer, Deputy Commissioner with the Department of Small Business Services.

NICHOLAS MOLINARI: Nicholas Molinari, Chief of Planning for the Parks Department.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Now we're ready... [cross-talk]

CAROL SAMOL: Thank you... [cross-talk]

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2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: ...again thank... [cross-
3 talk]

4 CAROL SAMOL: Good morning Chair Moya,
5 good morning Council Member Gibson and Council Member
6 Cabrera and the... and the committee, pleased to be
7 here this morning. We have... this is a three-year
8 commitment and we're very happy to be here. I want... I
9 want to extend a special thanks to Council Member
10 Gibson and Council Member Cabrera for their
11 leadership, their vision and for really demanding the
12 best for the Bronx, I think has made this process
13 even better. The Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Plan is,
14 is a... the array of agencies that you have before us
15 speaks to the, the multifaceted nature of the plan
16 itself, we'll go into a little bit of each of these
17 areas that the plan touches on but it's really
18 thinking about the neighborhood as a whole. We have
19 many neighbor... agencies that are here with us, but we
20 also have a whole team of agencies that worked with
21 the plan throughout, they brought their resources,
22 they brought their expertise to, to the process but
23 also to implementation which I think is very
24 important. The neighborhood itself is in the Western
25 Bronx for those of you unfamiliar, it's a... focused on

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2 the... a two mile corridor but the... also the
3 neighborhoods surrounding it, it's really focused on
4 transit oriented development around the four train
5 but I would also note the D train immediately
6 accessible on... along the Grand Concourse running,
7 running to the East, the beautiful Grand Concourse
8 and the Cross Bronx Expressway bisecting the study
9 area overall just to help orient you. The, the civic...
10 Bronx Civics Center is just to the South Fordham Road
11 just to the North. The rezoning area is focused on
12 the corridor, but we also considered in the planning
13 process the neighborhoods overall, it... they are dense
14 neighborhoods, there are about 350,000 people who
15 live in these... in this general area, that is the size
16 of a, a small city in and of itself. There are three
17 community boards effected; boards four South of the
18 Cross Bronx, boards five and a small portion of board
19 seven. The impetus of this study really was... the
20 start of it was at the request of the community
21 boards and as Council Member rightly noted you, you
22 know you asked just to extend the study area further
23 North to encompass more of the Jerome Avenue corridor
24 to really... the goal really thinking of how do we
25 repurpose this, this corridor to better meet the

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2 local needs of the local community. Many communities
3 along, along the corridor, it's, it's many different
4 communities, there's a diversity of communities and
5 needs throughout we... that we think the plan
6 addresses. The, the physical conditions, just a
7 little bit about the physical conditions, we have the
8 elevated structure we're trying to deal with, the
9 area of the elevated is actually kind of in a little
10 valley, you can see the lower density development
11 immediately to the... adjacent to the, the, the train
12 but also the apartment buildings in the surrounding
13 area and connections is a really... a strong theme that
14 runs through this plan including the step streets
15 that provide access to the... to the corridor itself
16 and throughout the neighborhood and then of course
17 the recently opened high bridge providing not only
18 access to additional parks but also just as a
19 beautiful resource in and of itself. Again you can
20 see the, the top, topographical changes and the step
21 streets, the apartment buildings surrounding, the
22 lower density development that it's immediately
23 surrounding the, the corridor and some connections
24 along the Aqueduct Walk to the North and anchors
25 institutions in the... in the borough including the

1
2 Bronx Community College with it's beautiful campus,
3 this is inside the rotunda, a major... very important
4 stakeholder and service provider in the area. We have
5 some challenges here including the Cross-Bronx
6 Expressway which really bisects the entire study
7 area. The structure itself which I think we'll see
8 how the zoning is intended to help address that and
9 allow develop, development to occur around it. we
10 have the auto uses and other uses that kind of spill
11 out onto the streets, effect the quality of life and
12 again in thinking about how do we, we transform the
13 corridor to better meet the local needs throughout.
14 The, the plan itself, you know we've, we've been at
15 this for three years, we've had significant
16 milestones, it's been a diverse process, the zoning
17 itself has been out since 2015, November and we were
18 able to certify the application last August. The
19 process itself has been diverse, it, it really has
20 been the building of a conversation and... including...
21 you know starting with the, the invitation to come
22 and study the area from the community boards but it
23 started with information sharing, goal setting where
24 we really talked to community and understand what do
25 they want to achieve in this community, what's their

1
2 vision for the future. We had vision workshops where
3 we literally talked about densities and heights and
4 uses along the corridor, where should uses remain,
5 that was the important part of the conversation, it's
6 an important part of the proposal. We had design
7 charades focused around the Cross-Bronx Expressway in
8 particular, how do we make that area work better for
9 the community itself. We had technical conversations
10 so that we could make sure that we were bringing
11 everyone along with all of the technical work that
12 needs to happen to make this day possible and
13 literally we were out in the community over the
14 summer for two summers just talking to people about
15 the plan, better understanding what their priorities
16 were, you know just people on the street. The plan
17 itself is multifaceted, it was released last October
18 and, and the goals of that plan in... are... were voted
19 on as we went, went through the process and confirmed
20 throughout the process. The zoning we really see as
21 being in service to the broader plan, we will walk
22 through the zoning of course but the broader plan
23 thinking about providing sustainable, high quality
24 affordable housing at all income levels but also
25 protecting tenants, preserving and improving housing

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2 quality throughout the neighborhood, key components
3 and the bedrock and the impetus of this study overall
4 but also thinking more broadly about the economic
5 development and workforce development needs of the
6 community whether that is the retail diversity,
7 access to healthy foods, job and... access to jobs and
8 career growth, access to training opportunities,
9 promoting small businesses and entrepreneurship,
10 there's a very strong entrepreneurial spirit along
11 Jerome Avenue and then also supporting the auto
12 related businesses and workers included among them
13 and then... and then also making sure that we can get
14 around the, the city again connections is a very
15 important component to this plan and access to, to
16 transit, to the neighborhood, to other amenities but
17 making sure that every, every community has access to
18 diverse recreation spaces but also open spaces, that
19 the space under Jerome Avenue is safe and walkable
20 and inviting. It is a transit corridor where, where
21 everyone goes and then overall that the streets are
22 safe and, and inviting for the community. And
23 underlying all of this I would say is... are the, the
24 focus on community resources and, and quality of life
25 and health. We really see this as an underpinning

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element and, and with... a, a... really a lens that we brought to every aspect of the planning... to the plan and to our recommendations and we would say that every aspect of the plan has to do with the betterment of the health of the community whether that is access to open space, job security, being able to grow ones business and being secure in your home. And I'll turn it over to Michael who will start with the ULURP aspect.

MICHAEL PARKINSON: Thank you Carol. So,

clearly as, as Carol demonstrated this plan and this process to us has been about far more than just land use and zoning but we do talk about land use and zoning in the same way that we do discuss these other plan recommendations and goals because we really do see land use as a way to advance some of the, the key incorrigibles of creating a vibrant mixed use corridor, of providing new affordable housing and as such that's why we're here to talk about the zoning application today. So, just to give a little bit of context as, as the members already alluded to in their opening statement, this application has traveled through the process earning votes of approval and approval with conditions from all three

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2 of the community boards that saw it, that's community
3 boards four, five and seven. The Bronx Borough
4 President Ruben Diaz Junior voted to approve the, the
5 application with conditions, the Bronx Borough Board
6 voted to, to approve and the City Planning Commission
7 voted to approve the, the land use actions. So,
8 before I get into the specifics of the land use
9 actions I want to take a minute to just describe some
10 of the early implementation strategies and
11 recommendations that we've really been able to
12 advance through this process to date. You know often
13 times I think when we talk about zoning we really
14 talk about it as a long term tool to achieve a vision
15 but, but certainly as, as has been mentioned that
16 can't be the only thing that a plan... a robust
17 neighborhood plan focuses on and already since the
18 inception of this process in 2014 we've already been
19 able to secure a number of implementation strategies
20 that help advance some of the goals that Carol
21 recommend... or that Carol described earlier. In terms
22 of housing, passing the citywide legislation for
23 right to counsel, certificate of no harassment which
24 will be piloted in community boards four and five as
25 part of this process, as well as the increased

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2 enforcement and attention to code sweeps, violations,
3 holding landlords to task in the areas around Jerome
4 Avenue and in terms of housing preservation, you know
5 in terms of land use and zoning we, we think about,
6 you know new construction that can be accommodated
7 and, and the opportunities that can be created
8 through zoning but far more than the opportunities
9 that can be created on the corridor itself are the
10 opportunities to preserve the existing stock we have
11 around the corridor and already to date since the
12 inception of the study the Department of Housing and
13 Preservation and Development have invested in the
14 preservation of over 5,500 units of housing which is
15 quite remarkable and, and that equates to roughly
16 over 800 million dollars of, of both public and
17 private financing leveraged to do that. In terms of
18 economic development and, and workforce development,
19 partnering with the Department of Small Business
20 Services and local organizations in the community
21 we've been able to put out a report, the Commercial...
22 the Jerome Avenue Commercial District Needs
23 Assessment which is really taking a fine-tooth comb
24 look at the needs that merchants and shoppers have
25 along the corridor today. Any, anyone who's familiar

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2 with the neighborhoods around Jerome Avenue will
3 attest to the vibrancy of the retail on the
4 surrounding streets but certainly will attest to the,
5 the sheer amount of challenges that it also faces.
6 So, this document in addition to over a million
7 dollars of grant funding that was awarded to these
8 local organizations to start implementing
9 recommendations that came out of this study have
10 already been able to get put into place. One of the
11 recommendations we heard from the onset in terms of
12 workforce development and engaging local residents in
13 workforce opportunities was to, to suggest the
14 creation of a local workforce network and we're so
15 happy to, to be able to say that we partnered with
16 jobs first NYC who really are a premier technical
17 advisor at... in... citywide in starting the local
18 workforce conversations and, and they'll be starting
19 design labs in early March with local organizations
20 to start thinking through what are the local
21 challenges and opportunities to really clear those
22 challenges in terms of connecting the local residents
23 with local jobs. And then as Carol mentioned open
24 spaces and park spaces and the connections to those
25 is being... you know a paramount priority in our

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2 planning process. Already to date we've been able to
3 invest in local parks to the tune of four million for
4 the reconstruction of Morton Playground and an
5 additional eight to ten million to Aqueduct Park as
6 well as the 4.6-million-dollar commitment to the
7 design and construction of a new park that the land
8 use actions will facilitate at Corporal Fischer. So,
9 moving onto the, the, the zoning framework and, and
10 the land use side of the recommendations that we're
11 putting forth as part of the Jerome Avenue
12 Neighborhood Plan. Just to give a little bit of
13 context, the surrounding neighborhoods as Carol
14 mentioned are home to over 340,000 people, I mean
15 this really is a city in and of itself and as you can
16 see it is, you know characterized largely by a
17 residential makeup. Certainly there's a variety of
18 housing stock here but predominantly we're talking
19 about walk up and elevator apartments and I'd be...
20 you'll hear in more detail about this to come but I'd
21 be remiss not to mention it here that when we think
22 about the residential character of the surrounding
23 neighborhoods it is largely government regulated in
24 terms of their rents and, and the affordability of
25 these neighborhoods and over two thirds of the units

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2 in the neighborhoods along Jerome Avenue are
3 protected in, in some way, shape or form and already
4 to date through this process the city's been able to
5 invest in the preservation and construction of over
6 7,000 units of housing in these neighborhoods but in
7 terms of new construction it, it can and should be
8 more and that's why we're taking a, a closer look at
9 the zoning around Jerome Avenue and the corridor
10 itself. So, today the corridor along Jerome Avenue,
11 the two mile stretch from, you know roughly between
12 McClellan Place and 184th Street is defined by low
13 scale commercial uses, one to two story, heavy
14 commercial automotive repair, light industrial uses,
15 uses that really have, have sort of been locked into
16 place and, and that got established around the turn
17 of the 19... or the 20th century rather because there
18 have not really been a closer look to change zoning
19 in this area since the mapping of the citywide zoning
20 in 1961, these uses have sort of been codified into
21 place and, and we've heard through this process that
22 they really don't meet the vision for what the future
23 of Jerome Avenue could and should be in the future.
24 So, we've used this process in a vision... a robust
25 three-year visioning and goal setting process to

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2 identify a number of recommendations that we've put
3 forth through a formal zoning application that really
4 has three components. The first component, component
5 is a zoning map amendment so proposing changes to the
6 zoning along Jerome Avenue to accommodate uses that
7 can't currently be located along Jerome Avenue in,
8 in... specifically certain community facilities but
9 mostly residential uses. So, when we mapped out some
10 of the vision with the community for what, what the
11 future of Jerome Avenue is it's a corridor that's
12 highly active, it's mixed use, it's... you know
13 affordable, it meets the needs of these dense
14 surrounding neighborhoods and in order to do that
15 we're proposing districts from R7 densities up to R9
16 densities so these are mid to high residential
17 districts but really taking advantage of the access
18 to transit at the stations, the, the... you know the
19 convergence of wide streets that could really
20 accommodate future growth at Edward L. Grant and
21 170th, at Edward L. Grant and Cromwell and Jerome
22 Avenues to the South as well as rethinking commercial
23 zoning around Jerome... or excuse me, around Burnside
24 and Tremont Avenues that, that could really
25 accommodate commercial growth into the future. And,

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2 and of course stitching together the entirety of the
3 elevated rail corridor with mid density residential
4 zoning with commercial overlays that really, you know
5 enhance and, and, and encourage that continuity all
6 along the elevated rail. In addition to the zoning
7 map amendments we are proposing a zoning text
8 amendment that will by and large do two things, one
9 it will map a special Jerome Avenue district which
10 will create special rules for lots fronting the
11 elevated rail. Anybody that's been around Jerome
12 Avenue can just imagine the, the type of conflict
13 that could exist with the elevated rail
14 infrastructure and the surrounding land uses but
15 through our special district we're going to mandate
16 low based heights and set backs at that corridor to
17 really ensure, you know the offset between
18 residential units and those buildings fronting the L
19 but also providing light and street to the corridor
20 itself. We will also be mandating non residential
21 ground floor uses so that you're not going to have
22 swaths of blank walls and inactivated spaces, you're
23 going to have transparency at the street, you're
24 going to have activity at the street, you're going to
25 have light at the street, all of the things that are

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2 really required to encourage a, a... you know a
3 positive retail shopping and, and you know use
4 corridor but also promote public safety throughout.
5 In addition to the special rules we'll be mapping a
6 hotel special permit which would require that before
7 any hotel development would, would be permitted
8 through special permit a housing goal is, is first
9 met. So, really prioritizing the goal of achieving
10 permanent affordable... permanent housing and
11 affordable housing through these actions. And to that
12 note we will be mapping mandatory inclusionary
13 housing so anywhere that we're mapping a significant
14 up zoning for residential uses we'll be mandating
15 that a portion of those uses be maintained as
16 affordable in perpetuity. So, really you know
17 regulatory agreement aside between 20 percent at the
18 deepest affordability levels to 30 percent at, at
19 AMI's hovering around 80 percent or households making
20 80 percent those units will be locked in as
21 permanently affordable in perpetuity. And again
22 you'll hear a little bit more about this later but
23 I'd be remiss not to mention it here that we really
24 see this corridor as an affordable housing corridor
25 for the foreseeable future and anywhere that

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2 developers will be using city subsidy based on the
3 term sheet revisions that HPD has put out in, in
4 recent months they will be required to, to produce an
5 additional 15 percent of permanent affordability. So,
6 along the corridor we can very likely be achieving up
7 to 45 percent permanent affordability in developments
8 that require city subsidy. And then the final land
9 use action is that... a change to the city map so we
10 have, you know a, a piece of property on 170th and,
11 and Nelson that's owned and controlled by the
12 Department of Parks and Recreation that in and of
13 itself is not adequate to produce a, a quality
14 neighborhood serving park because of that we will be
15 de-mapping an unbuilt street that's immediately
16 adjacent to that parcel and mapping the entire thing
17 which is shown in green here as parkland. So, not
18 only does the land use action really facilitate the
19 opportunity for creating... excuse me, a public open
20 space in, in a much... in an area that needs it we've
21 already committed through this process 4.6 million
22 dollars to the design and construction of this park.
23 So, here just a couple of things yet to kind of show
24 what, what a transformation of Jerome Avenue could
25 and should be this is a, a, a view looking West down

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2 170th Street, you know a main thoroughfare that
3 connects the Concourse to Edward L. Grant Highway and
4 has train stops at the BED and the four train that
5 could really be enhanced by the... you know the
6 addition of, of mixed use zoning and here at Burnside
7 Avenue just a few short blocks from Bronx Community
8 College, just a few short blocks South of Fordham
9 Road. We really see this as an opportunity to
10 increase the commercial zoning and, and improve
11 opportunities for mixed use commercial and
12 residential zoning at the Burnside Station of... at the
13 four stop. So, just to finish on the note that Carol
14 already spoke to a little bit earlier is, you know
15 throughout this process we have always thought of the
16 Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Plan as being holistic, in
17 being about far more than, than the zoning actions
18 and while we're here today to discuss specifically
19 the zoning application before the city council we
20 want to make sure that it's really viewed in context
21 with housing, community resources, economic
22 development and streets and open space. So, with that
23 I would turn it over to my colleague at the
24 Department of Housing Preservation and Development,

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2 Leila Bozorg to discuss the housing plan in more
3 detail, thank you.

4 LEILA BOZORG: Okay. Thanks Michael. Good
5 afternoon Chair Moya, Council Member Cabrera and
6 Gibson, thanks for having me here today. As we've
7 mentioned my name is Leila Bozorg, I'm the Deputy
8 Commissioner of Neighborhood Strategies at HPD and
9 I'm here to give you an overview of the work that my
10 team's been doing to support the Jerome Avenue
11 Neighborhood Plan. Can I go to the next slide? So,
12 as, as you likely know we recently released an update
13 to our Housing New York Plan, we call it Housing New
14 York 2.0 and it lays out our strategy to build and
15 preserve 300,000 affordable units which is up from
16 200,000 by 2026. It also includes new programs and
17 initiatives in response to some of the things we've
18 learned over the past few years and actually a lot of
19 our work in the Jerome... in this planning process and,
20 and what we've heard through a lot of the
21 conversations with community members has actually
22 informed a lot of the new strategies that we're
23 applying citywide now. So, I'll talk a little... a bit...
24 little bit about that as well. Next slide. So, since
25 2014 citywide we've already financed the creation or

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2 preservation of more than 87,500 affordable homes,
3 about 80 percent of these homes are affordable to low
4 income families and over one third are serving those
5 making the lowest incomes, 43,000 dollars a year or
6 less. Next slide. Over the past several years HPD has
7 been closely involved in the neighborhood planning
8 process as I mentioned, and we've developed and are
9 continuing to refine housing strategies for this
10 area. As you know Jerome... the Jerome area has one of
11 the highest concentrations of rent regulated housing
12 in the city, 65 percent of all apartments here are
13 regulated by a government agency compared to just one
14 third of homes across the city. This is due in large
15 part to the work that HPD had done in the area. In a
16 little over a decade we've financed the construction
17 or preservation of more than 16,000 affordable homes
18 in, in community districts four and five. On top of
19 these investments HPD and NYCHA supports about 13,500
20 families each year with rental subsidy vouchers.
21 However as, as we've been discussing the city and the
22 neighborhood is growing and rents are increasing
23 everywhere. Between 2002 and 2014 rents in the Jerome
24 area have increased at a similar rate to what we're
25 seeing across the city, that's about 25 percent but

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2 the area remains predominately low income and as a
3 result and despite the intense levels of resources
4 that we've been putting into, into the area to
5 provide stable rents through affordable housing about
6 two thirds of all households are still paying a
7 disproportionate share of their income towards rent.
8 Can we go to the next slide? So, to respond to these
9 needs as well as the housing issues raised through
10 the planning process we've created the housing
11 section of the draft Jerome Neighborhood Plan and it
12 lays out kind of four prongs of our approach. First
13 and foremost, we want to preserve, preserve what's
14 already here and keep people in their homes so
15 there's a wide range of things we're doing that I'll
16 talk about around preservation broadly defined.
17 Second, we want to ensure that we are pursuing
18 opportunities for the creation of new affordable
19 homes in order to keep up with our growing
20 population. Third we're continuing to make
21 improvements to the way we do business to ensure
22 residents are better able to access the affordable
23 housing we're creating and to benefit from our
24 investments and finally we're working to ensure that
25 our investments are creating broad economic

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2 opportunity. So, while a large portion of the homes
3 in the Jerome area are already regulated we continue
4 to offer loans and work with property owners to make
5 repairs and improvements to their buildings in
6 exchange for maintaining affordability for existing
7 residents. As Michael has already mentioned under
8 Housing New York to date we have financed the
9 preservation of 5,500 affordable homes in this area,
10 97 percent of those homes serve extremely low to low
11 income households. This represents about 870 million
12 in public and private investments. One new program
13 that we announced as part of the housing New York 2.0
14 Plan is an initiative called Neighborhood Pillars
15 which will provide dedicated resources for
16 neighborhood-based organizations, nonprofits and
17 mission driven organizations to acquire and rehab
18 existing rent stabilized buildings. We're also
19 piloting new tactics to reach building owners who
20 have not traditionally worked with the city or who
21 are unfamiliar with the help that we can provide. One
22 example of this is, is that we've contacted over
23 1,800 owners in the area through direct mailers and
24 phone calls in, including those that we know may have
25 affordability restrictions expiring. We're also

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2 piloting a property... an, an owner outreach event with
3 the council members and we've also recently launched
4 our Landlord Ambassadors' Program in this part of the
5 Bronx to do outreach and provide more hands, hand
6 holding to... and technical assistance to owners who,
7 who may benefit from our programs. Finally, we're
8 supporting home owners who could benefit from
9 assistance through homeowner resource fairs in the
10 area and... in collaboration with, with the elected and
11 we're also working closely with the Center for New
12 York City Neighborhoods to provide foreclosure
13 counseling and other important services. Another note
14 here is that in, in the update to the plan we did
15 articulate a commitment to revamp our small home loan
16 program so that low and moderate-income homeowners
17 can access funds to make home repairs more easily
18 than they have been in the past. So, we're continuing
19 also to improve housing quality through the
20 enforcement of the housing maintenance code, this is
21 another part of our preservation strategy. Since 2014
22 we've increased the number of inspections in the
23 Jerome area by 11 percent and the number of
24 violations we have issued by 25 percent. Last year
25 the inspections in this community district, the two

1
2 community districts, districts accounted for more
3 than ten percent of all of our inspections citywide.
4 We also spent more than two million between fiscal
5 years 2014 and 2017 to go in ourselves and do
6 emergency repairs that were endangering the health
7 and safety of residents. Jerome is also one of the
8 areas where we've prioritized proactive surveying of
9 distressed properties using data and referrals from
10 community groups like CASA our team has surveyed
11 over, over 420 buildings and as a result some of
12 those have been flagged for follow up action like,
13 like go... getting into our alternative enforcement
14 program. And then last summer as, as, as you may know
15 we launched a new zombie homes initiative at HPD
16 where... and we've prioritized the surveying of zombie
17 homes in the Jerome area as well. Really important
18 here as well is that we've launched a number of
19 important programs to, to protect tenants from
20 harassment and deregulation which we know is, is a
21 critical issue. As, as folks have mentioned through
22 HRA we're providing free legal representation to
23 tenants facing harassment or eviction in housing
24 court. The city is actually investing 9.6 million in
25 the Jerome area for anti-displacement legal services

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2 which will serve approximately 4,000 households
3 annually and this funding is secured through 2021. As
4 you know the tenant support unit has been doing a lot
5 of door knocking in the area and has knocked on over
6 32,600 doors and assisted more than 600... 6,000
7 tenants to resolve their cases. We're also continuing
8 to work with the tenant harassment prevention task
9 force. We continue to educate tenants on rights and
10 resources through hosting tenant resource fairs in
11 the area and we're contracting with community-based
12 organizations to conduct organizing and provide
13 tenant services. Lastly, in response to, to, to
14 growing interest here and through a collaborative
15 process with, with advocates and the council we are
16 implementing the certificate of no harassment pilot
17 program in the area which we're looking forward to
18 launching. Shifting gears now to new construction,
19 the city's proposed land use changes along the Jerome
20 Ave corridor could over time result in the creation
21 of thousands of new apartments and I'd like to speak
22 a little bit about the resources we're providing to
23 ensure development is responsive to community needs
24 and concerns. First through the application of MIH
25 any new development along the corridor would be

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2 required by law to set aside at least 20 to 30
3 percent of, of apartments as permanently affordable
4 but because the market in this area it does not
5 support large scale development without GAP financing
6 from HPD we expect that developers will continue
7 coming to us for subsidy and we've already been
8 working with them to finance the construction of over
9 1,700 affordable homes in this district over the past
10 three years and we really do expect this trend to
11 continue. So, when developers come to us and they
12 have to meet the program... our program requirements
13 which exceed those of the MIH program we're requiring
14 additional affordability and additional permanent
15 affordability on top of the MIH requirements as well
16 as applying our new term sheets which do have... do go
17 deeper than they did previously as well as require
18 set asides for formally homeless households. As part
19 of Housing New York 2.0 we also are launching a
20 program to finance the construction of affordable co-
21 ops and condos and those will be marketed towards
22 first time home buyers which is something we've heard
23 people ask for over the course of, of this planning
24 project. We're also as you know working with Council
25 Members Gibson and Cabrera on an outreach effort to

1
2 convene property owners along the corridor and help
3 them understand both the zoning changes and the
4 city's resources to support mixed use affordable
5 housing development. And as always, we're continuing
6 to identify opportunities to develop affordable
7 housing on publicly owned land. So, in community
8 meetings in the Jerome area we've heard time and
9 again that in addition to creating new affordable
10 housing and preserving housing that we need to be
11 doing more to make sure that residents can access
12 that housing. So, we know that the lottery process
13 can be time consuming and sometimes difficult to
14 navigate and we continue to take steps to help
15 residents become prepared to submit complete and
16 accurate applications. Our new Housing Ambassador
17 Program trains local community groups to help
18 residents submit applications for the lottery and we
19 do have two housing ambassadors that we've identified
20 in the Jerome area. We also have a new step by step
21 video and print guides to help with the lottery
22 process and finally we're always working to refine
23 our marketing guidelines to remove barriers to
24 qualifying for affordable housing, you know one
25 example is that the new marketing criteria do not

1
2 allow for tenants to be rejected based solely on
3 their credit score or just because they were taken to
4 housing court by a landlord. Last but not least, we
5 are committed to ensuring that our investments in
6 affordable housing create jobs, promote opportunities
7 for MWBE's and strengthen small businesses. Before
8 concluding I'd like to thank the community for their
9 relentless advocacy for the neighborhood as well as
10 yourselves. Many of these strategies were applied
11 locally or citywide have come... that have been applied
12 locally or citywide have come directly from our
13 conversations and collaborations with community
14 groups and elected officials here in Jerome. As
15 always, we welcome your feedback because we consider
16 this a work in progress and always want to be doing
17 better than, than we are. Thanks for the opportunity
18 to speak on... in support of the Jerome Avenue
19 Neighborhood Plan and I look forward to our continued
20 collaboration. I'm going to hand it over to Blaise
21 Backer now.

22 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: Good morning
23 Chair Moya and members of the Subcommittee on Zoning
24 and Franchises. My name is Blaise Backer and I'm the
25 Deputy Commissioner of Neighborhood Development for

1
2 the New York City Department of Small Business
3 Services. At SBS we aim to unlock economic potential
4 by connecting New Yorkers to quality jobs, building
5 stronger businesses and fostering thriving
6 neighborhoods. Over the past two years SBS has worked
7 closely with our partner agencies, Jerome Avenue
8 community-based organizations, small businesses and
9 residents to implement new investments in Jerome
10 Avenue's small business and job seekers with a goal
11 of increasing overall economic activity. Chief among
12 the new investments is Neighborhood 360, a program
13 created to identify, develop, and launch commercial
14 revitalization projects and partnership with local
15 stakeholders. Through Neighborhood 360 SBS provided
16 funding and technical assistance to the Women's
17 Housing and Economic Development Corporation or
18 WHEDco and David... Davidson Community Senator... Center,
19 sorry, to conduct a commercial district needs
20 assessment of CDNA as we've referred to before that
21 looked at the Jerome Avenue commercial corridor's
22 conditions and opportunities for investments.
23 Findings from the Jerome Avenue CDNA directly guided
24 the priorities for the competitive Neighborhood 360
25 grants, nearly one million in funding over three

1
2 years awarded by SBS to WHEDco and Davidson in early
3 2017. SBS has funded full time program staff at both,
4 both of these organizations to address community
5 identified needs including direct business services,
6 supplementary sanitation and beautification,
7 placemaking activities, district marketing and
8 merchant organizing. For example, WHEDco will be
9 providing free legal services to businesses along
10 Jerome Avenue that include one on one legal
11 assistance, workshops and direct support mitigating
12 noncompliance issues. Along with support for
13 commercial corridors near Jerome Avenue, SBS is also
14 ensuring businesses have access to business
15 development tools. SBS provides free business
16 services to all small businesses on Jerome Avenue
17 through the NYC Business Solutions Center located at
18 400 East Fordham Road. We're also supplementing the
19 auto business industry along Jerome Avenue which has
20 served as a hub for local employment. Building on a
21 previous, previous study funded by Council Member
22 Gibson, SBS funded WHEDco and the United Auto
23 Merchant Association to conduct a business study to
24 better understand the needs of auto businesses. The
25 biggest issue identified for most businesses

1
2 including auto businesses is access to credit to
3 start or grow their business. SBS currently offers a
4 number of free services to support these businesses.
5 SBS works with businesses to find the right lender
6 for their needs and assists them with developing the
7 most compelling loan application. SBS also offers a
8 number of business education courses ranging from
9 business planning basics to business financial
10 management to marketing 101. Another issue many
11 businesses face is bad commercial lease terms and
12 tenant harassment. To combat this SBS recently
13 announced the commercial lease assistance program
14 which will allow small business owners to obtain free
15 legal assistance on topics that include eviction
16 notices, lease negotiations, landlord issues, and
17 breach of contract issues. All of these services are
18 available to the auto businesses in the Jerome Avenue
19 area. Another objective we heard from the community
20 was to increase quality employment and training
21 opportunities for Jerome Avenue residents. To address
22 this SBS will ensure access to Workforce One training
23 and recruitment services. SBS operates a network of
24 21 Workforce One Career Centers across the city
25 including four centers in the Bronx. The West Farms

1
2 Workforce One Center offers customized services for
3 young adults ages 18 to 24. SBS also has an
4 employment work center in the Bronx with customized
5 services for, for individuals formally acquainted
6 with the criminal justice system. Additionally, SBS
7 works with a network of over 250 community partners
8 for workforce development services across the city
9 including 75 community partners in the Bronx. We will
10 continue to leverage the resources of our Workforce
11 One Center and community partners to connect Jerome
12 Avenue residents to quality employment and training
13 opportunities. SBS also recently launched a mobile
14 outreach unit vehicle boosting our support to a whole
15 new level by bringing our services directly to
16 business owners, community-based organizations and
17 job seekers in their own neighborhood. Through the
18 outreach unit we'll be able to bring our businesses
19 and... our business and workforce resources directly to
20 the community and allow SBS to rapidly address the
21 needs of the neighborhood. Last month SBS
22 successfully brought business resources to the Jerome
23 Avenue corridor via the mobile outreach unit and will
24 be visiting again to conduct Workforce One
25 prescreening later this month. SBS is committed to

1
2 serving the residents of the Jerome Ave... of Jerome
3 Avenue and will continue to provide necessary
4 services for the community's business owners and job
5 seekers. Thank you and I'm happy to take any
6 questions. I'm going to turn it over to Nick Molinari
7 from Parks first.

8 NICHOLAS MOLINARI: Good morning Chair
9 Moya and members of the Zoning and Franchises
10 Subcommittee. My name is Nick Molinari and I'm Chief
11 of Planning and Neighborhood Development at New York
12 City Department of Parks and Recreation. I'm here to
13 speak on the rezoning of Jerome Avenue. New York City
14 Parks recognizes the importance of our parks and open
15 spaces and improving the quality of life for
16 residents surrounding Jerome Avenue and in supporting
17 the goals for mixed income and affordable housing
18 advanced by Mayor De Blasio's housing plan. New York
19 City Parks is thankful to Council Members Gibson and
20 Cabrera for their continued capital support toward
21 parks and open spaces in these districts. Since 2014
22 New York City Parks has been working closely with our
23 partner sister agencies and local stakeholders to
24 better understand the community's open space
25 priorities and opportunities. We participated in

1
2 Department of City Planning's community engagement
3 process which led to the release of the Jerome Avenue
4 Neighborhood Plan in October of 2017. The Jerome Plan
5 recognized the diversity of public spaces within the
6 Jerome Avenue neighborhood, the pedestrian and safety
7 challenges that effect open space activation and use
8 and the significant opportunities for development of
9 new open space within the neighborhood. Thanks to the
10 city council's advocacy the administration has
11 secured a capital commitment of 4.6 million dollars
12 to develop a new park at West 170th Street and Nelson
13 Avenue, Corporal Fischer Park. The development of
14 Corporal Fischer Park will be transformative, this
15 undeveloped lot will now become a neighborhood park
16 and a valued amenity. The cities also committed four
17 million dollars for the renovation.. for the redesign
18 and reconstruction of the heavily used Morton
19 Playground at Morton Place and Doctor Martin Luther
20 King Boulevard as well as an eight to ten-million-
21 dollar contribution to improve access to Aqueduct
22 Walk. The development of these parks will go through
23 New York City Parks public engagement process. New
24 York City Parks will be hosting public visioning
25 sessions and will work to incorporate community

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priorities into our site plans and designs. Parks is committed to improving Jerome Ave... the Jerome Avenue neighborhoods public realm and in delivering improvements that reflect community visioning. We've heard numerous calls for expanding and improving open spaces at underdeveloped sites like Corporal Fischer Park and Grant Park and in improving connectivity and accessibility at sites like Morton Playground at Aqueduct Walk. We'll continue to work closely with the city council, our local... our city agency partners, local residents, park advocates, and others to identify opportunities to improve parks and create new open spaces that accommodate the growing Jerome Avenue community. I thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.

CAROL SAMOL: I think that concludes our... the testimony, thank you...

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Please, no please.

Okay, thank you. We're going to pause right now to allow Council Member Torres to vote on LU 6.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Continued roll call on... to... on a vote to approve LU 6, Council Member Torres?

COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I vote aye.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: The vote stands at
3 eight in the affirmative, zero in the negative and
4 zero abstentions.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. We're going
6 to now move into questions and I have a few. So,
7 thank you again for, for coming here today to
8 testify. Just a couple of things, when it comes to
9 the automotive industry which has been the lynch pin
10 for the local economy and employs many immigrant
11 workers what are the specific... what specific plans
12 does the city have to replace the jobs if the
13 businesses are lost during the rezoning.

14 CAROL SAMOL: Well I think that the, the
15 Jerome Plan balances many goals including job
16 creation, calls for... even as we're trying to create
17 affordable housing and improve the quality of life in
18 the neighborhood we also are trying to support the
19 auto related businesses in, in the corridor. We think
20 that... or we know more about the, the broader economy
21 of the area including the major sectors of health
22 care and community facility use... [sneezes] excuse me...
23 and education, we know those are the fastest growing
24 sectors and I think SBS can also speak a little bit
25 to how we will be offering services and training to

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2 connect individuals to growing... other growing
3 sectors. With that said our goal is also to better
4 connect local residents to existing jobs and to, to
5 jobs that will be in those sectors themselves and
6 we're creating the work, workforce development
7 network to do that, that is a, a network that will
8 work with local non-profits that are already doing
9 training and, and job placement and helping them
10 better work together and make referrals to one
11 another to trainings facility.. or training
12 opportunities whether that, that is, you know GED
13 services or language services or even just, you know
14 job training services as, as we could discuss and... so
15 we're really prepared for the, the new economy and
16 the growing economy that is in, in the borough. We do
17 not expect the auto related businesses to, to go away
18 from the area altogether, we know in, in general in
19 those.. in the larger area there are still a
20 significant number of, of uses mainly outside the
21 Jerome Avenue corridor quite frankly that, that...
22 within the half mile area there are, are actually
23 more repair shops outside than there are within so
24 that... I think that, that sector will be there. Also,
25 for the auto related businesses we are preserving

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2 small portions of the area for kind of heavy, heavy
3 industrial and automotive uses so that they could
4 remain at least in, in the proximity of the corridor.
5 It's important to remember that the zoning... this is a
6 zoning change and will not be requiring the
7 redevelopment and, and relocation of, of those
8 businesses they can continue to, to operate here, we
9 expect them to, we've seen that elsewhere in the
10 Bronx, point you to Webster Avenue where, you know we
11 had a similar rezoning and, and it, it evolves over
12 time, we're thinking, you know in the long term here.
13 I, I guess I would turn it over to SBS to really
14 focus on how we're connecting Bronx sites to growing
15 sectors in, in the... in the borough.

16 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: Yeah, to
17 elaborate a little more I think... I think the best way
18 to put it is... as, as the business owners themselves
19 certainly have access to the existing suite of, of
20 direct business assistance programs as well as our
21 workforce development programs so what we've done
22 thus far and then with Council Member Gibson is
23 really, you know attempt to better understand what
24 those business owner's needs are whether it's on... in
25 the career track or whether it's the business

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2 themselves and at this point I... you know based on
3 findings with United, United Auto Merchant
4 Association and, and WHEDco, you know we've, we're
5 really found a way to sort of zero in on those
6 programs and ensure, you know that those businesses
7 are getting directly connected not only to what's
8 already offered citywide but also in a more targeted
9 way within Jerome Avenue so as I touched on a little
10 bit in the testimony, you know we've heard... we've
11 heard a lot about sort of the need for financing as
12 well as assistance with lease negotiation and that
13 kind of thing so those are programs that are not only
14 ensuring that those businesses have access to our
15 community partners WHEDco and Davidson but also via
16 our... the mobile outreach unit so... and then we'll be
17 layering on sort of a... an additional hire touch
18 service sort of would be our contract with WHEDco
19 through the Neighborhood 360 program in order to have
20 an even more targeted way of, of addressing not only
21 the automotive businesses but, but the businesses on
22 the... on the retail corridors as well to ensure that
23 they're getting access to services essentially that
24 we believe they... you know we already have many of

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2 those that, that can help them it's just ensuring
3 they know about them and that they can access them.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: In, in all of that I
5 just don't want to see them get lost in this process
6 and for us that's a very important piece that, you
7 know we've seen in the past and Willets is a prime
8 example of, of what can happen when these
9 redevelopments happen, the rezoning's happen, the
10 auto workers then are displaced and then lose their
11 jobs, lose their income, I'm also looking to see like
12 are we doing any follow ups afterwards to see whether
13 or not there is... are there... are there still being
14 employed those are the kind of things that, that,
15 that I'm concerned with, it's just not in the
16 beginning but it's like where are we after this gets
17 implemented.

18 CAROL SAMOL: I mean I can say a little
19 more about how we're supporting the auto businesses
20 even outside the zoning and the zoning is just...

21 [cross-talk]

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Right... [cross-talk]

23 CAROL SAMOL: ...just one small component
24 to it and we do think of it as the auto businesses
25 and also the auto workers, I think just in... to put it

1
2 in context, you know the auto businesses while they
3 have a very prominent feel... bring a prominent feel to
4 the community they're actually a small portion, there
5 are hundreds of, of variety of businesses along the
6 corridor and auto businesses are, are about... just
7 under 20 percent of that... [sneezes] excuse me... what's
8 also come out in this plan is a very clear
9 understanding for the need for the business to help...
10 to help the businesses come into compliance and that
11 would do a couple of things. It would help them be
12 better neighbors but it would also help them be
13 better businesses, we think we working closely with
14 the Council Members to create a compliance program,
15 we have... that would, would bring education,
16 information, best practices to these businesses in
17 addition to all of the business services that they
18 would have these are the ones that would be specific
19 to the auto businesses and the DEC, the State
20 Department of Environmental Conservation has a very
21 effective and proven kind of outreach and education
22 program that we think would be a really good model
23 here in Jerome, it's, it's a, a light touch, it's,
24 it's outreach, it's information, it's followed up,
25 it's, it's one on one touch with, with business

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2 owners. Accessing capital is also important to
3 helping the businesses remain and, and also grow or
4 relocate or what... have ever... that's, that's the, the
5 full range of businesses here but especially the auto
6 businesses. In the next few weeks the city will be
7 announcing a program to support loans of up to
8 250,000 to qualifying small businesses that program
9 will be marketed directly on the corridor ensuring
10 that they are aware of, understand how to... how to
11 apply for it and that could be for anything from...
12 [sneezes] excuse me... growing a business to you know
13 helping a business come into compliance with air
14 quality or oil handling, helping them be better auto
15 businesses. Yeah and, and the workforce network I
16 think is, is another important component for the
17 workers themselves.

18 MICHAEL PARKINSON: Yeah, I mean I would
19 just add just as to sort of finish the thought is
20 that throughout this process one of the, the... you
21 know main issues that we've been able to address in
22 the auto industry, the, the retail sector, you know
23 name a business along the corridor, one of the
24 biggest issues was not having business owners be
25 fully aware of the types of programs and services the

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2 city offers so through this past three year planning
3 process that's been one of the most productive things
4 we've been able to is make... you know make that
5 awareness clear and connect people with those
6 resources. So, we look forward to continuing to do
7 that be it through the mobile outreach unit or
8 chamber on the go as, as SBS has described as well as
9 working with the local Council Member offices to make
10 sure that, that local needs are being met and those
11 programs and services are, are really being
12 highlighted along the corridor.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: My other question is,
14 there was four areas in the rezoning that remained
15 commercial what was the methodology that was used to
16 identify the geography of the four preservation areas
17 and why only save 20 percent of the businesses there?

18 CAROL SAMOL: So, I mean just to... just to
19 take a broader look, you know the Jerome Plan is
20 balancing multiple goals and even as the plan calls
21 for transforming the corridor to meet local needs and
22 build affordable housing and build connections across
23 the neighborhood and create, create walkable streets
24 it also calls for supporting the auto businesses and
25 workers with that said as we worked through the

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2 planning process the negative impacts of the auto
3 businesses were highlighted throughout, I think
4 that's why we're focused on compliance a lot besides
5 in general our, our too small, the uses spill out
6 onto the streets and sidewalks, cause... they cause
7 mothers and children to walk out into the moving
8 lanes of traffic quite literally to, to get around
9 the neighborhood, there are people with, with
10 mobility issues, thinking about schools and other
11 sensitive, sensitive uses and, and affect the quality
12 of life so it's that kind of balance. There are
13 indeed a hundred, hundreds of businesses and a
14 variety of businesses along the corridor, our goal is
15 to maintain a diverse economy in, in the... in the
16 corridor but not at the expense of our other goals so
17 we really tried to balance those things and... so we
18 looked at... for four areas... or we looked at areas
19 where there was a concentration of uses whether those
20 were auto uses but also heavy industrial uses where
21 they could remain but also still allow us to achieve
22 our other goals, that's very important and I would
23 also note again that, you know we know in the Jerome...
24 the broader area there are more auto repair shops
25 outside the corridor than there are on the corridor

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2 and it was... we really are thinking about the
3 methodology really was a balancing of our goals and,
4 and where... how could we keep the, the, the economy
5 being diverse but at the same time provide all these
6 other opportunities and meet our other goals. Michael
7 did you want to add anything?

8 MICHAEL PARKINSON: Yeah and I would just
9 add a little bit of a nuance but I think an important
10 one when we're having this discussion and that is
11 what the zoning will and will not permit, Carol... as
12 Carol's already described the change of zoning is, is
13 a long range, you know proposition, the, the changes
14 will, you know take place over time but even as the
15 changes do occur existing businesses won't be
16 required to leave by any stretch but what's more is
17 that where we are rezoning C8 districts and M1
18 districts and mapping residential districts we're...
19 especially along the corridor we're, we're replacing
20 those commercial... the commercial component of that
21 zoning with C2-4 overlays and within a C2-4 overlay
22 you are permitted a variety of automotive uses. Now
23 all be it not the, the heavy automotive body and
24 repair stuff the, the things that you wouldn't
25 necessarily want next to sensitive resources but you,

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you know driving schools, tire shops, auto glass and mirror stores, any auto retail as long as you're not doing heavy repairs, spray booths, you know dealing with dangerous chemicals and those types of things by and large those types of uses which I think we would all agree are automate... automotive uses would be permitted going forward per zoning as well. So, I just wanted to make sure that that point was not lost.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, while we're still on the topic of the businesses and jobs how many businesses and jobs does the city believe will be displaced as a result of the rezoning, what's the worst-case scenario, what type of assistance, what type of training does SBS have prepared to aid workers who may be displaced in the land beneath the shops that are sold?

CAROL SAMOL: Yeah, let me just start that and then I can, can kick it over to small business services to talk a little bit about, you know the business... clearly supporting the small businesses and entrepreneurs is a goal of the plan, that's, that's the... our starting place. Supporting the auto businesses is, is a... is a goal of our plan

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2 as well. There are hundreds of businesses 20 percent
3 of them or, or less are, are auto related. On our,
4 our projected sites, you know being conservative,
5 being reasonable, looking over the next ten years we
6 identified 88 businesses along, along the two mile
7 stretch that may be affected and 43 of those are, are
8 auto related that's what our environmental review
9 shows but quite literally, you know hundreds of
10 businesses along, along the corridor that, that will
11 benefit and grow. And I'll... so I would just kick it
12 over to... [cross-talk]

13 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: Sure, I can add
14 certainly again via sort of the 21 Workforce One
15 Centers in our Workforce One system, we typically
16 connect approximately 25,000 residents to jobs a year
17 and so you know some of those again as... there
18 obviously are certain industries that may be growing
19 faster than others and we certainly have worked with
20 partners in that, in the health care sector, in the
21 technology sector and others where if a... you know an
22 employee is looking to actually be trained in another
23 sector then that's something certainly we can connect
24 them to those opportunities but I think again as, as
25 Carol touched on I think our, our hope would be that

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2 where possible for those businesses that are, you
3 know both employees and businesses that are
4 interested in, in continuing with their business we'd
5 want to ensure we get them the assistance they need
6 so they can, you know remain in the Bronx and remain
7 viable businesses.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: And I don't know if
9 this was answered before but does the city have a
10 plan to track what happens to the workers after the
11 rezoning to know whether or not they were successful
12 or failed in getting a job, the auto workers?

13 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: I think... I would
14 have to... I mean I can... I guess I would have to get
15 back to you on the specifics of... you know again
16 obviously we track a lot of data within the system, I
17 think in terms of specific individuals in this
18 catchment area and whether we're tracking those
19 individuals at this point whether they have that
20 capability I think we'd have to get back to you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: And the trainings are
22 they going to be held in the Bronx or are they
23 downtown?

24 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: Our trainings can
25 take place at, at various locations, it really does

1
2 depend on the, the subject matter regard... depending
3 on if we're talking about a re-training obviously if
4 it... or we're talking about more specific automotive
5 business training where it is about helping a
6 business owner or employee to sort of improve their
7 skills or to improve their business practices those
8 can be held in... you know the business solution center
9 or again with our partners WHEDco which are very
10 close by.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Got it. Also, how many
12 individuals have applied to jobs through the HireNYC
13 program?

14 CAROL SAMOL: I mean I would just as
15 context in thinking about that because the HireNYC is
16 a very important part of achieving our goals, but it
17 will be one of many. We know we'll have the workforce
18 network where we'll try to really connect to even,
19 even broader and fill the gaps for, for local...
20 connecting local folks to jobs in whatever sector and
21 I know SBS is... could speak a little more to what's
22 actually happening with the HireNYC program.

23 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: So, I can speak a
24 little bit to this and I guess... I don't know if it's
25 helpful to provide a little bit of, of context

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2 because I do think it's important, you know obviously
3 we are committed to ensure... you know making every
4 effort possible to connect local residents to jobs
5 that are created from this plan. It is important to
6 note that while the city can require these
7 contractors who, who receive again and, and with HPD
8 projects over two million dollars annually from HPD
9 or 500,000 from contractors what we can require them
10 to register in this portal and register, you know
11 ensure that these jobs go via the Workforce One
12 system and that they interview any candidate that the
13 city refers, we cannot require that, that these
14 private contractors actually make these specific
15 hires so at this time I guess the... since I... I can
16 give... the, the numbers I have in terms of the... like
17 Bronx based HPD projects essentially... well actually I
18 could say that HPD... with HPD projects citywide for
19 example 135 Bronx residents have been referred to job
20 opportunities and 19 of those as of December 31st of
21 this past year have been hired, there could be more
22 that have been hired we just don't have any
23 additional data at that point... at this point but we
24 would... we would continue tracking that so we could
25 get new numbers to you.

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CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I'd love to see that.
And how many employers have participated in the
HireNYC program?

MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: At this point the
numbers... I, I believe we have 207 contractors have
submitted essentially... 200... 295 contract enrollments
for HPD projects specifically so 200... so, 207 actual
contractors enrolled... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: 207... [cross-talk]

MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: ...at this time,
207 for HPD.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Do you know the, the,
the length of the employment of the workers that have
been hired through this program?

MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: I don't think we
have that at this time again I... obviously it's a... you
know the programs only several years old, it's fairly
new and I... and, and obviously I think even during..
most generally during, you know warmer months when
more construction is happening and there's certainly
more jobs posted on the site but at this point we'd
have to really get back to you in terms of that sort
of follow up on data and how long employees are
staying in these projects.

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2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: And is there a reason
3 that HireNYC has no wage requirements?

4 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: What
5 requirements, I'm sorry?

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: No wage requirements,
7 how does the city plan to ensure the creation of like
8 good paying jobs without a... [cross-talk]

9 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: A wage... [cross-
10 talk]

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: ...wage requirement?

12 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: I would have to
13 get back to you on that, I, I don't have all the
14 information but if you need that now I can call up a
15 colleague of mine from... [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great... [cross-talk]

17 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: ...work personnel...
18 [cross-talk]

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I'd love to follow up
20 on that.

21 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: Okay, I can get
22 back to you on that.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: And lastly is there a
24 commitment to having good paying jobs in the
25

1
2 residents that are constructed i.e. being the
3 building the building service workers?

4 LEILA BOZORG: We have a number... a lot of
5 our projects actually do offer prevailing wage for
6 building service workers. We don't have an outright
7 requirement on every project that we build but a
8 majority actually do use prevailing wage for building
9 service workers and that's something we, we are
10 generally committed to continuing to talk about and
11 work on and we encourage our, our developers to pay a
12 prevailing wage on building, building service
13 workers.

14 CAROL SAMOL: I would add, I would expect
15 today you'll hear from a number of property owners
16 who are expecting to redevelop their properties and
17 that they may be able to speak to that quite directly
18 what their practices are.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, okay that's
20 important and, and I just want to get... while you're
21 getting back do me on... just do you have the zip codes
22 of the participants from the program, for HireNYC?

23 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: I don't believe I
24 do have those handy at least of, of the 19 hired you
25 mean... [cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yeah... [cross-talk]

MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: ...specifically,
yeah, we'd have to... I'd have to get that data.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great. Thank you,
that's it for now, I'll turn it over to my colleague
Council Member Cabrera.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you Mr.
Chair, thank you so much, welcome. Let me focus first
on parks, can you share with us which parks you have
identified as needing capital repairs at this moment?

CAROL SAMOL: I would just, you know
preface that also with, you know you, you are very
aware the... that investing in parks and investing in
the neighborhood over all is a very important part of
the plan, improving parks and making sure it's
dispersed throughout and creating a new park, we have
committed to Corporal Fischer Park, Morton Playground
and Aqueduct Walk to date, these are all important
open spaces but the plan calls for a much broader
vision and I'll turn it over to Nick if you want to
respond more directly to his...

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you.

NICHOLAS MOLINARI: Sure, so we did
mention that there are three park sites that have

1
2 funding through the plan so all three of those
3 projects are projects that will be advancing. We also
4 received a list of priority projects which we're
5 going through right now and hope to continue
6 conversations to see how you want to prioritize those
7 ones.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Absolutely, I'm
9 looking forward to seeing more parks being listed as
10 you know though the Bronx is known for being the
11 borough of parks unfortunately in the Northwest Bronx
12 we literally have a famine of parks and addition of
13 people will require more space for people to spend
14 time with their families. Have you made any efforts
15 to ensure that we have adequate staffing for
16 maintaining these open spaces, if we're going to add
17 parks, if we're going fix parks that were previously
18 closed we're going to need more staff, have you
19 started making an assessment and what do you have so
20 far?

21 NICHOLAS MOLINARI: On the individual
22 parks that have just received funding we have not
23 done that type of assessment but parks generally has
24 been looking at our portfolio of properties at how we
25 maintain our properties and trying to figure out ways

1
2 that we can be more efficient with our mobile crews
3 in terms of how we route our mobile crews so we can
4 get a little bit more time actually cleaning the
5 parks rather than driving from site to site so that's
6 something we've been doing over the last few years in
7 terms of prioritizing those sites to really be more
8 efficient with the workers we have but we... whenever
9 we have new parks as they come on board there's
10 always a conversation about how that impacts existing
11 staffing, existing staffing resources and how we
12 visit those sites so we will continue to explore that
13 on these particular sites.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I'm going to
15 tell you we don't have enough staff for what we're
16 about to do, we... I want to be very clear, we need
17 more staff if we're going to move forward there's no
18 way on earth that the very few people that have a
19 tremendous amount of work already are going to be
20 able to absorb more of the work especially if you
21 have, you know not just... you know you have parks but
22 then you have, you know like the Aqueduct, that's,
23 that's just a long corridor park and so that takes a
24 tremendous amount of time and as you know there's two
25 crews, one that comes in to clean and another one to

1
2 come and pick up and, and I know we're very closely
3 with Commissioner Silver and I commend him, he's the
4 park commissioner we've ever had since I've been here
5 but I, I tell you that we definitely... I want you to
6 go back to your people and to make this a really
7 important point that we definitely are going to need
8 more parks people working. Let me just switch here
9 because we have a lot of questions, I know a lot of
10 people want to make their statements here today. Can
11 you talk to me which step streets have already been
12 identified for capital repairs?

13 CAROL SAMOL: Yeah, I appreciate that
14 questions because it's also... and gets to the heart of
15 the... [clears throat] excuse me... the plan because
16 building the connections across the community are
17 really important and I will actually ask my colleague
18 from... Nivardo Lopez from the Department of
19 Transportation who you know...

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Welcome
21 Commissioner... [cross-talk]

22 CAROL SAMOL: ...to speak more to that... to
23 that.

24 NIVARDO LOPEZ: Council Member good
25 morning. I just want for the record to identify my...

1
2 identify myself, Nivardo Lopez Bronx Borough
3 Commissioner, New York City DOT. So, to answer your
4 question on the reconstruction, the main
5 reconstruction project we have in your district of...
6 [cross-talk]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Commissioner...

8 [cross-talk]

9 NIVARDO LOPEZ: ...course... [cross-talk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: ...I'm sorry, we
11 have to swear you in.

12 NIVARDO LOPEZ: Oh sure... [cross-talk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Yeah, I'm so
14 sorry.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK: Can you please raise
16 your right hand, do you affirm to tell the truth, the
17 whole truth and nothing but the truth in your
18 testimony before the committee and in response to
19 Council Member questions?

20 NIVARDO LOPEZ: Yes.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you, you can go
22 ahead with your...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you.

24 NIVARDO LOPEZ: As I was saying Council
25 Member the main reconstruction project that's ongoing

1
2 and will touch your district of course is the
3 reconstruction of the Grand Concourse phase four
4 which goes from 100... East 175th Street up to Fordham
5 Road, we're currently exploring a phase five which
6 would take us North of Fordham Road up to at least
7 100... East 198th Street. Within the Jerome Avenue
8 neighborhood study area, we identified three
9 locations that we want to improve the intersections
10 and also want to do streetscape improvements for so
11 that's Burnside Avenue where this last year we did a
12 safety improvement project at the intersection of
13 Burnside and Jerome and also, we've identified
14 Burnside Avenue pretty much from the Concourse to
15 University as an area that we want to improve.
16 Tremont Avenue as well is another location where not
17 only do we want to do intersection improvements but
18 we also want to do streetscape improvements. Many of
19 the streets in your district don't require capital
20 reconstruction we would just need to resurface them
21 with regular in house resources and then of course
22 along Jerome we also want to expand our safe routes
23 to transit program where we build out the sidewalk to
24 give bus riders a safe place to wait for the bus and
25 many of the constituents in your district of course

1
2 when waiting for the bus underneath the elevated
3 train have to stand in the street so our program
4 would be identifying key locations that have high
5 ridership that are by subway stops and we would
6 expand the sidewalk and create a safer area for bus
7 pick up and drop off.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: What kind of
9 staffing does, does DOT use to maintain the steps?

10 NIVARDO LOPEZ: Maintain, maintain step
11 streets?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Yes.

13 NIVARDO LOPEZ: So, step streets, the
14 cleaning of step streets are handled... the main... the
15 day to day maintenance is handled by the Department
16 of Sanitation just like any other street in New York
17 City. We've identified several step streets that need
18 to be capitally reconstructed so right now we are
19 currently reconstructing Clifford Place, the next
20 street is Davidson Avenue, there's a step street
21 there which we have fully funded and we'll begin
22 capital reconstruction either in 2019 or later in
23 2019 and then we keep asking ever year OMB for
24 additional funding to rebuild the step streets, we
25 had ranked them and there are several others in your

1
2 district I believe we're working on currently
3 reconstructing West 229th Street that's actually in
4 board eight that's outside of this area but we are
5 also looking at I believe West 230th as well as
6 another street we're looking to reconstruct. And
7 in addition... in addition to the cleaning we do have
8 staff in house that does sort of more spot repairs so
9 if there's a railing broken, if we need to replace
10 the lights, if we can... have to do some type of like
11 cleaning we can sometimes supplement sanitation's
12 resources.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: What efforts are
14 being made to improve the streetscape to make it more
15 pedestrian friendly and to improve public safety
16 especially along the elevated, what is the timing for
17 the redesign of major streets Jerome Avenue in
18 particular, L. Grant, Burnside, Tremont and 170th
19 Street.

20 NIVARDO LOPEZ: So, E.L. Grant we have
21 currently a, a preliminary design that we hope to
22 finalize by the end of this year and present to the
23 community either at the end of 2018 or beginning of
24 2019, the E.L. Grant Street improvement project would
25 probably happen in mid to late 2019. On, on the other

1
2 parts of Jerome we are currently... have hired a
3 consultant to sort of begin preliminary scoping and
4 design for streetscape improvements on Tremont,
5 Burnside and 170th.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Excellent. I
7 know we had a... with City Planning we had an
8 opportunity to talk about the Cross Bronx, can you
9 give us an update on how you're planning on
10 addressing the conditions at the Cross Bronx and what
11 is the process to improving, improving safety in that
12 intersection?

13 CAROL SAMOL: Well I think Nivardo and
14 Parks can actually speak to some of that but just to,
15 to confirm, yes, we had a visioning session and it,
16 it... just recognizing the sheer interagency
17 coordination that's required to make improvements
18 there, we... including the state owns property there
19 but... and also recognizing that it is a very important
20 intersection that bisects the, the study area and
21 today is, is just inadequate for pedestrian safety
22 and, and access but there are park spaces there,
23 there are state properties there, there's things that
24 the city could be doing. I, I think... Michael I don't
25 know if there's anything you would add to...

1
2 MICHAEL PARKINSON: Sure, okay, I, I
3 think I would just sort of add onto what, what Carol
4 said in terms of the collaboration and necessity of
5 investment there and this is something that we've
6 looked at since the start of the study but what has
7 become, you know crystal clear to us is that first
8 and foremost pedestrian safety at that intersection
9 is the most critical thing and if you want to think
10 about how those park spaces that do line the
11 periphery of the intersection can function as a
12 system you got to address the, the safety concerns
13 first and to that I would ask Commissioner Lopez to
14 speak to a little bit more about what DOT is doing in
15 terms of pedestrian safety there.

16 NIVARDO LOPEZ: So, back in 2016 we
17 actually began making improvements at that
18 intersection of Jerome Avenue and the Cross Bronx.
19 There was East... Mount Eden Avenue which went from
20 Macombs Road right to Jerome, the North side had no
21 sidewalk so back in the middle of 2016 we built a
22 brand-new sidewalk on the North side of Mount Eden
23 that allows residents to go from Macombs to Inwood
24 Park and to the train station at Mount Eden and
25 Jerome. Furthermore, last year we have finalized a

1
2 design and are ready to implement this summer at the
3 intersection of Jerome and the Cross Bronx. Right
4 now, that area it's very hazardous for pedestrians to
5 cross so we're going to build out some more
6 pedestrian space in that intersection, we're going to
7 add a new signal, we're going to add new crosswalk
8 markings, we're going to ban some movements and
9 clarify other movements... [cross-talk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Very good..

11 [cross-talk]

12 NIVARDO LOPEZ: ...to make it easier for
13 pedestrians to know where vehicular traffic coming
14 from and also to allow vehicles to know where they
15 need to go and to do so in a safe manner and we
16 expect that that project will be implemented this
17 year.. this summer actually.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I don't know one
19 driver that likes to drive through that intersection,
20 I'm, I'm glad to hear that we're making.. we're going
21 to be making some forward steps there, we need like
22 you say... signs to... for clarification, prohibit
23 certain things from happening there because its' the
24 wild, wild west of Northwest Bronx in that
25 intersection so I'm happy to hear that we're going to

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be moving forward in that. Let me move on to schools quickly here, a number of existing schools have large playgrounds and are breaking land that could be utilized for an Annex, which sites has SCA considered so far?

CAROL SAMOL: Can... we do have a colleague here from, from the SCA, I would just say just as a way of, of introduction thinking even beyond existing sites, you know trying to identify siting schools especially in district 10 as you are well, well aware has been a challenge over the years. We recently were successful in identifying, is it PS 33 for additional seats after, after a, a long... a long period but the rezoning itself we know will open up other sites that... where we can and, and are in conversations with developers to, to, to build schools and I would turn it over to SCA to talk about existing facilities and, and the other work you've done.

MELANIE LA ROCCA: Sure.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Okay, just one moment can you please raise your right hand, do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in your testimony before the committee and in response to Council Member questions?

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MELANIE LA ROCCA: Yes.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Okay, please introduce yourself and then you can go ahead.

MELANIE LA ROCCA: Good afternoon, my name is Melanie La Rocca, I'm Vice President of Operations at the New York City School Construction Authority. So, as Carol mentioned siting new capacity in school district 10 has been a challenge however as part of this rezoning process we've been working with our colleagues at City Planning to understand the rezoning as it took place over the number of years and I'm happy to say at this point we are in discussions with a number of stakeholders for potential opportunities and we are looking at both privately owned sites as well as Department of Education controlled sites.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Along the same line how does SCA ensure that it's projected enrollment accounts for the new development that is taking place?

MELANIE LA ROCCA: Sure, so every year the SCA releases an updated capital plan and we... as part of that process we evaluate our projections and expected growth so that coupled with being part of

1
2 the conversation from day one and having a strong
3 partnership with City Planning as well as HPD and
4 others ensures that we are best able to prepare for
5 potential changes in rezoning that would increase
6 density as well as population so I think those two
7 strategies ensures that our resources are targeted in
8 areas of existing overutilization as well as future
9 growth.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And I just want
11 to be clear and I know I mentioned it in my opening
12 statement and I know also Council Member Gibson we've
13 been uh very vocal about the fact that we need new
14 schools, brand new schools and we need expansions on
15 some of the schools especially, especially in those
16 district sectors that have been already identified as
17 being overpopulated for us to have more children as
18 you know better than I do being overpopulated, having
19 more students that means that our children will not
20 do us well if we don't start right away with this
21 potential plan and so I, I just want to.. I just want
22 to sound the trumpet here very loud that we, we are
23 now in desperate need and we will need even more
24 spaces as, as we are getting ready to potentially
25 move forward here.

1
2 MELANIE LA ROCCA: We certainly recognize
3 this is an important council priority as well as
4 community priority.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I really
6 appreciate that. In terms of you know Jerome Avenue,
7 183rd Street is, is part of the corridor that I had
8 put a lot of work in the last eight years, I brought
9 in the Cure of Violence Program then myself and
10 Council Member Jumaane Williams got started us in an
11 initiative throughout the city, we saw crime go down
12 but we still in need of a community center, what kind
13 of support could the city provide to create new
14 community center focused on youth especially in the
15 building that formally housed PS315 LAP School?

16 CAROL SAMOL: I, I mean I think the, the
17 benefit of this planning process has also been to
18 raise priorities not only from the Council Members,
19 from the community in, in, in general and community
20 centers were certainly one of them and it's even in
21 the plan to, you know support the community centers,
22 the... they... there are a number of them, they're very
23 strong in the neighborhood, how do we keep them
24 strong, how do we keep them vital parts of, of the,
25 the city. I would look forward to talking to you in

1
2 more detail of course about specific investments and
3 specific centers including Davidson Community Center
4 which has been an incredible partner throughout this,
5 but you know at this time, you know I would... I would
6 just say that we're, we're looking forward to
7 continued conversations and understand that's a
8 priority.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I'm looking
10 forward to those conversations. As you know, you know
11 young people today, you know and when you have to
12 cruise they go by blocks so to ask them to go to
13 Burnside and... when they are on 183rd Street is... for
14 some of... even for some of the children even dangerous
15 and so, so I, I think this is really the right way to
16 go and I'm looking forward to those conversations.
17 Along those same lines can you talk to me about the
18 possibility of having security cameras, not the ones
19 who give tickets, security... [cross-talk]

20 CAROL SAMOL: Yes... [cross-talk]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: ...cameras and
22 lighting?

23 CAROL SAMOL: Yeah... [cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: And what kind of lighting are you thinking for Jerome Avenue, installing in Jerome Avenue?

CAROL SAMOL: The, the plan absolutely calls for making the Jerome Avenue corridor safe, inviting, walkable, I mean that is a key... you know the, the investments that we will be seeing from, from transportation will contribute to that. The safety cameras I think... I think we need to further discuss, I know you've supported a lot of those in the past, but I would turn it over to Nivardo to really talk about the lighting that can be done under the structure itself.

NIVARDO LOPEZ: So, this year we've... in... well actually starting last July DOT has been upgrading every single street light in the Bronx to the new LED standard and we should be finished with that conversion by this year, by March. In addition to upgrading existing lighting we're exploring possibilities to improve pedestrian lighting especially underneath the elevated structure so at Jerome and Burnside where we did a safety improvement project last summer this summer we plan on piloting a what we... a structure we call the city L which is a

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2 structure that will go around the elevated pillar at
3 Jerome and Burnside which will provide additional
4 lighting, additional seating and also opportunity for
5 community advertisements. This pilot is an attempt to
6 see whether or not this structure can work at the
7 elevated structure and if so it's something that we
8 would hope to expand elsewhere along elevated
9 structures in the Bronx especially Jerome but also
10 elsewhere in the city and we're going to be
11 partnering with community organizations at Jerome and
12 Burnside to help use the structure as well. In
13 addition to go back to what I said earlier the
14 preliminary design scoping that we're doing about
15 streetscapes that also includes lighting because what
16 we want to do is also create a new pedestrian fixture
17 for underneath the elevated structure and then also
18 when we do our safe routes to transit projects, the
19 expansion to the sidewalk for bus stops often those
20 projects come with additional ped lighting to sort of
21 illuminate bus stops and help riders when they're
22 waiting for the bus.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Appreciate the
24 word often but if you can make sure that it happens
25 in this corridor, I mean there's so many dark places

1
2 in Jerome Avenue, you've been there many, many times
3 Commissioner, there's... people feel safe when its
4 light, it is safer when there's lighting, there's
5 lighting people think about twice committing a crime...
6 a crime when those two factors are in place, we have
7 sufficient lighting and at the same time we have
8 security cameras just people feel safer and they...
9 and, and technically they are safer because there's a
10 raised level of consciousness that you cannot commit
11 a crime and not be looked upon and so appreciate
12 anything you could do in that regards... [cross-talk]

13 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: And, and Council
14 Member, you know that's one of the reasons why we
15 picked Burnside and Jerome because that is a very
16 high trafficked pedestrian corridor, you have the
17 subway station there, you have several MTA bus lines
18 and then you also have the commercial corridor along
19 Burnside Avenue which you know very well so we felt
20 that the city L was like... that was a perfect spot for
21 the city L because that was... there's a need there, we
22 heard... and a lot of our community workshops and a lot
23 of community meetings we heard the not just desire
24 for better pedestrian crossings at Jerome and
25 Burnside but more lighting so that's why we picked

1
2 that location to be the pilot to test out this new
3 DOT infrastructure that we hope to expand along
4 Jerome.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Appreciate
6 that Commission.

7 MICHAEL PARKINSON: Well... and, and I
8 would just like to take this opportunity to, to,
9 you know draw the connection between land use and
10 public safety as well and you know one of the
11 primary goals of the zoning framework is to
12 establish the continuity along Jerome Avenue
13 bringing eyes to the street and so when you... when
14 you... you know you increase opportunities for
15 housing and mixed use development, you have ground
16 floor, you know uses that are likely to stay open
17 later, creating, you know a vibrancy on the street
18 that really does correlate with public safety and
19 the transparency requirements that we'd be mapping
20 as part of this special district would ensure
21 that, that lighting from the interior buildings
22 also, you know permeates those, those structures
23 to the street as well so I, I just wanted to
24 mention that.
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COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Along those same lines can you talk to me about the growth of increased, increased bus and subway services, what are we expected to see?

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NIVARDO LOPEZ: I mean I don't want to speak for the MTA since they're not here but what the... generally speaking what happens whenever there is new population growth in any neighborhood in New York City the MTA will sort of look at the ridership numbers and then increase ridership along those routes, part of the reason why we've targeted Jerome Avenue for the safe routes to transit improvements is that those areas already have high ridership so the improvements that we want to do will benefit riders now and will also provide a benefit for the future population growth we see along the corridor.

19

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COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Do you anticipate any major changes in bus routes base...

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NIVARDO LOPEZ: Well again... [cross-talk]

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COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I know you can't speak for... [cross-talk]

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NIVARDO LOPEZ: No, of course... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: ...the MTA but... [cross-talk]

NIVARDO LOPEZ: ...but what we... so, back at the end of last year... DOT released its bus forward report which is a talk about the next wave of SBS expansion throughout the city and several bus lines in this neighborhood study area were identified, the BX4042, BX36, the BX3 are... those are three routes that we are looking to find improvements, they may run the gambit from full SBS treatment and if it's not a full SBS route then other improvements that we can do that will improve speed and reliability.

CAROL SAMOL: And I would... I would just add, you know Department of City Planning is in communication with New York City Transit quite regularly, we found... always found them very amenable to when you can make a case for a change to be... real... to thinking about how they can best service their riders, so those conversations will absolutely continue.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Fantastic, if, if... also if you could give me an update on the efforts to secure station elevators especially the one in Burnside... [cross-talk]

CAROL SAMOL: Yeah... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: ...as you know we don't have an elevator between... this is... this is shocking... [cross-talk]

CAROL SAMOL: Yeah... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: ...that we still don't have an elevator from Fordham all the way to, to... what are we talking about... from Fordham all the way down to... [cross-talk]

CAROL SAMOL: 161, uh-huh...

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Wait, let me see how far down... [cross-talk]

CAROL SAMOL: 161st Street... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Right, so... yeah, I mean that's just... that's just unconceivable that... [cross-talk]

CAROL SAMOL: Yes... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: ...we, we still don't have an elevator there and I'm thinking about single moms with children, thinking about

1
2 people with disability, I'm thinking about one of
3 these days I'm going to get older and I'm not
4 going to be able to walk up those stairs, you know
5 and, and the thousands of seniors that I have in
6 my district whoever remind me about that so is, is
7 there any progress, any conversations... [cross-
8 talk]

9 CAROL SAMOL: Yes... [cross-talk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: ...at all taking
11 place?

12 CAROL SAMOL: Yes, thank you, I mean I...
13 we, we share your advocacy for such a service with
14 the MTA. The, the city's 2.5 billion dollar
15 contribution to the MTA has really supported I
16 think some productive conversations, MTA has
17 agreed to committing to focusing some of those
18 dollars on station improvements in growing
19 communities and we've communicated to them that
20 Jerome Avenue is our priority, they're receptive
21 to that and, and the conversations are productive,
22 we'll of course be in touch with you and Council
23 Member Gibson as those commitments become clearer.
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COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so much. Mr. Chair thank you for all the time you allowed me to ask all these questions.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Council Member, turn it over now to Councilwoman Gibson.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you Chair Moya and thank you Council Member Cabrera and once again thank you to the administration for being here and to everyone in the public. I apologize for stepping out briefly, I had another committee meeting across the street and I had to vote, the challenge of sitting on seven committees in the city council so... I do apologize for that but certainly I want to thank my staff and, and many, many of the members that send me updates on your testimony today, so I don't think I missed anything this morning. So, I appreciate Chair Moya asking questions about the auto industry along Jerome Avenue specifically on local hiring provisions but I guess I am very concerned, before today's hearing all of the agency heads were very clear in understanding that I expected folks to come here today and answering questions and having answers about HireNYC, about the data that we have

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2 been collecting, the number of employees that have
3 been hired and so to hear that, you know you guys
4 don't have this information is very, very
5 concerning. We've been talking extensively about
6 HireNYC for weeks and I expected SBS to have that
7 information since you have been overseeing HireNYC
8 since it began. So, if we are to move forward in
9 Jerome not only do I expect answers, but I want to
10 understand if HireNYC is effective or not, if it's
11 not effective then we need a new plan to make sure
12 that residents are hired in our community for all
13 future construction jobs as well as other retail
14 jobs that will come forward. So, I am making a
15 request today that after today's hearing I want
16 answers on HireNYC, do I have that commitment?

17 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: Yes, Council
18 Member and I, I just... to... I want to just emphasize
19 our commitment to working with you on this program
20 and getting you that data, I did... there was some
21 data points we did have available that I did share
22 about Bronx residents, I think if you're asking
23 about specific ones within... residents within the
24 catchment of Jerome Avenue I think that's where we
25 need to get back to you on but we do have

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2 information about 135 Bronx residents being
3 connected to opportunities citywide and 19 of
4 those as of December 31st having been hired an
5 average of 16 dollars an hour wage so we can get
6 back to you with more current information as soon
7 as we have it.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, I just
9 want it to be sooner rather than later, I've been
10 waiting for SBS to get back to me for weeks now. I
11 appreciate the Bronx numbers but we're talking
12 about Jerome corridor, community boards four, five
13 and a small piece of seven so that's the
14 information that I want to see in terms of... to
15 this date how many people have been hired from
16 HireNYC's database, okay?

17 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: I understand
18 and I... and I can give you one... one... I do know that
19 eight residents within those community districts
20 have been referred, I think what we're trying to
21 get data on is whether they have been hired yet
22 and I think given the nature of construction and
23 given the nature of these being sort of slower
24 months in the construction we don't have current
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2 data on whether they've actually been hired but
3 that's what we were trying to get for you.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, okay, I
5 will follow up on those questions. So, I, I know
6 Council Member Cabrera talked a little bit about
7 public safety and parks and you know first let me
8 acknowledge on the affordable housing and housing
9 preservation some of the commitments that have
10 been made to date so we talked extensively in the
11 past few months before the community boards
12 rendered their decision a few months ago that
13 since 2014 to 2017 under Housing NY, there has
14 been over 4,500 units of housing that have been
15 preserved meaning additional regulatory
16 agreements, meaning infrastructure upgrade.
17 Meaning working with landlords and owners on
18 improving the quality of their buildings and
19 improving the quality of life for the families and
20 residents that live in these buildings, that is
21 great, 4,500 units to date is commendable and we
22 know that the value of that is about 800 million
23 dollars and I commend the administration for
24 recognizing that in the housing conversation
25 preservation is important, every resident will not

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2 have access to a brand new apartment but the
3 majority of the families that live in Jerome today
4 are not happy with their current conditions in
5 terms of quality of life. There was an additional
6 commitment that was made to the Bronx Borough
7 President and Council Member Cabrera and I that in
8 the next two years we're going to raise the
9 threshold of housing preservation by 1,500 units
10 in two years and I do know that HPD has ongoing
11 conversations, ongoing negotiations with owners so
12 I'm not asking for detailed information in terms
13 of some of the negotiation conversations but what
14 I think is important to recognize is 1,500 should
15 be the floor and not the ceiling, I want more
16 housing units to be preserved in the next few
17 years and so I've asked the administration in
18 previous meetings to look at a number closer to
19 2,500 or 3,000, I think that can be achievable if
20 we were able to preserve 4,500 units of housing in
21 three years I think we can get to 3,000 in another
22 two to three years. So, since that time when we
23 had that conversation has there been any movement
24 on housing preservation numbers beyond the 1,500
25 that has already been committed?

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LEILA BOZORG: Well I can say we share the goal of preserving as many affordable homes as possible in the area. One point of correction is that under Housing New York to date we've actually preserved five... over 5,500 so a thousand more I think than, than you mentioned... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: That's great, so should... [cross-talk]

LEILA BOZORG: Yeah... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: ...I raise the 3,000 to 4,000... [cross-talk]

LEILA BOZORG: No, look I mean we... [cross-talk]

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I like to aim high... [cross-talk]

LEILA BOZORG: As, as we've discussed before we, we really do share the goal, we... you've been a great advocate for helping actually create a pipeline for us as well. One of the things we're limited by is that we're, we're, we're actively going out and trying to get private land owners to work with us to bring their buildings into our affordable housing programs on the preservation front. So, there's a number of things we're doing

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2 some of which we're doing together in terms of the
3 outreach to owners, we're looking forward to
4 piloting the program to, to do an event for
5 property owners and see how many more of them we
6 can bring into our program... into our programs. We
7 also have the landlord ambassadors program going
8 out and doing hand holding with property owners,
9 so we really do share that goal. We... as we've
10 discussed with you we have a fairly robust
11 pipeline for the next two years which we are going
12 to be paying very close attention to and we've
13 committed to looking at whether increasing that
14 commitment is possible, again we're limited by how
15 much we can compel private owners to come in and
16 work with us but you know it's, it's a commitment
17 we've made to go out and be as proactive as
18 possible in getting as many private owners
19 interested in our programs.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, well I
21 appreciate the response but certainly as this
22 process moves forward I am looking for a
23 commitment, so I want HPD to get to a point where
24 we can say with surity and with confidence that we
25 achieve more than 1,500 units of housing to be

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2 preserved over the next several years. Just so you
3 understand where we are, I appreciate the work
4 that's been done, the Landlord Ambassador program,
5 we've hosted property owner's clinics both in
6 district four as well as community board five, we
7 have future meetings that we're planning in the
8 spring and that's all great but I do think public
9 commitments before a vote assures residents that
10 housing preservation is a priority as well new
11 construction but making sure that we preserve the
12 housing we have today with the resources and
13 leverage that HPD has as well.

14 LEILA BOZORG: Understood.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON? Okay. I want to
16 continue on the same vein of housing and look at
17 some of the HPD tax subsidy programs we have.
18 HPD's program like ELLA, SARA, Mix and Match,
19 etcetera because we passed MIH and Z, Q, A over a
20 year ago in the city council we have two
21 particular options. Option number one, option
22 number two and then we have a deep affordability
23 option. The projected Jerome is looking to create
24 an additional 4,000 units of new construction.
25 There's been a lot of concern, a lot of pressure

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2 from everyone about half of those units being
3 focused on permanently affordable housing for
4 families making less than 50,000 dollars. There
5 have also been some other proposals to reduce that
6 number of 4,000 units to achieve a maximum amount
7 of deep affordability, so I wanted to know from
8 HPD's perspective including all of the subsidy
9 programs we have at our disposal of those 4,000
10 units what is the percentage that we are looking
11 to achieve that will be permanently affordable
12 housing.

13 LEILA BOZORG: Okay. So, the track
14 record to date in this area is that most of the
15 development that's happening is using HPD programs
16 to build 100 percent affordable buildings. In
17 terms of what MIH will require if it's mapped 20
18 to 30 percent of new development now by law will
19 be required to be permanently affordable. When we
20 use our subsidy programs which we're expecting to
21 use on most development that happens here on top
22 of that 20 to 30 percent we're requiring an
23 additional 15 percent of the units to be
24 permanently affordable. So that's where you have
25 100 percent of what we, we expect to be 100

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2 percent affordable program... building where up to
3 45 percent will end up being permanently
4 affordable, okay. In terms of deep affordability,
5 we... as we've discussed we're recently revised both
6 our ELLA and our Mix and Match term sheets which
7 are the terms sheets that are used most often in
8 this area to require developers to go deeper and
9 to get a deeper range of incomes than was
10 previously required. Part of why we require it in
11 our mix and match as well as ELLA is that we, we
12 don't necessarily believe that's it's healthy to
13 require all deep affordability to take place in
14 one building, we're trying to spread out where
15 we're getting that deep affordability. So, that's
16 something that we... the deep affordability as... is
17 something that we've heard frequently in this area
18 part of why we turn... changed our term sheets was,
19 was coming out of that advocacy, we got new
20 capital funding in order to do that. So, it's
21 something we're committed to and I think as, as
22 we've mentioned before the housing plan in general
23 is committed to a mix of incomes, so we do think
24 mixed income development is important but deep
25 affordability is something we've heard we need to

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2 be doing more of and so we've, we've made changes
3 to do that.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay and I
5 appreciate that, I'm, I'm very much aware of some
6 of the term sheet items. I simply want to make
7 sure we go on record as this is our first
8 opportunity and I think everything you described
9 brings us up to 45 percent that would be
10 permanently affordable, many will argue that's not
11 enough, I think the challenge that we face in
12 Jerome compared to the other neighborhood plans is
13 this is the most challenging neighborhood plan
14 that we're facing to date. It has a high
15 concentration of poverty, of families that are
16 living at or below the federal poverty level, two
17 thirds of the housing stock today are there based
18 on government subsidy programs.

19 LEILA BOZORG: Uh-huh... [cross-talk]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: The one third
21 that we still need to talk about are families that
22 are paying much more than 30 percent of their
23 income towards rent. A challenge we face in Jerome
24 is we have very little city owned parcels of land
25 so this plan if successful will really rely upon

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2 our expected relationships and ongoing
3 conversations that we're having with private
4 owners and land owners and realize the anxiety
5 many land owners could be sitting on their
6 property waiting for the highest bidder and we
7 truly want to make sure that owners understand the
8 leverage they have to work with government, the
9 fact that this neighborhood cannot today absorb
10 any luxury or market level housing, the majority
11 of the families that have lived there years ago
12 that live there today deserve to stay and this is
13 a plan that must achieve that ability for them to
14 stay. I want to make sure everyone understands
15 because in addition to all of these conversations
16 we will continue to talk, I know some members of
17 the public have left and I ask you to please,
18 please indulge us with your patience in waiting
19 just a little while longer because we definitely
20 want to make sure we hear from everyone. So,
21 housing preservation as you know from me is number
22 one of importance. The new construction and making
23 sure that the new construction is beneficial to
24 the residents today is equally important. I
25 understand the income diversity and for families

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2 today that live at 30 percent AMI, in five years
3 they should not remain at 30 percent AMI, we have
4 to do better to create the better paying jobs, the
5 prevailing wage, the union wage employment that
6 allows families to live outside of poverty.

7 Poverty is not just a mental state of mind, but it
8 is a way of life for a lot of people and it's not
9 acceptable and so housing for me is extremely
10 important, but I do want to move on because there
11 are other topics that I wanted to make sure I get
12 on record. Council Member Cabrera spoke a little
13 bit about the school seats and SCA has a real
14 opportunity in this conversation to not only
15 address the overcrowding we face in school
16 district nine and ten but to look at brand new
17 schools. Next to the new settlement school on
18 Jerome and Goble, the High Bridge Middle School in
19 High Bridge we have not built brand new schools in
20 this area for several years, so it behooves us to
21 look at new opportunities. I do know there are
22 ongoing conversations with owners on potential
23 sites and so I want to hear from SCA very quickly
24 about where we stand, where we're going and can we
25 achieve a brand new school for district nine and a

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2 brand new school for district ten and also I do
3 know we're looking at capacity that we may have in
4 existing schools that could potentially see more
5 school students in their existing schools so if
6 you could please provide us an update on where we
7 are and certainly how we can achieve all of these
8 goals? Thank you just identify yourself.

9 MELANIE LA ROCCA: Sure, Melanie La
10 Rocca, Vice President of Operations at the School
11 Construction Authority.. [cross-talk]

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you.

13 MELANIE LA ROCCA: You're welcome. So,
14 thank you for your question and following up on my
15 response to your colleague, Council Member Cabrera
16 we recognize that this is a, a significant area of
17 concern for the both of you as members
18 representing this rezoning as well as the
19 community. So, we are having active conversations
20 as you mentioned with a number of stakeholders and
21 we are looking at multiple opportunities both
22 privately owned as well as department-controlled
23 sites. So, I think it would be a little premature
24 to speak to whether those sites are feasible for a
25 school, but they are... there are active

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2 conversations going on as we speak in order to see
3 if we can secure some of these opportunities.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay,
5 definitely a conversation we will still continue
6 to have. I also want to quickly go back to housing
7 because Council Member Cabrera and I represent a
8 large concentration of cluster units of families
9 that are living in homeless shelters but are in a
10 homeless unit in a traditionally affordable
11 housing building because we represent the largest
12 concentration and overall the city has made a
13 commitment last year to phase out cluster units
14 and transition these families into long term
15 permanently affordable housing as well as possibly
16 turning these cluster units back into an
17 affordable housing unit. I don't know if HRA is
18 here but certainly going on the record and making
19 sure Commissioner Banks understands how important
20 it is to draw down on those cluster units so we
21 can get to Vision Zero in cluster housing but the
22 key part of this is turning those units back to
23 affordable housing for a family but secondly
24 making sure that those families living in cluster
25 units do not go to another shelter, they should go

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2 into affordable housing. I want to make myself
3 clear, we represent a lot of families and as we
4 phased out, we started at about 3,000, we draw
5 down on 1,000 so the 2,000 that are remaining are
6 mostly concentrated in the Bronx and Brooklyn in
7 our districts so that is very much a part of this
8 housing conversation. Those families are living
9 here, they're possibly from our community and they
10 need long term housing in our districts, okay, so
11 HRA's not here but I need someone to get that
12 message to HRA, yes?

13 LEILA BOZORG: We've been speaking to
14 the Department of Social Services, HRA about this,
15 I don't want to speak fully for them, but you know
16 in, in the turning the tide report they did as, as
17 you're saying they did commit and they have shown
18 a commitment to wanting to close all of the
19 clusters. We are working with them to, to
20 implement a limited acquisition program that was
21 announced recently for 25 to 30 of the buildings
22 that exist some of those are in the Jerome area
23 we're excited about that initiative to see how it
24 unfolds. I, I can't speak to any further details
25 in that, but I do know that they share the

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2 commitment and have articulated the commitment to
3 close the clusters and to convert as many of them
4 as possible into permanent affordable housing.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, great so
6 I'm going to minimize my questions to just two
7 more so that we can move on to the remainder of
8 the hearing. I'm still on housing and I do know
9 that prior to the vote at the Borough President's
10 Office we agreed to establish a Southwest Bronx
11 Housing Task Force that will look at some of the
12 distressed buildings in the corridor that face an
13 excessive amount of A, B, and C violations and
14 looking at a plan to address the quality of life
15 for those families so as we begin to put this task
16 force together I'd like to understand from HPD in
17 terms of capacity, the office of Alternative
18 Enforcement has a number of inspectors that go out
19 and respond to 3-1-1 calls etcetera but as we're
20 moving forward I want to make sure that there's an
21 understanding that we have to address these
22 excessive code violations and quality of life
23 issues that many of the families are facing and
24 what plans do we have to work with owners and
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2 landlords in this area to make sure that their
3 buildings can be improved and up to code?

4 LEILA BOZORG: Yes, we're very much
5 looking forward to participating in that task
6 force with all of you. we will have members of
7 our, our code enforcement team as well as our
8 neighborhood strategy team participating. I think
9 in terms of capacity it's going to depend on
10 what's found, we generally do have the capacity to
11 be participating in these task forces and as
12 displayed through some of the proactive survey,
13 surveying we've done in, in Jerome state we've
14 been able to do that without any needed new
15 capacity so we do expect to be able to participate
16 heavily and, and execute on findings in the task
17 force through existing staffing and if that turns
18 out not to be the case we can revisit it then.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay and my
20 final question focuses on workforce development, I
21 know we've talked a little bit about the auto
22 industry which is along Jerome Avenue, the small
23 businesses, the mom and pop shops that have been
24 in the community for quite some, everyone is
25 facing harassment, push out, price out, landlords

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2 are recognizing what's happening, they're raising
3 the rents and you know making sure that many of
4 our leases are no longer able to stay. I've done
5 walk throughs with Commissioner Bishop from SBS,
6 with my colleagues, with CASA and many others,
7 we've talked to businesses and owners and everyone
8 is feeling the same brunt, they feel like we're
9 doing everything around them, we're not helping
10 them, I certainly want to recognize UAMA and all
11 of the work that United Auto Merchants Association
12 has really been doing and, and the work that Pedro
13 has really been making sure to establish better
14 relationships, many of the businesses don't want
15 to talk to government, they don't like us and so
16 we not only have to make sure that they're
17 listening to us but that they have a real genuine
18 sense that we're helping them. So, SBS has
19 workforce development centers, had a chance to
20 visit the one in West Farms and they do great work
21 focusing on young adults that are out of school
22 and not working, there was a great pipeline with
23 DOE in district 79, great services, also had a
24 chance to talk about the Port Morris and Hunts
25 Point workforce developments and these are all

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2 great. I do think that we have to recognize that
3 because it's Jerome and it's verily... very heavily
4 intense on auto as well as non-auto commercial, we
5 have been looking to ask and we have been talking
6 about a community coordinator, a community
7 coordinator which would be an actual person hired
8 by the city of New York to work with specifically
9 the auto businesses to address all of the concerns
10 they have with compliance, with expansion, any
11 issues that businesses are going through today.
12 So, we've talked a little bit about relocation,
13 we're not repeating Willets Point in this plan but
14 we also know that if a business decides that they
15 want to relocate we should help them, we should
16 have a relocation package that would include all
17 of the services SBS has; loans, grants, all the
18 opportunities that a small business can access and
19 say small business this is what we can do for you,
20 if you want to go to Bathgate, you want to go to
21 Port Morris, you want to move this is what the
22 city is willing to do. I also think for non-auto
23 commercial we should also have a community
24 coordinator whose job it will be to make sure that
25 there's a parallel with all of the services that

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2 BBS has so I don't want to do a referral system
3 like HireNYC does, I want to make sure that there
4 is a body that is working with an owner, with a
5 worker to make sure that they access services, I
6 don't want them to have to travel to West Farms,
7 to Port Morris, to Hunts Point and then assume
8 that they're able to navigate this system so a
9 coordinator can do exactly that, can coordinate
10 all of the services. SBS has a mobile unit which
11 we have started to roll out and that's great, I
12 think that regardless of the outcome we should
13 have monthly SBS mobile units in your district, at
14 your train station, at your corner, along Jerome
15 the visibility to make sure that residents and
16 owners see the work that we're doing so from the
17 perspective of workforce development I'd like to
18 understand where we are in terms of a package for
19 a business that chooses to relocate, what are we
20 doing with SBS and the mobile services and also
21 what are we doing to put all of the services
22 together to ensure that residents and, and owners
23 and businesses are able to navigate the SBS
24 process?
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2 CAROL SAMOL: Okay, I'll just say a few
3 words of... kind of context and, and some, some more
4 specifics and then turn it over to, to Blaise to
5 talk about what SBS is, is doing. I wanted to just
6 talk... you know like there are hundreds of
7 businesses along Jerome and they're very diverse,
8 you know about a fifth of them are auto related
9 and so we need to think about their diverse needs.
10 A lot of them are very similar, lease negotiations
11 etcetera. I would say for the auto businesses in
12 particular we're... we are pursuing a, a compliance
13 program, we look forward to kind of working out
14 all of the, the details and the commitments with
15 you, recognizing that that's like the number one
16 thing that we could do to help them as auto, their
17 specific needs, it would be helping them
18 understand the regulations, helping them
19 understand the best practices, it would be very
20 one on one. The, the model that we've identified
21 that we think is very effective is from the State
22 Department of Environmental Conservation and they
23 literally go door to door knocking on the doors
24 but they also partner with local organizations
25 that, you know allow them to hold seminars in

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2 Spanish and in English, it's a very effective
3 program for getting people to come into compliance
4 with their regulations and just be more aware of
5 how they're doing business but as far as like
6 broader services in addition to what SBS would add
7 accessing capital is important to every business
8 along this corridor, it's especially important for
9 auto businesses that want to come into compliance
10 and I'll just repeat a, a little bit of what I was
11 saying before, you know in the coming weeks the
12 city will be announcing a program to support loans
13 of up to 250,000 dollars to qualifying small
14 businesses, we will market that program to the
15 businesses along the corridor auto related and
16 otherwise so that they can understand that this is
17 available to them, how they can help qualify for
18 it, how they might use that kind of investment
19 whether it is coming into compliance for oil
20 separator or air quality uses but also how they
21 might grow their business or if they have
22 relocation needs or whatever their business needs
23 might be. Then I would turn... I'll just turn it
24 over to, you know to, to SBS to really talk about
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2 the... how we're expecting to deliver businesses
3 here on the corridor.

4 MICHAEL BLAISE BACKER: Sure, thanks
5 Carol. I guess just to help... yeah, talk about a
6 little bit how we're connecting the dots, I'm,
7 I'm, I'm not familiar with the community
8 coordinator concept you mentioned, I think it's an
9 interesting idea and we certainly look forward to
10 continuing those conversations but what we are
11 doing now as I think you know is, is really about
12 ensuring that we can help the business... auto
13 workers and auto businesses as well as businesses
14 on all the retail corridors in navigating the
15 system and, and connect with the services that are
16 available, the mobile unit obviously was out... was
17 out earlier this month, we'll be getting it... or...
18 in... last month, we'll be getting it out there
19 again at the end of February, I think we'll, we'll
20 work with you to figure out like at what frequency
21 we can do that, at this point in time we have it
22 going out... we don't have the resources for it to
23 go out twice a week across the entire city so... but
24 we continue to look at how we... what might be able
25 to target that when... where we know that there are

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2 opportunities to connect, you know people to job
3 opportunities. And then of course as, as... you know
4 as, as I think Council Member Gibson you know
5 we've, we're obviously worked with UAMA and I've
6 met with Pedro personally several times since the
7 beginning of this plan and we have been working to
8 get funding to them and to, to WHEDco and to
9 Davidson to ensure that we're, you know just
10 constantly... you know not only identifying all the
11 business needs that are there and in helping to
12 ensure that we are... you know have a feedback loop
13 there so we're getting these services into those
14 communities so not only through the funding of
15 Neighborhood 360 that is going to WHEDco and, and
16 in some... and in some cases they are subcontracting
17 with UAMA to, to help support that work, to help
18 support the outreach and community building that
19 is going on with the auto workers so they can
20 essentially, you know help to, to inform us and
21 inform what's going on and help to ensure that
22 we're continuing to refine our products and that
23 we're getting them into that community so we,
24 we're, we're always open to more ideas for how we
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2 can, can target that better and, and certainly
3 look forward to continuing the conversation.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, thank you
5 and, and I appreciate that, I recognize the level
6 of work that SBS has done, I guess because this is
7 Jerome and because this is our district in the
8 Bronx I want us to step it up, we have to step it
9 up a lot more and make sure that there are
10 concrete and real commitments, a clear pipeline of
11 work well beyond construction jobs, making sure we
12 address the current make up of jobs that are
13 available but we also have to be creative in
14 looking at future jobs. It has been beyond
15 frustrating for, for me over the years to have
16 developers and businesses come to my district and
17 tell me that my people are not skilled and are not
18 experienced, if they're not we need to get them to
19 the point where they are, I don't want businesses
20 coming in with their own set of jobs I want that
21 to be available to the residents in our district
22 so creating a consistent pipeline of work and this
23 is not just minimum wage because as we continue to
24 increase minimum wage which is great but we want
25 people to have careers not just a job, a career. A

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2 career builds stability, it allows families to
3 live comfortably and it says to the residents of
4 this district that we care about their future, we
5 recognize the intersectionality between education
6 and jobs and so everything we do has to be about
7 building the pipeline of future career driven jobs
8 and so SBS is doing great, I applaud you and
9 Commissioner Bishop but I've talked about a
10 community coordinator more than once to Warren and
11 others at, at SBS, I've said it more than once
12 because I think SBS does great work but I want
13 targeted people that are targeting my district for
14 a reason, I don't want a Bronx person that focuses
15 on the entire borough I want someone focused on
16 Jerome, why because it's important, it's important
17 to send a message that this is a community that is
18 been severely under invested for quite some time
19 and we're not going to repeat the mistakes of the
20 past but we're going to do things a little bit
21 different, how do we do that by recognizing the
22 mistakes, by being creative in our approaches and
23 by saying that we recognize the future jobs of
24 tomorrow. So, the access to capital, the loans,
25 the grants, the construction jobs, the retail

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2 jobs, the workforce development, language access
3 which I have to point out is extremely important,
4 I don't want English only services and I don't
5 want English only documents, everything we do has
6 to be in a second language and even beyond that
7 but I recognize the challenge for us, we've passed
8 legislation here that makes sure that every city
9 document is in the top six languages in our city
10 and I think that's great so language access has to
11 be important. I guess as I turn this back over to
12 Chair Moya I will just say that it's important to
13 hear the remainder of today's hearing and I, I
14 certainly know that while we may dismiss you from
15 this panel we're not dismissing you from the
16 hearing, I need every agency that is here to
17 remain here to listen to the voices of the
18 residents that live in the community that we're
19 making decisions about. Often times agencies leave
20 but we're not doing that today, we're going to
21 stay and listen to the remainder of the testimony
22 of the residents that have to live in the
23 conditions that they're living in today that are
24 unacceptable and I think we all recognize that so
25 while I always have lots of questions I definitely

1
2 wanted to make sure that the large buckets of
3 housing preservation, of new construction, of deep
4 affordability, of local hiring of MWBE, of
5 workforce development, small business, making sure
6 that we focus on all of these issues which are all
7 very important but obviously I have to just talk
8 about a few but certainly my commitment remains to
9 working with all of you, to working with the
10 stakeholders and making sure that we develop more
11 in this plan and we step our game up so I thank
12 you for being here, I thank you for your work and
13 now I'll turn this back over to my wonderful
14 Chair, Chair Moya, thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you
16 Councilwoman. I want to thank the panel for your
17 testimony, we are now going to dismiss you and
18 thank you again for being here. We will now move
19 on to the public testimony, we will call up panels
20 of five alternating between panels in favor and in
21 opposition, everyone will have two minutes for
22 testimony so that all speakers have an opportunity
23 to speak. We will start with our first panel in
24 favor with representatives from the community
25 boards and the Borough President. So, if we can

1
2 call up the first panel James Rausse, James
3 Rausse, yep, okay. How do you say that... Diosamnack
4 [sp?] Perez, CB5; Dr. Bola Omotosho, Community
5 Board five, Chair; Paul Philps, Community Board
6 four; Ken Brown, Community Board five. Thank you.
7 Great if you can just identify yourself and we can
8 get started.

9 JAMES RAUSSE: Sure, James Rausse,
10 Director of Planning and Development representing
11 Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Junior, I'll be
12 testifying on behalf of the Borough President
13 today. Do I need to swear or... okay? Okay. So,
14 Chair Moya first and foremost congratulations on
15 your appointment and esteemed Council Members
16 thank you for the opportunity to testify before
17 you today. The Jerome Avenue rezoning represents
18 one of the most comprehensive zoning map changes
19 ever to be proposed for any Bronx community during
20 my tenure. I want to recognize the leadership and
21 advocacy by your fellow Council Members, Vanessa
22 Gibson and Fernando Cabrera in bringing us up to
23 this point today. I do wish to acknowledge a
24 robust advocacy from the local community
25 coalitions that have brought to light many

1
2 concerns about the rezoning as presented. I
3 appreciate the efforts by this administration,
4 Department of City Planning's Bronx office and the
5 Department of Housing Preservation and Development
6 to consider a rezoning of this magnitude
7 nonetheless however this matter remains... continues
8 to remain contentious. Over a hundred people
9 attended my public hearing on November 2nd most of
10 whom were passionately against what is being
11 proposed. As such I opened continuing dialogue
12 with the city to assure there were certain
13 commitments by the administration prior to my
14 vote. The commitments as agreed to the city of New
15 York and relevant agencies are as follows, I'll
16 truncate my comments as it's four... they're four
17 pages long. Certificate of no harassment pilot
18 program in community districts four and five,
19 commitment by the city preserving 1,500 units of
20 affordable housing in a two year period in
21 districts four and five, creation of a Southwest
22 Bronx task force to identify buildings of concern,
23 at least ten percent of the units being set aside
24 for families earning less than 30 percent of the
25 area median income, half of the units constructed

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2 will be set aside for current residents,
3 commitment to extend an R8A zone West along
4 Featherbed Lane to Macombs Road that will include
5 the Starhill Campus managed by services for the
6 underserved to provide 400 units of affordable
7 housing, a commitment of eight to ten million
8 dollars to rehabilitate and provide access to the
9 Southernmost portion of Aqueduct Walk located
10 between Burnside and Tremont Avenues which has
11 lain foul for decades, and a commitment to a full
12 discussion that to expand C8 preservation zones to
13 allow more auto... existing automotive uses to
14 remain within the Jerome Avenue corridor, expand
15 or relocate to areas. I'm pleased and appreciative
16 of these commitments the city has made but there's
17 more to do as has been discussed. I just want to
18 identify before you there's a report that the
19 Borough President has released today identifying
20 at least 2,000 units, 2,075 units to be exact as a
21 starting point for discussion with the city as
22 part of the Southwest Bronx housing task force of
23 our most at risk buildings, this was based on B
24 and C violations, demographic information that
25 includes employment, income, age, age of the

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2 community as well as... as well as household size
3 and whether the building participates in the
4 subsidy program. We feel these are the most at
5 risk buildings currently and we look forward to
6 working with the city on this but as such the
7 Borough President voted in favor of this
8 application, but we're open to discussion and we
9 urge the city council to consider the other items
10 that the Borough President identified that feels
11 needs further discussion. Thank you for allowing
12 me to testify today and again congratulations.

13 YESENIA: I'm a... I'm a resident...

14 [cross-talk]

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Turn your microphone
16 on.

17 YESENIA: Good?

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, yes...

19 [cross-talk]

20 YESENIA: Great... [cross-talk]

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: And just identify
22 yourself.

23 YESENIA: Yes, my name is Yesenia
24 Perez, I'm a resident of the Bronx and I'm here to
25 represent all those families from the Bronx and I

1
2 have been living in the community board for over
3 ten years, okay. In all these... in all those years
4 I have seen, heard and experienced the great needs
5 of more affordable housing in particularly
6 affordable housing targeted for moderate and mid
7 income families. There are a lot of families who
8 are paying over 50 percent their... of their income
9 in housing. I took some time to speak with some of
10 my friends, families and neighbors about their
11 thoughts of having more affordable housing and all
12 agree on the critical needs of having more
13 affordable housing especially for moderate and mid
14 income families. I had... even though that I have a
15 good idea the, the answer that they were going to
16 give me I needed to hear it from themselves so
17 some of their needs were more options. For
18 example, my brother who has... who is in his late
19 40's and lives with his wife and three children
20 they... two children they are in college, they are
21 working, one of them, the oldest one is about to
22 finish college and he is ready to move, he is
23 ready to move out so... out even though I didn't
24 mention he was with his wife from the Dominican
25 Republic so all of them are working in the same

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2 apartment, two bedroom apartment, okay so there
3 are like six people there, yeah. So, he's ready to
4 move out but there are not many options so one of
5 his needs is like he needs more options. Another
6 person that I spoke to was a friend of mine,
7 Filipe he lives in Jerome in 167 so... and Cromwell
8 right there so... he said that he... they need... he
9 needs more nicest and decent apartment that is
10 what he said and, and other people like my niece
11 she said so she needs more options because like
12 there is no need to move out from the Bronx so...
13 she's a nurse and she move out from the Bronx
14 because there is no more options so that's why...
15 one of the things that they are saying too. So, I
16 want to talk a little bit about myself because I'm
17 here representing them, they are working and
18 they're going to college right now, so I did take
19 the time to come here and, and really talk for
20 them. I came from the Dominican Republic in, in
21 the 2000 and I went to school to learn English, I
22 was working, going to college and all of that so
23 when I was ready to move out there was no option
24 for me so really, I, I need... we need... I'm
25 representing them we need more affordable housing

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especially for those mid income families. One more thing... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, we're keeping it to two minutes.

YESENIA: A little bit... just one more... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: No, please... [cross-talk]

YESENIA: So, I really... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We have a... we have a long list of people... [cross-talk]

YESENIA: The rezoning... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: ...out there waiting... [cross-talk]

YESENIA: ...is really I think is, is offering this so I really agree with it. Okay, thank you so much for your time, gracias...

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, thank you, thank you.

YESENIA: Thank you.

BOLA OMOTOSHO: Good morning... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Morning... [cross-talk]

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2 BOLA OMOTOSHO: Chairman Moya and... good
3 morning, well it's... [cross-talk]

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Good afternoon...
5 [cross-talk]

6 BOLA OMOTOSHO: ...after noon... [cross-
7 talk]

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yes.

9 BOLA OMOTOSHO: Good afternoon Council
10 Member Gibson and Council Member Cabrera. I'm here
11 this morning... my name is Doctor Bola Omotosho, I'm
12 privileged to be the Community Chair for board
13 five and I've held this position now for at least
14 ten years, this is my 11th year and I've been on
15 that board for almost 20 years which is a long
16 time and I just want to give the historical
17 perspective to the rezoning, the importance of it.
18 Back in 2000 as a member of the board, also the
19 Chair of the House... the committee and Chair of the
20 Education and Youth we had a visioning session
21 which was meant to be part of our 197-a plan and
22 in 2002 we published the initial draft documents
23 and in 2003 we published the final documents which
24 was part of our 197-a plan and that was exactly
25 what we wanted to see... some of the things we

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2 wanted to see on Jerome Avenue. Now let me fast
3 forward, almost 15 years has gone through now but
4 three or four years ago when the Mayor came out
5 with this initiative of rezoning initially board
6 five which has a boundary between Fordham Road and
7 the Cross Bronx the, the North and the South
8 boundary and the West... and the East and the West
9 boundary which is Webster and Major Deegan were,
10 were not included as part of the rezoning and I
11 wanted for the record to state that we had to
12 approach Council Member Cabrera at the time and
13 who now fortunately thank you so much for
14 including us... including us in the rezoning package
15 and that also extends to board seven who has about
16 six blocks. This historic perspective is nothing
17 new to us because these are some resources which
18 are meant for our district which under the... under
19 the various administrations we've not been able to
20 maximize or benefit from it. Now we have
21 developments fronts which, which gives us the
22 opportunity to have some of the resources that
23 have been meant that for some reason we've not
24 been able to get. For instance, we had a
25 commitment now to improve Morton Playground which

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2 is badly needed and the Aqueduct Walk and we have
3 an opportunity to include the school seats, we
4 have an opportunity for affordable housing to real
5 affordable in our district and to go on and on
6 several things that comes with this process and a
7 couple of months ago the community board voted in
8 favor of this process in the... to the tune... I mean
9 and the numbers exactly 18 for, 11 and one
10 abstained, one... 11 against and one abstention and
11 this goes to say that the work that has been 15
12 years ago is now coming to fruition. So, please we
13 support this project and we want... we put a tracker
14 in place as part of our recommendation and we want
15 these trackers to be transparent just like in any
16 other neighborhood. Even though I've heard it loud
17 and clear from several of community residents
18 about the advantages and the disadvantages
19 everything about the displacement, harassment,
20 anti-harassment they are all as part of our
21 trackers which we had several meetings with the
22 interested parties and special elected officials
23 in this process and we have a detailed... [cross-
24 talk]

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CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you... [cross-talk]

BOLA OMOTOSHO: ...submission which will be done... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you... [cross-talk]

BOLA OMOTOSHO: ...thank you so much... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: ...so much for your testimony, thank you.

PAUL PHILPS: Good, good afternoon Council Member Moya, Council Member Cabrera and Council Member Gibson. My name is Paul Philps, I'm the District Manager for Community Board four. I will keep my comments relatively brief, one minute and 55 seconds to be exact... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

PAUL PHILPS: So, we submitted a lengthy recommendation with conditions as it relates to the Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Study. The board has been actively engaged in this process for over three years. I just want to emphasize, and I think we've already heard a little bit about this, the importance of the

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2 investments that need to take place as a part of
3 this planning process. The zoning is one tool but
4 it's really important to note that we need
5 investment in schools particularly there's a lack
6 of school seats in both school districts, we must,
7 must as a part of this process have a commitment
8 to school seats both current and future, that's
9 really important. Transportation is really
10 important here, the four is overcrowded there's no
11 additional capacity, I would love to see the city
12 work with the MTA on additional bus capacity as
13 well as improvements on the D line. We also are...
14 we are delighted to see commitment in open space
15 particularly Corporal Fischer but we have the
16 largest number of park properties in the entire
17 borough so we also would like to see more open
18 space, we are the capital district but we would
19 also like to see some attention be paid to the
20 expense side of the ledger in terms of maintenance
21 for park workers, PEP officers as well as
22 horticulturists. And lastly, I want to talk a
23 little bit about jobs and job training and
24 placement. So, the auto industry is important
25 here, we must support not only auto related

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2 businesses and workers but all the small
3 businesses here, they need support, they need
4 services. At 26,000 dollars a year if we want to
5 improve the economic vitality and the economic
6 sustainability of the members that live here we
7 must give them the opportunities that they need in
8 terms of training, jobs, education, and
9 employment. I will close on that, I, I want to
10 thank Council Member Cabrera and Council Member
11 Gibson for their fearless and tireless leadership
12 and advocacy on this project and I look forward to
13 the end results of this in the coming weeks and
14 months. Thank you very much.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

16 KEN BROWN: Good morning Chairman Moya,
17 Council Person Cabrera, Council Member Gibson. My
18 name is Ken Brown, I have been the District
19 Manager of Community Board five for veritably five
20 months now in contrast to our Chair Dr. Omotosho.
21 I'd like to begin by extending our thanks and
22 appreciation to our council members on behalf of
23 the community board, we thank you and appreciate
24 your stewardship through this process. As Dr.
25 Omotosho said this is a vital effort towards

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2 redressing the historic underdevelopment and lack
3 of resources in our community. As Dr. Omotosho
4 said we have a considerable written testimony that
5 we'd like to submit so I'll constrain my comments
6 to a compliment to the hitherto provided testimony
7 and constrain my comments to local hiring. There
8 is a recommendation that HPD include language that
9 mandates local hiring in construction projects,
10 we're certainly in support of that. We have
11 partnered with one of the most vital institutions
12 in our community, Bronx Community College, we are
13 a very strong advocate for the return of HireNYC,
14 we certainly supplement in support Council Members
15 Gibson's comments about HireNYC, it's a vital
16 program and we think that it's reinstitution and
17 revitalization at BCOMMITTEE CLERK would be an
18 important part in developing local workforce to
19 take advantage of the construction jobs that we
20 expect to come into the district. As, as Mr.
21 Philps said and as others have so amply testified,
22 the lack of school seats is a dire consideration
23 in our community. As we sit right now we have
24 upwards of 1,500 unfunded seats and the potential
25 to add 30, 30... 3,200 odd new apartments to the

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2 community is certainly something that warrants
3 further consideration and hesitation. So, thank
4 you very much.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Yep,
6 Council Member Cabrera?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I just want to
8 give to the Borough President and to the Chairs of
9 the community board, the DM's and our community
10 board members, thank you for your relentless
11 efforts that you have shared valiantly in the last
12 three years. Thank you on behalf of myself and
13 Council Member Gibson.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you all,
15 you are the first public panel so certainly I want
16 to thank you for your work, for your testimony,
17 for being here and certainly I want to recognize
18 the Bronx Borough President in providing us with
19 this blueprint on Jerome Avenue, I think it
20 supports the argument that I've been making on
21 increasing the number of units of housing that we
22 preserve. In addition to the 5,500 we've preserved
23 to date, the 1,500 that has been committed, I
24 truly believe that we can get to 3,000 and you
25 know the Borough President's report really

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2 highlighted more of the apartment buildings that
3 have B and C violations that the Southwest Bronx
4 housing task force will really seek to address in
5 addition to looking at ways to preserve those
6 buildings for another 30 and 40 years through a
7 series of regulatory agreements and Article 11
8 action. So, I want to thank you and certainly... I
9 don't have any questions because we've talked, and
10 we will still keep talking but I just really want
11 to thank you for your consistency and for all of
12 the recommendations that CB4, CB5, CB7 and the
13 Borough President made as well, those
14 considerations are absolutely on the table so I
15 thank you so much.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you
17 Councilwoman. Thank you to the panel, thank you
18 for being here and thank you for your testimony,
19 thank you.

20 JAMES RAUSSE: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Now we are going to
22 call up the next... first panel in opposition;
23 Hernandez Guadeloupe, she had to leave, okay,
24 sorry. Desia Revis, Revuz from CASA, last name R i
25 v a s, no. Is, is it Lee Millman... Killerman, New

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2 York Community Alliance, here, okay. Yep, okay.
3 Spanos Patrice, Alex Feldman, yep, okay and Karla
4 Cruz, yep, she's right there... Daphne Hart. Thank
5 you for being here and let us begin, just please
6 identify yourself and...

7 ALEX FELDMAN: [off-mic] Good
8 afternoon... [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Turn your mic on.

10 ALEX FELDMAN: Good?

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yeah.

12 ALEX FELDMAN: Great. Good afternoon,
13 my name is Alex Feldman and I'm a Senior Program
14 Manager for Community Development at WHEDco. For
15 25 years we've provided the Jerome Avenue area
16 with affordable homes, high quality education and
17 economic opportunity. At this point in the process
18 we've heard from elected officials, from the
19 community boards, we've heard from hundreds of
20 community residents, we've seen the EIS and the
21 CDNA, WHEDco has recently completed a business
22 needs survey which was mentioned earlier, we also
23 just completed a community needs survey of over
24 660 people who live and work in the area about
25 perceptions around housing, work, health, and

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2 education. It might surprise some people in this
3 room but 55 percent of people who took our survey
4 reported that they had never heard about the
5 Jerome Avenue rezoning and yet there are still
6 things that we, including the Council Members and
7 the Department of City Planning and other
8 stakeholders do not know about the community and
9 the impact that this rezoning will have. These
10 questions must be answered to make an informed
11 decision about this rezoning and the future of
12 these neighborhoods. We don't know the anticipated
13 income range of the incoming population after this
14 proposed action, we do know the median incomes for
15 community boards four and five; 31 percent and 28
16 percent AMI but we also know that even MIH and
17 HPD's additional commitments are not going to
18 create enough affordable apartments for these
19 communities. We also know from our community
20 survey that current residents think about this
21 neighborhood as affordable now but 81 percent fear
22 that they won't be able to afford the neighborhood
23 in the future and those fears are triggered by
24 rising rents. We encourage city agencies to
25 estimate the incomes of incoming residents based

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2 on the kind of housing that's going to be
3 developed and the rents that they'll pay which
4 will help us answer the next question, we don't
5 know how much retail this incoming population
6 could actually support. We do know that there are
7 already unmet needs based on computer... consumer
8 preferences, we know that there's more retail
9 space coming but we don't know if this is right
10 for the community. And finally, I will close by
11 saying that we don't know how the city can truly
12 make an informed decision that impacts thousands
13 of residents and hundreds of businesses without
14 answering these questions, we certainly appreciate
15 the work that the council members have done to
16 secure commitments already and the work that
17 you're continuing to do. We know that... we take
18 this job very seriously and we hope that you'll
19 continue to demand the information that you need
20 to make an informed decision so thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Next,
22 just please identify yourself.

23 LEE KALLMAN: Hi, I'm Lee with the
24 Community Alliance for Workers Justice. We
25 organize work with non-union workers and also with

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2 union workers and one of the things that we've
3 seen in the neighborhoods and in the areas that
4 you represent is that a lot of the development
5 that's going on and that's being done currently is
6 being done by some of the worst most exploitative
7 low road contractors with records of wage theft,
8 worker misclassification, histories of fraud, and
9 all types of... all types of exploitative practices.
10 Fraud on workers comp, unemployment, disability
11 insurance and that these are the contractors who
12 are currently working, these are the developers...
13 this is the way the developers are currently
14 building in the neighborhood and so what will make
15 it different for the Jerome Avenue rezoning? The
16 city has to ensure that there's responsible
17 contractor policy in place, there, there shouldn't
18 be contractors who've been disbarred from public
19 work projects, been committing wage theft, these
20 are not... this is totally unacceptable and I think
21 that the city should go further and also do more
22 to connect... to connect residents to long term,
23 high paying career jobs that, that offer workers
24 the full benefits not just to build and be
25 exploited and then be priced out of the

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2 neighborhoods that they live in but to be able to
3 actually have a career with retirement. This is...
4 this is what we're asking for and I don't think
5 that HireNYC has proven or been demonstrated to be
6 able to do this, there's a lack of data around how
7 HireNYC is working and if there are no guarantees
8 that they're connecting workers to good union jobs
9 for this rezoning then it's insufficient, that's
10 all.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

12 SPANOS PATRICE: Good afternoon Chair
13 Moya and members of the subcommittee, my name is
14 Spanos Patrice, I work as a residential doorman
15 and I'm a member of the Building Service Worker
16 Union, SEIU Local 32BJ. I'm here to speak for
17 19,000 of my 32BJ brothers and sisters who live in
18 the Bronx and for everyone who works as a
19 residential porter, handy person or door person in
20 the city. Jerome Avenue is a diverse community of
21 working people including over 3,000 32BJ members.
22 32BJ knows that many New Yorkers are struggling to
23 stay in their homes, year after year people are
24 seeing their rents increase while their wages stay
25 the same. New Yorkers need affordable housing and

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2 good jobs in order to continue calling this city
3 home. This rezoning is an opportunity to make sure
4 the city helps this neighborhood develop both
5 affordable housing and good jobs. I'm here to call
6 on a developer called Madd Equities to commit to
7 good jobs in the rezoning area. If the council
8 approves this rezoning, then Madd Equities will...
9 would go on to build lots of apartment complexes
10 on either side of River Avenue between McClellan
11 and 167th Streets. Madd will hire people to work
12 as porters, handy persons and door persons in
13 those new apartment buildings, this would be one
14 of the biggest projects that could result from the
15 neighborhood rezoning. Unfortunate, unfortunately
16 Madd has made no commitment to provide good
17 building service jobs on River Avenue. I call on
18 Madd Equities to commit to good jobs for building
19 service workers in the Bronx and throughout the
20 city. Thank you very much for your time.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

22 KARLA CRUZ: Hi, good afternoon. My
23 name is Karla and I am here testifying on behalf
24 of the Laborers Union. Over the last three years
25 our members have worked side by side with the

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2 community to develop a plan that is inclusive of
3 the community's needs and uplift working families
4 along the Jerome Avenue corridor. Thousands of
5 residents have participated and today we ask that
6 those voices not be overpowered by greed and
7 silenced by the forces of displacement and
8 exploitation. The current HireNYC approach is ill
9 suited for recruiting residents to gain entry... to
10 gain entry into high paying careers and
11 construction merely noticing communities in which
12 the job... there are job openings available will not
13 help low income residents get qualified or hired
14 for high quality construction jobs. Furthermore
15 the city has failed to publicly share sufficient
16 data that shows the results of this initiative,
17 how many low income residents have been hired by
18 recipients of public subsidies, how many of these
19 placements have led to careers in the construction
20 industry, what are the wages associated with these
21 jobs, their job titles, does the employer have a
22 good record and provide safety and training and
23 it's acceptable to say that the administration
24 does not have this information when they have
25 expanded HireNYC in 2015. We ask that the city

1
2 council reject the city's lackluster local hiring
3 plan and instead commit the same tools and
4 investment it has provided other economic
5 development initiatives under this administration.
6 What we are asking for has been done before, it
7 has been done in this city, under this
8 administration and in other cities across this
9 country. We ask that residents of the Southwest
10 Bronx not be treated differently, they too deserve
11 investment and access to opportunities that will
12 change the status quo. Our asks do not guarantee
13 union jobs instead we have focused on creating a
14 real impactful local hiring plan that holds
15 developers accountable when utilizing subsidies to
16 build private residential homes. Unfortunately, we
17 are still being told this cannot be done for Bronx
18 residents. Council Member Vanessa Gibson has been
19 a great partner and actively listened to our
20 proposals, we know we can count on the
21 Councilwoman to strongly advocate for and to fight
22 for our demands. Thank you and that is all.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

24 DAPHNE HART: Good afternoon, my name
25 is Daphne Hart and I'm a proud Bronx resident and

1
2 a member of Local... Laborers Local 79. I want to
3 start by thanking the New York City Council and
4 Chair Francisco Moya for the opportunity to
5 testify today and voice my concerns regarding the
6 city's proposed plan to rezone Jerome Avenue. I
7 live directly in the area the city is looking to
8 rezone in community board five. My family and I
9 will be affected by this rezoning and the changes
10 it will bring to our neighborhood, this is
11 personal to me. I am proud to live and raise my
12 family in the Bronx and I have seen firsthand the
13 underinvestment in the borough... in the borough;
14 the joblessness, the struggle to make ends meet
15 for so many of my neighbors and loved ones. We
16 need more affordable housing, middle class job
17 opportunities, better schools and the list goes
18 on, but we need these things done in a way that
19 respects the existing community and includes input
20 from neighborhood residents. What makes this
21 rezoning even more personal to me is my work as a
22 journey person and ten-year member of Laborers
23 Local 79. The rezoning of 92 blocks along Jerome
24 Avenue is a large undertaking that will require a
25 large construction workforce and contractors that

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2 can meet the rigorous demands of this dense
3 neighborhood yet there are no safety or training
4 standards for workers or responsible contractor
5 standards to make... to make sure the contractors
6 and developers that receive this work have a
7 history of working well with the community they
8 build in, a record of hiring locally, locally for
9 construction jobs that lead to long term careers
10 with family sustaining wages and most importantly
11 a record of safe job sites for both the workers
12 and local residents. Ultimately the companies that
13 come to work here have to be good neighbors and
14 good neighbors don't abuse workers or provide dead
15 end jobs, they do what's right for the community.
16 As a woman in the trades I also bring a unique
17 part of the... point of view as to why it is
18 important the city pay attention to the
19 construction jobs and responsible contractor
20 standards in the rezoning. This rezoning can be a
21 tool to uplift local residents, but I want to
22 stress to you that this... that an opportunity this
23 can be especially for women living in my
24 neighborhood. I left a job as a teacher because I
25 was struggling to make ends meet and support my

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2 family, working as a laborer and earning a middle
3 class wage with health benefits and retirement
4 security has given me a financial independence and
5 a piece of mind I never dreamed of having, no
6 longer am I worried about paying my bills each
7 month, I'm saving money and thinking about the
8 future in a way that excites me. I'm building at
9 work and I'm building with my family at home, I
10 want other women in my neighborhood to feel like I
11 do and have the same opportunity, I know there are
12 so many single mothers and heads of household that
13 just need a chance like I've had, and this
14 rezoning can be that for them. I want to see my
15 neighborhood thrive and grow but not if it isn't
16 done in a safe manner that takes into account the
17 needs of Jerome Avenue residents. If properly
18 crafted the Jerome Avenue rezoning can uplift
19 residents and bring good middle-class jobs to this
20 community while providing much needed housing and
21 neighborhood improvements but as it currently
22 stands the plan being heard to date leaves many
23 questions unanswered when it comes to responsible
24 contractors, safety, career paths, construction
25 jobs for local residents and deeper housing

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2 affordability. Based on these issues I urge the
3 New York City Council to reject the Jerome Avenue
4 Rezoning Proposal before you. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank,
6 thank you to the panel, thank you for being here.
7 Thank you very much. And now we're going to call
8 up the next panel in, in favor. James Coakley,
9 Nora Martins, Bill Bollinger, H.J. Lee and Jorge
10 Madruga, no. Jorge Madruga, no. Eli White.. Eli
11 Weiss [sp?], sorry, Eli Weiss, no Eli Weiss. Katie
12 Moore. Thank you very much please state your name.

13 JAMES COAKLEY: Hi, my name is James
14 Coakley on behalf of Cayre Equities. I'm here to
15 support Council Member Gibson and her efforts to
16 bring new schools to the district. Cayre Equities
17 is a private New York City based real estate
18 developer and operator with a long history of
19 bringing quality real estate projects to fruition
20 throughout the five boroughs. Our projects include
21 retail centers, industrial warehouses, mixed use
22 and commercial buildings as well as several
23 community use facilities. We have a current
24 development project located within the Jerome
25 Avenue rezoning at Edward L. Grant and 169th Street

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2 that is particularly well suited to be delivered
3 as a public elementary school. This opportunity
4 would bring a much needed 450 additional school
5 seats to the district. It is the Cayre team's
6 belief that a quality education can truly change
7 an individual's life therefore I'm here to implore
8 to council to recognize the existing shortage of
9 school seats and to take the necessary steps to
10 ensure future school development becomes a reality
11 here and now. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

13 NORA MARTINS: Good afternoon, my name
14 is Nora Martins from Akerman LLP, I'm actually
15 speaking on behalf of Jorge Madruga from Madd
16 Equities today which is... he was not able to join
17 us, so this statement is on his behalf. My name is
18 Jorge Madruga and I'm speaking on behalf of Madd
19 Equities in support of the Jerome Avenue Rezoning
20 Plan. Madd Equities is planning to develop two
21 sites located at 1159 River Avenue and 1184 River
22 Avenue on either side of River, River Avenue
23 between East 167th Street and McClellan Street both
24 of which are within the area of the proposed
25 rezoning. The sites are currently zoned R8 with a

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2 C2-4 overlay which permits residential and
3 commercial development as of right currently but
4 without any requirement to provide affordable
5 housing. The proposed rezoning would change the
6 existing residential zoning to R9A which would
7 permit additional residential floor area together
8 with a text amendment to designate a mandatory
9 inclusionary housing area that would require 25 or
10 30 percent of that floor area to be permanently
11 affordable. Should the Jerome Avenue plan be
12 approved Maddr Equities is ready and able to
13 develop the sites with 100 percent affordable
14 housing. The proposed R9A district could produce
15 approximately 720 units of affordable housing of
16 which 25 or 30 percent would be permanently
17 affordable on these sites with local, commercial
18 and community facilities as... such as a school
19 which we understand is needed in this community.
20 Maddr Equities has significant, significant
21 experience in this type of development having
22 developed approximately 2,500 units of affordable
23 housing in the Bronx alone. The proposed
24 developments are intended to be financed subject
25 to ongoing discussions with HPD and HDC pursuant

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2 to the ELLA Program which funds construction for
3 households earning a range of incomes from 30
4 percent to 80 percent of AMI and requires that ten
5 percent of the units are set aside for formally
6 homeless households and an additional 30 percent
7 of the units are affordable to extremely low and
8 very low incomes between 30 and 50 percent AMI
9 which is a wide and diverse range of incomes
10 meeting the communities needs. The Jerome Avenue
11 Rezoning as mentioned could result in development
12 of these sites with 720 affordable units with 180
13 to 216 of these units permanently affordable and
14 potentially a new school. The proposed special
15 district text allows for additional flexibility
16 and design within a maximum height limitation
17 which is another benefit of the proposed rezoning
18 district and something not available in the
19 existing R8. For these reasons we respectfully
20 request that the subcommittee vote to approve the
21 proposed Jerome Avenue Rezoning.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Please.

23 WILLIAM BOLLINGER: Hi, my name is
24 William Bollinger, I'm a Principal at JCAL
25 Development Group. We're a Bronx based development

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2 company here speaking in support of the project.
3 From a... from a zoning and planning perspective I
4 think it makes good use of increasing the density
5 obviously at the transportation node, so it's well
6 thought out there in the mixed use of nature. I
7 think it has a, a great opportunity to unlock a
8 lot of potential for affordable housing
9 development and knowing the market and having
10 developed several projects in board four and five
11 most of the development here of, of any scale
12 would be financed by city housing programs and
13 probably targeted for people at the lower income
14 bands but I'm also here to make sure to stress the
15 nature of that importance of mid income housing. A
16 lot of the students and people... young people in
17 the Bronx have gone on to get the... much like
18 people have encouraged them and one of the things
19 we wanted to do is make sure that we don't
20 experience a brain drain so there needs to be
21 housing and quality housing to help attract those,
22 those residents to stay in the Bronx who want to
23 remain in the Bronx, they don't have to move to
24 Brooklyn or they have to move somewhere else and I
25 think that this is also... from a... from a great

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2 opportunity if you look at other rezoning areas in
3 the... in the... in the borough like Central
4 Morrisania where you've seen a lot of development
5 and its really dramatically changed that. I also
6 from a planning process I, I thought this was
7 tremendous and I would actually say that I think
8 45 percent is a great number, people that know
9 about rezoning. I think City Planning along with
10 the Council Members did a, a lot of outreach;
11 weekends, nights and I've seen other areas where,
12 where, where you know that didn't happen and I
13 think you can just see from the discourse here
14 from a... from an exchange in a positive way as
15 opposed to some of the other areas that, that I
16 think that outreach made a difference so people
17 have a chance to say and be, be heard and be
18 respected but I think the process was a very good
19 process.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

21 H.J. LEE: Good afternoon. My name is
22 H.J. Lee and I'm here representing the 35,000
23 members of the New York Hotel Trades Council. Our
24 members work in approximately 300 hotels across
25 New York City and are a vital component of the

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2 city's tourism industry. The Hotel Trades Council
3 offers its strong support for the proposed Jerome
4 Avenue Rezoning particularly the inclusion of a
5 special permit for hotel use. We believe that the
6 inclusion of a special hotel permit... hotel special
7 permit helps guarantee development that creates
8 good jobs and stays in line with the community's
9 needs. We also believe it is important step toward
10 preventing unchecked hotel development in the
11 Jerome Avenue corridor which could easily overtake
12 the more desired uses such as affordable housing.
13 It is our position that requiring a special permit
14 for hotels is a thoughtful way of ensuring that
15 new hotel development meets the goals of the
16 rezoning and that all stakeholders in the
17 community are guaranteed the opportunity to have
18 their voices heard. We strongly support the city's
19 plan, thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

21 KATIE MOORE: Good afternoon Council
22 Members. Thank you for the opportunity to present
23 testimony today. My name is Katie Moore and I'm
24 also here on behalf of the New York Hotel Trades
25 Council. Our union's 35,000 members work in hotels

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2 across New York and Northern New Jersey and make
3 up about 75 percent of the hotel industry within
4 the five boroughs. As is the case with any
5 rezoning our union places great importance on
6 developer responsibility, community inclusion, and
7 the creation of good jobs. We feel that the
8 proposed Jerome Avenue rezoning is striking this
9 balance and we support the city's plan. We are
10 especially supportive of the proposal inclusion of
11 a special permit for hotel use which we believe
12 provides a critical step toward ensuring community
13 input and the creation of good jobs for locals.
14 This special permit will allow the community to
15 have a key seat at the table during every step of
16 public review for a potential hotel. While a
17 special permit may limit the development of hotels
18 we feel it is the most sensible means of ensuring
19 that any new hotel development suitably fits
20 within the stated purpose of the overall rezoning
21 while providing the most benefit to the community.
22 We strongly support the city's plan, thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. I'm going
24 to open it up for some questions, Councilwoman
25 Gibson?

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you so
3 much, thank you Chair Moya, thank you again to all
4 of you for being here. I'm going to move this
5 along quick, we have other panels behind you, but
6 I guess specifically for the developers and land
7 owners, the conversations that we're having are
8 very critical to the future of this plan. As I
9 mentioned in my earlier remarks Jerome has, you
10 know unfortunately the distinction of not having a
11 large concentration of city owned land in which we
12 can do what we want and so it's important that the
13 dialogues that have started with the
14 administration continue and I simply want to make
15 sure we go on record in ensuring that all of you
16 have a commitment to really achieving and building
17 100 percent affordable housing. In addition in my
18 earlier comments I spoke with a lot emphasis on
19 local hiring, I think it's' really important to
20 send a loud message of a commitment to the
21 residents of our district that we are committed to
22 ensuring that local residents have access to the
23 construction jobs but even beyond that to careers
24 and making sure that they have long term
25 employment and so one of the earlier testimonies

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2 you heard there are some developers in this city
3 that unfortunately take advantage of workers, they
4 take advantage through worker exploitation,
5 through wage theft, dangerous working conditions,
6 too many construction workers on both non-union
7 and other jobs have unfortunately been injured and
8 certainly we want to prevent that from happening
9 moving forward. So, I'd like to ask all of you
10 your commitment to achieving 100 percent
11 affordable housing using the city's existing
12 resources and certainly to... for Cayre the
13 conversations on achieving a brand-new school in
14 our community and how we can make sure that this
15 is a partnership that we achieve together. So, I'd
16 like to get all of you on record in terms of
17 affirming that commitment that you have moving
18 forward?

19 JAMES COAKLEY: Sure, I think... I'm
20 again James Coakley on behalf of Cayre Equities
21 certainly to forward that Council Member Gibson,
22 you know we stand committed to doing that, we've
23 had as you've mentioned ongoing communications and
24 dialogue with the various city agencies that are
25 involved with these things, you know as early as

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2 this morning so we've gotten tremendous commitment
3 on behalf of the city and, and some of their side
4 as well to working with us and we're really
5 looking forward to that opportunity and I think we
6 have a, a great opportunity here to really leave
7 something that's long lasting and something that I
8 know that the Cayre Equity team and family who are
9 New Yorkers are very interested in doing. I heard
10 one of the earlier testimonies just prior to us
11 saying, you know good neighbors make good
12 neighborhoods and we're here in the neighborhoods
13 and we believe that thoroughly so thank you for
14 that opportunity.

15 NORA MARTINS: Hi, thank you Council
16 Member Gibson. I'll just speak in a very limited
17 capacity on behalf of Madd Equities for now, but
18 we've been having ongoing discussions and will
19 continue to meet with the council member on these
20 issues, absolutely committed to 100 percent
21 affordable housing that's primarily what Madd
22 Equities does, has tons of experience doing that
23 in the Bronx and actually meeting actively with
24 HPD and HDC about getting the financing and the
25 pipeline for these projects as soon as possible.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay and then
3 how does it work with a local hiring plan, I do
4 know in other projects in the city of New York my
5 colleagues were able to work with developers and
6 achieve an actual local hiring plan that was
7 derived from conversation and ultimately a public
8 commitment that was a part of the overall
9 finalized plan and I do know that Maddd
10 specifically was able to achieve that in other
11 projects so that is something that we have put on
12 the table to ensure that we achieve a local hiring
13 plan.

14 NORA MARTINS: Yes, and that's
15 absolutely something we'd like to discuss with the
16 council member to try to put something that works
17 for everyone in place.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Council Member
20 Cabrera?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so
22 much. Let me touch on the other aspect that was
23 brought by the previous panel which is service
24 jobs, have you had discussions such as union
25 members... unions such as 32BJ's and then some of

1
2 the other projects you do employ members from
3 32BJ's or related unions and, and just curious as
4 to the level of progress that you're making, yes?

5 NORA MARTINS: That question I can't
6 really speak to right now, we can be in touch
7 about that... yes, the... on other projects have
8 involved 32BJ, on this particular project it... we
9 have not had that discussion to date that I'm
10 aware of, but we can be in touch on that.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay, I would
12 love to have an opportunity to sit down and to
13 have that little conversation with Maddd Equities
14 and all of the other developers because I think
15 it's' essential that we have that and also
16 regarding hotels, if you have any influence in
17 talking to developers who want to put a hotel
18 please bring one to my district, we don't even
19 have one hotel so... love to have that. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you very much.

21 JAMES COAKLEY: Thank you... [cross-talk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, we're going to
24 bring up the next panel in opposition; Courtney
25 Wilson, Bronx Coalition, no Courtney Wilson? No.

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2 Jocelyn Taylor; Sandra Mitchell, Bronx Coalition;
3 Ramon Catala, Ramon, how do you say it?

4 RAMON CATALA: Oh Catala.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Catala, sorry,
6 couldn't read your... Terani [sp?] Dense [sp?],
7 she's not here, okay. Izzy Doudy [sp?], the People
8 of New York, Izzy, oh there you go. Thank you very
9 much, please identify yourself.

10 JOCELYN TAYLOR: Good afternoon Council
11 my name is Jocelyn Taylor and I have a personal
12 story for you today. I am a face of homelessness
13 and housing insecurity. My partner and I have both
14 been educated in this great city through an
15 equally great CUNY system. We completed our
16 applications for affordable housing only to be
17 disappointed because we did not decide to enter
18 into the shelter system mostly because of our
19 safety we feel like we are being punished and have
20 it held against us. The city is not recognizing
21 unfortunately the legions of people that have
22 decided that they don't want to enter into a
23 system that feels like an endless merry go round
24 but is instead punishing us because we want to
25 have some agency over our lives. Affordable

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housing is terrific but overall there's just not enough and don't always reflect the situation of the numbers that are in our neighborhoods, the numbers that are dire, please keep people in mind, we are not just statistics, we are not just scribbles on a page, we are real because honestly Council I wouldn't wish this upon anybody what we've gone through. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

SANDRA MITCHELL: Good afternoon

Council, my name is Sandra Mitchell, I'm a registered voter and a leader at the Parent Action Committee and a CASA leader, Community Action for Safe Apartments. As a concerned community member, I am asking the city council to vote no to the rezoning plan as it stands of Jerome Avenue. The community needs you to assist in delivering a plan that provides less luxury apartments, no displacement and more investment in the Jerome Avenue neighborhood to be more inclusive of all the residents already living there. I am extremely concerned with the massive, massive amount of housing displacement and lack of affordable housing that will ensue if this rezoning plan is

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2 implemented as it stands. Furthermore, I am
3 horrified at the impact the rezoning will have on
4 our public schools, our schools are already
5 overcrowded, underfunded, and the city and this
6 district are struggling to find special education
7 teachers and multilingual teachers; English,
8 Spanish and African dialects. The teaching pool in
9 district nine is less qualified than, than the
10 city as a whole, the underqualified teachers
11 employed in our district public schools have a
12 direct and negative impact on the very low
13 academic performance of our students, this
14 systemic atrocity in our district schools has
15 birthed an immediate need for more support and
16 funding for our children to be able to be properly
17 educated. The plan for this rezoning is to bring
18 more than 11,000 new residents including many
19 school aged children. With the influx of 11,000
20 new residents what type of education are we
21 expecting to provide for our children in the
22 Jerome Avenue community? This will be a disaster
23 for all involved and I want to tell you what we
24 would like to suggest, we would ask you to
25 release... to help us to release the 47,091,145

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2 dollars owed to district nine that was won through
3 the campaign for fiscal equity fund culturally
4 responsible and anti-vised practices for teachers,
5 principals, fund restorative justice practices for
6 all schools with special attention to district
7 nine, ten and 11 and lastly to fund full time DOE
8 social workers for, for schools. We really need
9 you to help us for our Jerome Avenue community and
10 we're depending on you because you're all we've
11 got. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

13 IZZY DOUDY: Good afternoon Council,
14 good afternoon everybody. My name is Izzy Doudy,
15 I've worked with the Bronx Community Board four as
16 their Community Planning Fellow for ten months
17 between 2016 and 2017. At the board my role was
18 with, with overseeing the community input and the
19 participatory process of the recommendations that
20 board four has committed for their approval of the
21 plan. During this time, I observed that in my
22 experience the main emphasis of those in support
23 of the plan was in support of the attachments that
24 is the additions to city services and the
25 additions to city infrastructure that were

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2 brilliantly packaged by the Council Members Gibson
3 and Cabrera into this rezoning as a condition of
4 it. However, I think that investment in
5 infrastructure and services long overdue such as
6 school seats, lighting, safe roads, road
7 crossings, trash, trash pickup, park
8 beautification are much needed and should not be
9 used as bargaining chips in this process. Making
10 civic services and infrastructure package of the
11 conditions to the zoning amendment sends a message
12 to the people of the West Bronx that they do not
13 deserve and they are not worth these improvements
14 on their own but only after they move over and
15 make room for new residents in the neighborhoods
16 who'll live in these new developments as the
17 speakers before talked about are, are they
18 deserving of having these improvements to their
19 neighborhoods. By setting a precedent of matching
20 these needed improvements to the rezoning the city
21 is saying that they're... that they're not worth it
22 on their own and that these investments are only
23 for the rich, only for newcomers of the
24 neighborhoods. Are we a city who looks at our
25 basic service delivery, housing protection, parks,

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2 and safe streets as profiteering, are we only
3 willing to build infrastructure where we can see a
4 return on our credit rating and tax revenue for
5 it, do we look at our people as latent cash
6 potential rather than human beings, this plan says
7 so? I thank Council Member Cabrera and Gibson for
8 their dedication to the people of their district
9 and I hope that you all will make the right
10 decision in this.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

12 RAMON CATALA: Good afternoon... [cross-
13 talk]

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Afternoon... [cross-
15 talk]

16 RAMON CATALA: My name is Ramon Catala,
17 I live in 1685 Topping Avenue in the Bronx close
18 to the Cross-Bronx Expressway and I'm a CASA
19 leader. [foreign dialogue]. When my wife and I
20 first moved to 1685 Topping Avenue six years ago I
21 was really happy with everything, we used to shop
22 along Bathgate and Washington Avenue in the fish
23 markets and we used to shop at the retail stores.
24 [foreign dialogue] While I was too busy playing
25 baseball I didn't notice that the buildings were

1
2 being... becoming vacant. [foreign dialogue] From
3 night to day there was tremendous change, I didn't
4 notice at first but the, the buildings were
5 destroyed... demolished. [foreign dialogue] The
6 vacant... the buildings remained vacant for many
7 years and... I'm sorry and there was... it was almost
8 as if it was no one's land until they built a
9 police precinct and a firefighter station.

10 [foreign dialogue] With time they built a Wendy's,
11 gas station and three small buildings [foreign
12 dialogue] and three small private schools.

13 [foreign dialogue] All the families that owned
14 their own small businesses they disappeared
15 forever. [foreign dialogue] Then people from other
16 countries started owning the small businesses.

17 [foreign dialogue] And what happens with these
18 small businesses with newcomers is that they don't
19 often don't employ local residents. [foreign
20 dialogue] This is what happens when there's a
21 rezoning in our borough. [foreign dialogue] As you
22 all know I was recently watching the news and we
23 all know that the Bronx... the Borough of the Bronx
24 is one of the biggest in the city. [foreign
25 dialogue] It is increasingly difficult for people

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2 in the community to find jobs, they just aren't
3 out there. [foreign dialogue] And we anticipate
4 that the Jerome Avenue rezoning is for the people
5 in the Bronx. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Any
7 questions? Thank you very much. Thank you.

8 IZZY DOUDY: Thank you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, the next panel
11 in favor is Carina Brown, Michael Cramer, Allison
12 Gangi, Tammy Rivera, is there anyone else who
13 wants to speak in favor? Seeing none, okay. Thank
14 you, please.

15 CARINA BROWN: Thank you, my name is
16 Carina Brown and I'm here in... on behalf of
17 Kingspoint Heights, a developer in the Bronx.
18 Kingspoint Heights has been developing in the
19 Bronx for over 18 years, our portfolio consists of
20 developing commercial and non-commercial
21 properties. We build schools, community centers,
22 and affordable housing. We are dedicated to
23 bringing affordable housing to families in the
24 Jerome Avenue neighborhood. The rezoning of Jerome
25 Avenue will give us an opportunity to serve the

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2 community where well over 200 apartments,
3 additional community space for area schools, for
4 non-for profits, institutions, as well as
5 affordable commercial spaces which will bring
6 quality jobs into the neighborhood. Kingspoint
7 Heights is dedicated to making sure that this
8 project comes to life. However, in order for us to
9 do that... in order for that to happen we need your
10 help to make sure that this project is included as
11 part of the rezoning of Jerome Avenue. We are
12 committed, we hear your cries, we are committed to
13 working with the local community to create, create
14 and meet the community's needs, a project that
15 everyone can feel good about with the leadership
16 of you Council, the leadership of Vanessa Gibson.
17 We feel positive about bringing that place. Thank
18 you.

19 MICHAEL CRAMER: Good afternoon

20 Chairman Moya, members Cabrera and Gibson. My name
21 is Michael Cramer, my colleague Gary Spindler
22 wasn't able to stay, I'm test... we're testifying as
23 representatives of the property owners at Jerome,
24 Inwood bound by West 169th Street on block 2855. As
25 the zoning now stands we have maxed out our

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2 properties, we own legacy businesses which
3 struggle to be profitable and are stuck in time.
4 After two years of meeting with Bronx Community
5 Board four, the Borough Presidents, land use unit,
6 Bronx City Planning and Council Member Gibson a
7 text amendment was approved in early November
8 which added our block 2855 to the Jerome Avenue
9 rezoning area. Being included in the rezoning will
10 give us an opportunity to build a multi-use
11 property. We are planning a mixed income
12 affordable residential building with a school at
13 it's base and 150 feet square... feet of street
14 frontage along Jerome Avenue while replacing the
15 existing parking spaces in the cellar of our new
16 building. We've met with Mr. Ted Weinstein, Mr.
17 Kenneth Spillberg of HPD's new construction
18 finance unit about using mix and match funds
19 within our project site and we expect that we'll
20 be able to build approximately 200 affordable
21 dwelling units including ten percent set aside as
22 transitional units for the formally homeless. Our
23 residential tower will step back to the Inwood
24 Avenue side away from the elevated subway to be
25 consistent with the new zoning. We also spoke with

1
2 Miss Gale Mindoro and Miss Melanie La Rocca who
3 was just here from the School Construction
4 Authority to plan for a badly needed elementary
5 school. Our design for a school in our base will
6 be able to accommodate 24-foot-high ceilings
7 making it suitable for a gym or auditorium onsite
8 with a Jerome Avenue entrance, our land use
9 consultant, Mr. Sandy Hornick has also prepared
10 written testimony which I've just distributed
11 detailing our underlying planning principles and
12 the potential for job growth which can be realized
13 on our block 2855. Our block is the largest
14 through block front eligible for transformation,
15 your decision to include us gives us the tools to
16 create a safer and continuous Jerome Avenue
17 corridor to improve the retail streetscape, to
18 build a school to stimulate job growth and to
19 create new affordable housing units just steps
20 away from the elevated subway. We have no quarrel
21 with auto repair shops on our block, the operator
22 of the largest enterprise is also the owner of its
23 own property and understands that this use will
24 continue to be grandfathered under the rezoning
25 and we're thankful for the courtesy given to us by

1
2 board four, the elected officials and Bronx City
3 Planning who work with us to reconsider our legacy
4 zoning and to be welcomed into the future of new
5 Jerome... the new Jerome Avenue and we thank you for
6 hearing our testimony.

7 ALLISON GANGI: Chairman Moya, Council
8 Members and staff good afternoon and thank you for
9 the opportunity to speak about the proposed
10 rezoning along the Jerome Avenue corridor on
11 behalf of Bronxworks. My name is Allison Gangi and
12 I am part of the development team at Bronxworks.
13 Bronxworks is a large, multi service agency that
14 has worked in the Bronx since 1972 and runs a...
15 runs a wide variety of programs including after
16 school, community and senior centers, ESL classes
17 and food stamp access. Each year our program
18 assists over 45,000 Bronx residents. Bronxworks
19 has over 30 sites across the Bronx and the Jerome
20 Avenue corridor under consideration and the
21 rezoning is at the heart of our service area. Our
22 flagship community center is located a few blocks
23 away along the Grand Concourse. We have and
24 continue to be deeply committed to helping
25 individuals and families in our community improve

1
2 their economic and social wellbeing. As one of the
3 largest providers of homelessness services and
4 homelessness prevention in the Bronx promoting
5 truly affordable and suitable housing for our
6 communities lies at the heart of our work. Just as
7 many New Yorkers across the city have experienced,
8 residents from the communities around the proposed
9 Jerome Avenue rezoning project have felt the
10 squeeze as average rental rates increase while
11 average household's income has remained stagnant.
12 Over a third of households residing in the
13 Highbridge neighborhood around the proposed
14 project live under the poverty line which is
15 nearly twice the rate of poverty relative to the
16 city overall. Though the average monthly rent
17 within this neighborhood ranks among the most
18 affordable in the city an estimated 38 percent of
19 households still must pay more than 50 percent of
20 their monthly income on rent. Moreover, of the
21 affordable housing units that exist in these
22 neighborhoods the vast majority of these units are
23 for families who earn 40,000 or more which falls
24 outside the household's earnings for many
25 households. Our agency advocates for the much-

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2 needed housing that this rezoning initiative
3 potentially delivers, at the same time we
4 emphasize that the proposed rezoning can only
5 earnestly alleviate the rent burden for residents
6 if the proposed housing solution is truly
7 affordable for its surrounding communities. We
8 recognize that with progress comes significant
9 needs to ensure that effective protections for the
10 community are in place so that this community will
11 remain a vibrantly diverse space for Bronx
12 residents to call home. Bronxworks specifically
13 asks that any approved rezoning proposal address
14 the increased pressure placed upon the school
15 system, overcrowding of the public transit system,
16 relocating of existing businesses along the
17 corridor, job creation for local residents and
18 creation of housing that is affordable for members
19 of the community. School crowding is an issue
20 across the city and we recognize that the
21 introduction of a significant number of new
22 residential units will place added pressure on the
23 existing educational infrastructure in the
24 neighborhood. We advocate for adding new school
25 seats at every grade level in the proposed

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2 rezoning area to meet this increased need as the
3 neighborhood grows. Further, the subway and bus
4 systems remain strained in this neighborhood with
5 the number four train being one of the most
6 crowded lines in the entire system. We ask that
7 additional investments are made in both train and
8 bus services to meet the increased needs for
9 public transit that will come with additional
10 residential development in the neighborhood. As a
11 workforce development provider, we are acutely
12 aware of the need for well-paying jobs in this
13 community, it is for that reason that it is vital
14 that any approved rezoning plan include a plan to
15 relocate and support the transition of any
16 existing businesses that may be displaced by new
17 development resulting from the rezoning. Further
18 we strongly advocate that jobs generated from new
19 construction and development along this rezoning
20 corridor be targeted to employ neighborhood
21 residents. The Bronx has significantly higher
22 rates of unemployment than any other borough and
23 we hope that this new development will be able to
24 play a positive role in providing more jobs to
25 Bronx residents. Finally, the most pressing

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concern is that the new development provides apartments that are actually affordable to members of this community. We ask that affordability rates be based on the local average income in the neighborhood and units that are affordable for low and middle-income families be available in this neighborhood. In order to make certain that this rezoning does not displace the many low... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We're... [cross-talk]

ALLISON GANGI: ...income... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We're time... [cross-talk]

ALLISON GANGI: ...members of this community... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Two minutes, please, thank you.

ALLISON GANGI: Sorry, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

TAMMY RIVERA: Good afternoon, congratulations Chair Moya. Good afternoon Councilwoman Gibson and Councilman Cabrera. My name is Tammy Rivera, I am a professional carpenter for 24 years, that says a lot for a

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2 woman. I know the Bronx very well, my father lived
3 in the Bronx, so I was going back and forth from
4 Inwood to the Bronx. I wasn't going to speak
5 today, I didn't have anything written but
6 something happened today, and I said I got to say
7 something. I'm for the development in the Bronx
8 especially Jerome, we need a makeover god knows we
9 need one if it's done correctly with the community
10 in mind, their protection with careers.

11 Everything, I'll call you the panel, everything
12 that you've said, you've said it all so I don't
13 want to... you know repeat myself but I just hope
14 that... Chair Moya you asked, I'm not sure who it
15 was, it was a gentleman about the differentiate...
16 the differences in the wages and he couldn't
17 answer, that's a slap in the face to somebody like
18 me or anybody else here that's in the blue collar.
19 So, I'm just talking right now about the
20 construction part, that's my career for 24 years,
21 I never thought I would do anything that long but
22 not only that I'm the first female organizer for
23 the largest trade of the country, that would never
24 happen if I was working on a development site
25 that's making substandard wages. In fact, I don't

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2 think there's anybody here today that's going to
3 speak about the development and that they're,
4 they're making substandard wages and that they're
5 for it or that they're not for it, they're not
6 here, we are organized because we want a career
7 like everybody else. The people that were sitting
8 here earlier today HPD, SBS, you know I'm sure
9 they're making a decent wage and benefits, what
10 are we worth to be doing all this laborers work,
11 this isn't modern day slavery ladies and gentlemen
12 and I really hope that they're reaching out..
13 there's ways to do this, you could have.. you can
14 have a job fair and reach out to CWE, Consortium
15 Workers of.. for Education, Bronxworks, you can
16 reach out to Helmets to Hardhats and what's,
17 what's really dear to me is nontraditional
18 employment for women because that's my roots, 24
19 years ago, I wouldn't be sitting here right now if
20 it wasn't for NEW. I taught there for about ten
21 years, I'm still very active with them, my job is
22 to go around the Bronx, I know everything that
23 goes up there and everything is bad unless it's
24 SCA that's all we're worth for a career. We need
25 to do better, we must do better, we need to

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2 elevate ourselves, elevate each other and we are
3 trying to do that but when you have other people
4 here saying we don't know about the wages they
5 need to look at themselves in the mirror, you know
6 how much are we worth to build somebody's vision?
7 There are too many deaths that have happened in
8 the past few years and just to let you know Chair
9 Moya we've worked progressively, we are working
10 with different, different ways of doing things
11 like immigrant, immigrant workers, we have a
12 provisional program, we can sit down and talk
13 about this and, and, and find a blended rate
14 something to sharpen our pencils a little bit but
15 we need to do better or else we're doing the same
16 thing, low wages in the Bronx, why because we're
17 the Bronx? When are we going to be money making
18 Bronx? That's all I got to say, please I really
19 urge HPD... I have my Council Rep card here, proud
20 council rep, okay, we can talk so that's... like I
21 said I really wasn't planning on doing this but
22 when I heard you ask the great question and the
23 guy couldn't answer and then I heard somebody say
24 16 dollars, 16 dollars plus benefits that's a
25 great start, that is but what... Jerome Avenue this

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2 is going to be going on for a long time, are we
3 going to be making 16 dollars an hour year after
4 year after year? What happens when we get hurt,
5 are there benefits? Okay, I've had surgeries on my
6 knees and it's, it's wear and tear, but we have
7 benefits, so we get back in the game, okay so..
8 [cross-talk]

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Tammy,
10 thank you.

11 TAMMY RIVERA: You are so welcome.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. I know
13 the Councilwoman has a couple of questions..

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you, I'll
15 be quick. Thank you so much for your work, I know
16 that you join Chair Moya on discussing worker
17 safety in Albany during his assembly days, so I
18 thank you for your advocacy and certainly thank
19 you for always promoting worker safety, worker
20 training and making sure that we continue to build
21 more carpenters that look just like you, that's
22 our goal. I wanted to ask specifically while I had
23 the panel here in terms of development, I mean you
24 are developers so you have a practice of building
25 affordable housing in the Bronx in the city of New

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2 York so obviously I, I wanted to ask about
3 commitments and recognizing all of the testimony
4 you've heard to date, the current AMI structure in
5 both community boards four and five is less than
6 30 percent AMI for a family of four and that's
7 extremely low income so in order to achieve and
8 maximize on affordable housing, you know we've
9 said many times it has to be real affordable
10 housing, housing for the families that live there
11 today. So, I wanted to ask about your commitments
12 and certainly make sure that I get on record that
13 both are committed to working with the city,
14 working with the administration and all of us in
15 achieving deep affordable housing for the future
16 of our district.

17 CARINA BROWN: Absolutely affirm,
18 absolutely and I've taken notes today and I've
19 been taking mental notes with you, I, I just
20 didn't want to write it down because I was really
21 into listening everything that you had to say and
22 I think it's very powerful and I think that we
23 have to go back and reconsider a lot of things
24 that has been said today.
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COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: And your company has been building in Marciano specifically, right, most recently? Okay, which is still my district.

CARINA BROWN: Yes, ma'am.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

MICHAEL CRAMER: Our experience has been building in Manhattan but we've, we've had a business in, in the Bronx for 20, 25 years now and obviously we, we are aware of the local conditions in, in the Bronx that... we actually thought that... have, have looked very carefully at the model of putting a school underneath of a residential building because they can be a strong anchor tenant and they will allow us to do all the other things... all the other good things that we wanted... want to do.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, I do know that the city does have existing models of both residential and schools on one plot of, of parcel of land. We have a project coming into the Bronx near Hostos that's going to achieve that so it's not, you know foreign to us. Obviously, we want to maximize as much as we can because we don't have a

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2 lot of land to build on we have to look at mixed
3 use opportunities at achieving both housing as
4 well as educational seats. The expectation moving
5 forward are families moving in will have school
6 aged children and so even if we address the future
7 need the school seats will address the current
8 need that we have today in school district nine
9 and certainly to your point we've worked really
10 hard to achieve, you know including many of the
11 existing properties in the A-text version of
12 Jerome and so that was for a reason to make sure
13 that those commitments hold true in terms of
14 achieving affordable housing and looking at
15 possible school seats as well.

16 MICHAEL CRAMER: You know we have the
17 unusual situation of being on Jerome Avenue...

18 [cross-talk]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Right... [cross-
20 talk]

21 MICHAEL CRAMER: ...and you know this
22 would give us a base that will allow a better
23 residential experience above the elevated subway
24 which is important to us and it's also... it's just
25 a good location, it's a transit-oriented location

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2 where it's much... a shorter distance for school
3 kids especially if they're elementary school kids
4 to get to our block so we think it's a great
5 opportunity.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay, thank you
7 so much and especially thank you to Bronxworks,
8 please send my warmest regards to Eileen Torres,
9 to all the work that Bronxworks does, incredible
10 social service provider and I look forward to
11 working with you, thank you for being here.

12 TAMMY RIVERA: Thank you.

13 MICHAEL CRAMER: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, the next panel
15 in opposition Carman Vega-Rivera, Dr. James
16 Fairbanks, Dr... okay. Pedro, Pedro Estevez, Adrien
17 Weidgen, Weidgen, and Chris Walters. Thank you for
18 your patience and we can get started just please
19 identify yourself, thank you.

20 CARMEN VEGA-RIVERA: Hi, good
21 afternoon, my name is Carmen Vega-Rivera, should I
22 just proceed? Hi, thank you for having me here.
23 I've been a resident of the Southwest Bronx for
24 almost 40 years and I come on behalf of CASA and
25 the Bronx Coalition for Community Vision and I

1
2 want to specifically talk about cutting the
3 rezoning and here's what I have to say as the
4 coalition, we are concerned that this rezoning is
5 too large and will make developers less likely to
6 build affordable housing in our community by
7 significantly changing the local housing market
8 and reducing developers toppling to take or renew
9 HPD subsidies. We believe that a smaller rezoning
10 that allows the construction of 2,000 units rather
11 than 4,000 creates room for more subsidized
12 housing in our community allowing HPD to continue
13 its successful track record of building housing
14 that meets the neighborhood needs and generating
15 less risk of displacing existing residents and
16 businesses. The council has scaled back rezoning
17 in this way, an example of that has been in East
18 New York rezoning, the city originally proposed a
19 rezoning that would bring 65 apartments... 6,500
20 apartments to the community a figure that was
21 almost cut by almost ten percent in the final
22 stages of ULURP. We need the city to be strategic
23 in the Bronx, we are not East New York. This
24 rezoning will affect Bronx residents along the
25 corridor for generations. This is why we are

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2 demanding the council to cut the Jerome Avenue
3 rezoning by 50 percent, if the city scales back
4 the rezoning to 2,000 units a greater share of
5 what's built will be subsidized decreasing the
6 risk that housing would trigger market shifts that
7 threaten the stability of existing low-income
8 residents. This would also give the city time and
9 space to develop new tools to reach the deepest
10 affordable levels. I also want to say that not
11 only have I lived in the Bronx for 40 years, but
12 someone talked about infrastructure, I waited for
13 infrastructure, quality schools since I come from
14 progressive education running non-for profits. Why
15 did I have to wait for 40 years and now that
16 there's a possibility that I will be displaced
17 along with my neighbors, my family and friends and
18 who are here amongst us today since we are the
19 experts and know exactly what we want, we created
20 the platform with four principles and many
21 demands, why wait 40 years so we can be pushed
22 out? I'm not going to afford to use the parks, use
23 the elevators and the subways that I have not used
24 since 2008 since I'm disabled, walk along the
25 community, enjoy all the new amenities if I don't

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2 have a roof over my head. Unless we deal
3 specifically with the dire need of the local
4 community in terms of housing and real numbers
5 such as that 45 percent of our community makes
6 under 20,000 and 78 makes 50,000 then what we're
7 doing is setting the bar and doing a new city for
8 those that are coming in while we're being pushed
9 out and so we say no to this rezoning as it
10 exists.

11 JAMES FAIRBANKS: I apologize if my
12 testimony goes over a little so if you'll allow
13 that, thank you. The South Bronx welcomes new
14 housing, but I ask you to vote no on this
15 unaffordable housing plan. The majority of the
16 housing is for people making from 50,000 to
17 120,000 and beyond to the new hot market rates.
18 The AMI is 25,000 for board four, 21,000 for board
19 five, based on the AMI's of this community 25
20 percent of the housing should be for residents
21 making 24,000 or less, 25 percent for those making
22 33,000 or less, 25 percent for those making 42,000
23 or less and 25 percent for those making 51,000 or
24 less. CASA proposes cutting the rezoning in one
25 half from 4,000 to 2,000 units so that greater

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2 subsidies will allow deeper affordability and
3 cause less displacement of the auto industry. This
4 rezoning is unaffordable, gentrification plan. The
5 census shows... the census shows that the South
6 Bronx already has sufficient middle-income
7 housing. The housing crisis we have is for the
8 homeless and the low at moderate income. Instead
9 of this gentrification we should spend the money
10 and we could wipe out the housing crisis. This is
11 an inequality plan, I thought the city was
12 committed to economic equality, the only way for
13 this plan to work would be to vastly increase,
14 vastly increase the jobs and wages of the
15 residents. This is a racist, urban removal plan of
16 one of the last communities in the city where low
17 and moderate-income people of color can struggle
18 to survive. The national book award winner Ta-
19 Nehisi Coates calls NYC's gentrification ethnic
20 cleansing. This plan will remove the present
21 culture of the community both the diversity of
22 cultures and the small business of the outer
23 industry. I'll skip the next paragraph. All over
24 the city community groups such as CASA and the
25 Bronx Coalition for Community Vision have been

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2 organizing thousands of community residents to get
3 involved in democracy by attending hundreds of
4 meetings, writing neighborhood plans for new
5 housing preservation and all kinds of amenities,
6 of jobs, schools, youth centers, parks, etcetera,
7 this is pure democracy, pure democracy which
8 elected should embrace. Our public officials were
9 just elected by the present residents, the present
10 residents but they will soon will have a much
11 higher income consistency, this gives the term
12 gerrymandering a new meaning. Finally, the one
13 percent, the one percent developers see the South
14 Bronx as a gold mine, it is a moral and spiritual
15 crisis that we are giving them the land to
16 increase their billions and their billions.
17 Realtors have so squeezed people elsewhere that
18 the miracle has happened that even white people
19 are no longer afraid to move to the South Bronx.
20 Council go back to the drawing board and listen to
21 the vast majority of the people of the South
22 Bronx. Council Members thank you for over the
23 years you work to bring justice to the South
24 Bronx.

25 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

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2 PEDRO J. ESTEVEZ: Good afternoon, my
3 name is Pedro J. Estevez, I'm the founder and
4 President of United Auto Merchants Association,
5 UAMA. As a decade long advocate in, in technical
6 assistance provided to the Bronx Auto Merchants
7 especially in the borough... on the corridor of
8 Jerome Avenue, Cromwell and Inwood, UAMA's unique..
9 uniquely positioned to testify today on behalf of
10 the Jerome, Cromwell Avenue Corridor Auto
11 Merchants and all the mechanics. The corridor is
12 slated for rezoning by the Department of City
13 Planning, the corridor is roughly two and a half
14 miles from 167th to 184th Street. The rezoning will
15 have a significant impact on approximately 200
16 auto, auto, auto related businesses as well as
17 other businesses causing to displace hundreds of
18 workers, thousands of them and their dependents
19 will lose their livelihoods. The rezoning will... is
20 going to affect the certificate of occupancy, the
21 only document that allows them to be there and
22 they need to be in a zone that is industrial and
23 commercial eight. Almost all the workers are
24 target, targeted in the corridor are people of
25 color and predominate immigrants. The industry

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2 provides employment for those limited education
3 attainment, 68 percent of the employees have high
4 school diploma or less, this is especially
5 important in the area that's higher than the city
6 average unemployment and low education completion
7 rates. The mechanics, while skilled in experience
8 they lack former education and require
9 certification to find employment elsewhere and
10 they too will be pushed out. The average annual of
11 wage for the occupational auto repair under New
12 York City the statistics say is 44,000 dollars,
13 21, 21 percent of the auto repairs employees who
14 earn more than 60,000 dollars a year are high
15 school diploma degree or less. By comparison the,
16 the food and preparation and, and... food
17 preparation and retail, two industries that are
18 going to be the majority and employ large numbers
19 of individuals with high school diploma or less
20 have an average of 20,000 dollars or less a year.
21 The merchants, the community and residents are all
22 in favor of the community of housing development
23 but not in... will bring economic growth and
24 development to the Bronx, it surely will do but
25 especially of the corridor around the

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2 neighborhood, but they are not in favor of the
3 sacrifice of the minds of the existing auto
4 merchants and the other businesses located in the
5 corridor for decades. The merchants from the
6 corridor all agree that United Auto Merchants
7 Association will assist and can assist and end
8 the... what you call auto business readiness plan
9 consists of four of them, this is our plan.
10 Conduct a one on one technical assistant to
11 address the challenges through... that will
12 experience while navigating through the compliance
13 process, we will require all the license and
14 permits and regulations not to be fined,
15 conducting business management administration
16 workshops to the merchants and the managers, we
17 all... we know all of them even by name. Four,
18 providing an auto training education to all... to
19 all those merchants, owners and their employees as
20 well as the residents interested on having a... an
21 auto, auto repair career achievement and achieving
22 the service excellent certification ASE recognized
23 all over the United States. Finally, the
24 relocation plan, 96 percent of all the merchants
25 in the corridor have agreed to United Auto

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2 Merchants to move to a vertical auto merchant
3 building, in an IBZ zone that we're not going to
4 be relocated anymore. This concept is a vertical
5 building which will require much smaller
6 footprint, exceed auto industry requirements, meet
7 all green building standards and will capable to
8 have every single business displaced from the...
9 from the rezoning of Jerome Avenue corridor. And
10 finally, UAMA requests the assistance... [cross-
11 talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We're, we're...
13 [cross-talk]

14 PEDRO J. ESTEVEZ: ...of the city of...
15 [cross-talk]

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: ...trying to keep it...
17 [cross-talk]

18 PEDRO J. ESTEVEZ: ...New York... [cross-
19 talk]

20 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We're trying to keep
21 it to two minutes.

22 PEDRO J. ESTEVEZ: I apologize... [cross-
23 talk]

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: ...we're already...
25 we're, we're already at... [cross-talk]

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PEDRO J. ESTEVEZ: I'm representing
over 1,000... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: ...four, I understand...
[cross-talk]

PEDRO J. ESTEVEZ: ...families, just one...
[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: ...I, I understand but
we're... [cross-talk]

PEDRO J. ESTEVEZ: ...ten seconds please...
[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: ...already... we're
already past four minutes and we have a long list
of people waiting... [cross-talk]

PEDRO J. ESTEVEZ: Okay, I will go...
[cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: ...I thank you so much
for your testimony... [cross-talk]

PEDRO J. ESTEVEZ: I will welcome the
community... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you... [cross-
talk]

PEDRO J. ESTEVEZ: ...to reschedule UAMA
to elaborate in... and here's the, the proposal...
[cross-talk]

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CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you sir...

[cross-talk]

PEDRO J. ESTEVEZ: ...for the city of New York to save all those businesses... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you... [cross-talk]

PEDRO J. ESTEVEZ: ...elaborated by four years of United Auto Merchant... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you sir... [cross-talk]

PEDRO J. ESTEVEZ: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, thank you.

ADRIEN WEIBGEN: Good afternoon, my name is Adrien Weibgen, I'm an attorney at the Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center which works with low income communities to make sure that residents aren't pushed out in the name of progress. I've been working with the Bronx Coalition for more than three years on this plan and in that time even though the coalition has secured really important policy victories that were mentioned today including the certificate of no harassment and the historic right to counsel.

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2 The Department of City Planning's plan itself has
3 changed almost not at all, it continues to propose
4 a massive up zoning of the neighborhood and a
5 conversion of most of the manufacturing land in
6 the rezoning area to residential and I'm here to
7 talk about the coalition's request that the
8 rezoning be cut in half to 2,000 units rather than
9 4,000 and to sort of explain how that relates to
10 the question of how much housing will be
11 subsidized. So, first of all the Department of
12 City Planning has suggested that through a massive
13 up zoning the rent burdens that are in the
14 community today can be decreased because more
15 housing will be created much of which will be
16 affordable but we know for a fact that isn't true,
17 research on up zonings that were undertaken in the
18 Bloomberg era or... either where the amount of
19 housing was increased and or there were a lot... a
20 lot of manufacturing to residential conversions
21 shows that when neighborhoods were rezoned in that
22 manner rents increased at twice the rate that they
23 did citywide so in... it didn't take the rents down,
24 it drove them up by more than 43 percent in those
25 communities and those are... those are facts the

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2 city can know and chooses to ignore. It would be
3 one thing if a majority of the housing that were
4 going to be built were going to be affordable but
5 the city can't know how much of the 4,000 units
6 will be affordable and you heard that today from
7 the Deputy Commissioner of HPD herself who Council
8 Member, Member was asking for a commitment from
9 HPD to have the number of preservation units be
10 something more like 2,500 to 3,000 units, Deputy
11 Commissioner Bozorg herself said that it's not
12 possible for HPD to make a commitment like that
13 because they can only get subsidies buildings
14 where developers want to work with them and want
15 to take subsidies. So, by the city's own
16 projection of the 4,000 units that the rezoning
17 will bring at best half of them will be subsidized
18 and that's... and that is really a guess about when
19 the market is going to change to the point where
20 an individual developer looks at a deal with the
21 city and says, you know what it's not worth it to
22 me to keep this building affordable for 30 years
23 when I can just wait a few years more for the
24 market to flip. By the city's own projection half
25 of the 4,000 won't be affordable and that's why

1
2 the community is asking that the scale of the
3 rezoning be significantly reduced. The East Harlem
4 rezoning at this stage in the process the council
5 cut the scale of the rezoning by about 25 percent,
6 the community here is asking for a, a reduction of
7 half to reflect the tremendous displacement risk
8 that inviting 2,000 luxury units into the
9 community will create. Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

11 CHRIS WALTERS: Good afternoon and
12 thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name
13 is Chris Walters and I'm the Rezoning Technical
14 Assistance Coordinator at the... at the Association
15 for Neighborhood and Housing Development, ANHD and
16 a Technical Assistance Provider for the Bronx
17 Coalition for Community Vision. ANHD is a
18 membership organization of neighborhood based
19 housing and economic development groups from all
20 five boroughs with a mission to ensure flourishing
21 neighborhoods and decent affordable housing for
22 all New Yorkers. In addition to the ban to cut
23 back the rezoning by half I'll be testifying today
24 in support of the Bronx Coalition's call for a no
25 net loss policy for the communities around Jerome

1 Avenue. A no net loss policy would serve the vital
2 role of ensuring that the Jerome community does
3 not lose more affordable housing than it gains
4 following the rezoning. This is especially crucial
5 for neighborhoods like those around Jerome with
6 high numbers of low income households at risk of
7 displacement if the housing market changes.
8

9 Currently as we heard today the vast majority of
10 what gets built in the community is subsidized
11 with a relatively high percentage of units serving
12 households under 30 percent AMI, but an up zoning
13 of the scale currently proposed threatens to put
14 this at risk meaning more market rate units and
15 less affordable as time goes on. While the city
16 has committed to creating affordable units through
17 MIH and continued subsidy it must ensure that
18 these are not offset by more affordable units
19 leaving regulations either legally or illegally or
20 foregoing subsidies as the market changes. A no
21 net loss policy would prevent this by tracking the
22 creation and loss of affordable units over time to
23 help guarantee no net loss of units. The program
24 itself would be straightforward, the city should
25 conduct a baseline assessment of all regulated or

1
2 subsidized housing units within the community
3 broken down by income brackets served. This
4 assessment should include rent stabilized housing,
5 section 8 vouchers and HUD subsidized developments
6 as well as those subsidized or regulated by HPD.
7 Every year the city should update its numbers to
8 see how much housing at each income bracket is
9 gained and lost and adjust its strategies
10 accordingly to ensure no net loss of units
11 affordable at each bracket with special attention
12 to the lowest income families. As part of the
13 Jerome Avenue rezoning we support the coalitions
14 call for the city to commit to and fund creation
15 of a task force to create a pilot program for a no
16 net loss policy for the local community. Thank you
17 very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you
19 very much. Okay, now we have... we bring up the next
20 panel in opposition, we have Elena Conte, Conte;
21 Sandra Mitchell, she did, sorry, yep. George
22 Sotiroff; Courtney B. Wilson, Courtney, gone,
23 left, thank you. Anita Long; Robert Joseph;
24 Michael Gordon from Ironworkers Local 580, he
25 left, thank you. Dillon Francis, no. Virginia, I'm

1
2 sorry I can't read the... Reyes, no. Martina
3 Riveradesofeat [sp?], okay. Alton Anderson, no. Do
4 we got Alton, is that you, okay? Thank you,
5 welcome, please.

6 ELENA CONTE: Hi, thank you Chair Moya,
7 Council Members Gibson and Cabrera. I'm Elena
8 Conte, Director of Policy at Pratt Center for
9 Community Development, we've been serving as
10 technical advisors to the Bronx Coalition for
11 Community Vision and specifically we've been
12 looking at how the proposed rezoning may impact
13 local businesses and jobs in the auto sector, we
14 published Under the Hood, we did the technical
15 work under... out of... Out of Gas and I know that
16 those documents are available to you and that you
17 can find the coalition or the coalition can find
18 you to discuss the ways to implement those
19 detailed things and, and we are at their service.
20 I want to underscore a few things, auto repair
21 jobs are good jobs, they pay nearly twice as much
22 as jobs in the retail sector and the jobs are
23 deeply needed. The neighborhood surrounding the
24 rezoning have an unemployment rate of 17 percent.
25 Displacement of these quality auto worker jobs is

1
2 inherent in the rezoning plan based on the change
3 DCP itself predicts that 25 percent of the auto
4 businesses will be directly displaced. Pratt
5 Center estimates that close to 75 percent of the
6 auto sector workforce hundreds of jobs will be
7 displaced as a result of the proposed action. In
8 the more than three years since it was announced
9 that Jerome was targeted for rezoning auto
10 merchants, the United Auto Merchant Association,
11 the Bronx Coalition have been calling on the
12 administration to treat with fairness and respect
13 the people whose jobs are jeopardized by this
14 action. The response has been to hide behind legal
15 technicalities and analytical manipulations to
16 pretend that the city has no responsibility to
17 hundreds of workers in a sector that its land use
18 decisions are systematically decimating. The
19 council... this council has the opportunity to take
20 a different approach, this council can. As the
21 Bronx Coalition has called for reduce the size of
22 the rezoning to allow for a majority of auto shops
23 to remain and thrive in place, invest in the
24 places that auto businesses need to operate and in
25 making sure that auto businesses have a fighting

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2 chance of locating and being successful there in
3 the Jerome area and throughout meaningful
4 relocation provisions that align the realities
5 that auto businesses face, mandate a citywide
6 sector so that at the next hearing we are not
7 pointing to Jerome's failures the way today we are
8 pointing to those of Willets Point and finally
9 provide training and assistance to businesses and
10 workers but not as a standalone measure, not as a
11 headline or a how feel good gesture but in
12 conjunction with actual policies that ensure that
13 businesses and workers have a place to operate.
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

16 GEORGE SOTIROFF: Good afternoon, my
17 name is George Sotiroff, I live at 901 Walton
18 Avenue in the Bronx. Thank you Mayor... or Chairman
19 Mayo and... Moya, sorry, I'll learn to read and
20 Council Members Miss Gibson and Mr. Cabrera. I
21 just want to say that I'm, I'm a fellow of not a
22 great education and I'm unaccustomed to public
23 speaking and I admit right now and I'm going to
24 prove to you I'm not the brightest bulb in the
25 room and that is that I know a young man who works

1
2 for Verizon in his early 40's and last year he
3 bought a co-op in Chelsea and he, he financed it
4 correctly not through a subprime mortgage or
5 anything like that and the reason he was able to
6 buy that was because it was affordable and I, I
7 realize that these words affordable and
8 affordability are being used but I can't seem to
9 get a handle on what it means and I, I've come to
10 the conclusion that affordability is... or
11 affordable housing is what you can afford, if
12 you're rich you can afford it and if you live in
13 the South Bronx and rezoning takes place and
14 gentrification takes place you won't be able to
15 afford it and that's something I don't understand
16 and, and that's why I admit it that I'm not
17 particularly bright because doesn't anybody see it
18 or am I missing something and that's all I wanted
19 to say and not talk too much because everything
20 has been said quite well and the, the details and
21 specifics about it but I'm just coming around and
22 saying affordability strikes me from what I
23 understand it's for somebody who can afford it and
24 if you can't afford it you're going to be
25 displaced and who, who knows where you can go and

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2 I'm not going to be young and handsome like I am
3 today and I'm, I'm going to need some place to go
4 and where can I go when my useful virility is gone
5 and I can't work anymore. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. although
7 I'll, I'll give you an opportunity if you want to
8 change the first part of your statement because
9 you are smarter than a lot of other people that
10 have been up here before so... I'll... I will allow
11 you to do that if you want.

12 ANITA LONG: Good day, my name is Anita
13 Long, I am a member of CASA and I live at 1212
14 Grand Concourse in the Bronx and I've lived in the
15 Bronx for over 35 years, I love the Bronx. I was
16 not going to really say anything when I came up
17 here but a map happened to appear on that screen
18 here where they were discussing the zoning, I
19 googled it, I looked at the map, study it the best
20 way that I could and I see that the, the rezoning
21 is stopping right at my doorstep, I live on the
22 Grand Concourse at 167th Street. Now looking at the
23 map is made it clear to me why my landlord is
24 using MCI and he have plans for more MCI and I
25 think this is unfair to me, the other tenants that

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2 live in the building and other tenants along the
3 Grand Concourse, along the path of this rezoning.
4 Landlords now using MCI more than they have ever
5 have. I've been in that building for 20... over 25
6 years all of the... all of the sudden now he wants
7 to do more work and as we all know with the MCI
8 you keep using that's permanent rent increase then
9 all of the sudden now I'm at market rate, it's
10 unfair and you're only doing it because of this
11 rezoning. Thank you for allowing and hearing me.

12 ROBERT JOSEPH: Good afternoon, Robert
13 Joseph and I'm a Project Manager at the Municipal
14 Art Society of New York. MAS believes that without
15 further investment and protection the Jerome
16 Avenue Rezoning Proposal has the potential to
17 irrefutably effect the character of the
18 neighborhood, simply put the city is not doing
19 enough to mitigate the documented negative impacts
20 of increased development to the Jerome Avenue
21 area. Despite the city's community outreach
22 efforts of the Jerome Avenue Neighborhood Plan we
23 find a disconnect between the plan's goals and
24 strategies identified in the rezoning proposal to
25 achieve them. We... therefore we remain concerned

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2 about housing affordability, residential and
3 commercial displacement and the impacts on
4 neighborhoods, neighborhood schools, daycare
5 facilities and public open space. The city claims
6 residential displacement from the construction of
7 3,200 dwelling units spurred by the rezoning would
8 be mitigated by affordable units created under the
9 mandatory inclusionary housing program however the
10 city has yet to disclose the total number of
11 expected affordable units or the income
12 requirements for those units. Like Council Member
13 Gibson we, we find that this gap in the
14 socioeconomic analysis to be unacceptable, the
15 city needs to disclose how many units are going to
16 be affordable and without a detailed plan we
17 question the validity of the, the whole proposal.
18 Even with the application of mandatory
19 inclusionary housing the median income in the
20 Jerome Avenue neighborhood is only 26,000 dollars
21 which would mean the deep affordability option
22 34,000 dollars is well above that meaning most
23 households wouldn't be able to afford the deepest
24 affordable apartments. We want to reiterate the
25 concern for the loss of automotive jobs made by

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2 the Pratt Center and it's clear that the city has
3 no specific plan to protect those jobs and we want
4 to keep that a continued concern. We're also very
5 concerned about the introduction of 9,600 new
6 residents and the increase on schools, the schools
7 being at 170 percent in some districts this is a...
8 this is a grave issue and as Council Member Gibson
9 mentioned the city must address the shortage of
10 school seats. We're also concerned about open
11 space, the... after the rezoning this, this area
12 will only have 20... meet 21 percent of the city's
13 goal of two and a half acres per thousand
14 residents which is a net six percent decrease from
15 current conditions. We implore the city to find
16 additional sites for new open space. Thank you for
17 the opportunity to speak today.

18 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Sir.

19 ALTON ANDERSON: Hello everyone, my
20 name is Mr. Alton Anderson and I am retired from
21 the New York City Housing Authority. I had been a
22 supervisor, exterminator, a boiler man and I sing
23 too but the thing is I, I don't find it fair when
24 I was working there I was able to be my own boss,
25 run their supervision, I was as I said an

1
2 exterminator, a boiler man and so on but I think
3 the, the, the amount of money you should get
4 should be a, according to the job that you're
5 doing but I still also felt that when you're in
6 housing the amount that, that, that they shouldn't
7 be thrown out because their income is low because
8 that's what's going on and I was work... I was
9 living in the housing authority itself also, but I
10 also increased my ability to get a higher position
11 as I said and became an exterminator and
12 everything else but I, I think the rent should
13 still go according to what a person makes and what
14 their income is. I can't... I mean technically if I
15 was a, a millionaire it doesn't meant nothing to
16 me, I don't give a doggone about a high-class car,
17 it's just a car to me, it doesn't mean nothing.
18 The main thing that housing needs to do is let
19 these people have their apartment according to
20 what they can afford, being rich don't make you no
21 better, if I was a billionaire what am I going to
22 do with the money, all I can do with it is just
23 help the people. Rich people being rich don't mean
24 nothing so what if I was billionaire it don't mean
25 nothing to me, having a car so what, the car can't

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2 really make you happy, what makes you happy is how
3 you feel towards each other as a human being, I
4 don't have time for the races and all that old
5 dumb stuff, my mother never taught us that, never
6 brought it up to us, I knew what it was, I was
7 with Martin Luther King and all of that but ain't
8 nobody no better than nobody, having money and all
9 that don't make you no better. We have to stick
10 together as a United States and as a country.
11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, any
13 questions? Thank you very much. Thank you. The
14 next panel Carolyn Wilson from CASA, no. Lourdes
15 Delacruz; Bryant Brown, Bryant Brown, no. Last
16 name Young, Shawnie, no. Claud S. Copeland Junior,
17 no. Narciso Salcedo; Enrique Colone, that's four;
18 Atheala [sp?] Yerk [sp?], Yerk, okay. So that's
19 five. Read.. you're reading whose testimony, but
20 you are? Okay, yeah, okay. Nell Baldwin, no.
21 Antoinette Rose. Thank you so you can proceed.

22 NARCISO SALCEDO: [foreign dialogue] My
23 name is Narciso Salcedo and I represent the
24 organization CASA. [foreign dialogue] I want to
25 let you know why I oppose the rezoning of Jerome

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2 Avenue, we have been working over two years to
3 create a vision for our community and the city has
4 completely ignored us, we need housing... we need
5 housing we can afford, real protections from
6 displacement and good local jobs including new
7 jobs and protections for small local businesses
8 and auto workers. The city hasn't listened to us
9 and this rezoning will hurt our community so, so
10 vote no.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

12 NARCISO SALCEDO: [foreign dialogue] He
13 basically said for tenants that are living in an
14 apartment that they now can afford in the future
15 they won't be able to afford that because the
16 rents will continue to increase if this rezoning
17 happens. He says that over 50 percent of tenants
18 in the community are paying over 50 percent of
19 their income in rent and we, we need to make sure
20 that the average tenant only pays 30 percent of
21 their income in rent and yeah, that's more or less
22 some of the main points he, he mentioned.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, thank
24 you. Okay, now Enrique I just want to make
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something clear you're, you're testifying on your behalf?

ENRIQUE COLONE: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: And then you're... you said you had testimony... [cross-talk]

ENRIQUE COLONE: I'm reading Atheala Yerk's after, yes... [cross-talk]

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, hers... you can submit her testimony... [cross-talk]

ENRIQUE COLONE: She wanted me to read it, is that possible?

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: We're, we're pressed for time, so you can submit that testimony and you can testify on your behalf.

ENRIQUE COLONE: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay.

ENRIQUE COLONE: So, my name is Enrique Colone, I live in the Southwest Bronx in the Morris Heights section of the Bronx for over 40 years and I'm a member of CASA and also the Bronx Coalition for Community Vision. The coalition is against this rezoning. There's a lot of things that need to happen before this rezoning should be voted on. The number of apartments should be cut

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2 down by half, instead of building 4,000 units we
3 want 2,000 units to be built to make sure that all
4 the apartments are subsidized and affordable for
5 the majority of the people that live in our
6 community now which make an average of between
7 27,000 dollars... or 25,000 dollars or less. Also we
8 need some strong protections for the auto workers,
9 the auto workers are not here because they're
10 working, sometimes they work six, seven days a
11 week and around seven or nine o'clock in the
12 evening so that's why you don't see him... see them
13 here but what the city is planning to save for
14 them is only about 16 percent of the land for them
15 and we're... the coalition is pushing for at least
16 64 percent of the land to be saved for the auto
17 workers. There's already speculation along Jerome,
18 there are small businesses that have closed, there
19 was a store on 170th on the corner of Jerome that
20 had to move to 167th because his rent was doubled,
21 and we've also been hearing some rumors lately
22 that a business down the block from us that has
23 the Drinks Galore is planning to sell. So, there's
24 already speculation even though the rezoning
25 hasn't passed. So, there really needs to be some

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2 strong protections in order to protect the tenants
3 who live in the community now, all the small
4 businesses and the over 200 auto shops. And, and
5 also just to wrap up as tenants have said
6 landlords are increasing their harassment tactics
7 by charging MCI's sometimes not doing the work in
8 their buildings but charging them and if tenants
9 don't reply with a reasonable amount of time those
10 MCI's become part of their rent and they're
11 permanent even though the landlord recoups those
12 MCI's in five, six years for example and also
13 preferential rents is a huge increase. Many
14 tenants sign preferential rents and landlords are
15 using these... this to displace tenants and we're
16 seeing this in our office every week, tenants come
17 to our office with these issues and they're... those
18 issues are increasing. So, we need to make sure
19 that there are strong protections that landlords
20 don't harass tenants, so they're not displaced
21 when this rezoning happens. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Please.

23 ANTOINETTE ROSE: My name is Antoinette
24 Rose and I'm with the North Bronx Coalition and I
25 reside at 241 East Mosholu Parkway North,

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2 apartment 4G, Bronx, New York 10467. I say no to
3 the rezoning, we are also concerned that the city
4 does not even intend to use ELLA which represents
5 the current best option for affordability. HPD
6 has... the current best option for H... I'm sorry, HPD
7 has guaranteed that at least ten percent of units
8 will be set aside for families earning less than
9 30 percent of the area median income, AMI and an
10 additional ten percent will be set aside for
11 families earning between 30 to 50 percent AMI in
12 the HPD financed new construction development but
13 these numbers are lower than what the ELLA team
14 sheet requires and significantly lower than what
15 the current, currently being created in our
16 community, how is this commitment a good option
17 for our community?

18 LOURDES DELACRUZ: [foreign dialogue]

19 Good afternoon, my name is Lourdes Delacruz and I
20 also live in the Southwest Bronx and I'm in the
21 study area of the Jerome Avenue rezoning. [foreign
22 dialogue] I'm also a CASA leader and obviously I'm
23 against this rezoning and the reason why is when
24 we see other rezoning's it's not just about
25 changing the way the land is used but it's also

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2 about changing the people that live in the
3 neighborhood. [foreign dialogue] And how is that
4 people are changed it's that Latino's, Afro
5 Americans are removed from the community and its
6 rich people that come in and whiter people.
7 [foreign dialogue] That is simply segregation,
8 discrimination and racism. [foreign dialogue] but
9 our solution is that the city should do a study to
10 make sure that every unit of affordable housing
11 that we lose is replaced by another unit of
12 affordable housing. [foreign dialogue] And there's
13 this word that I hear a lot about schools and
14 education and I'm not sure what the city's
15 definition is, but the fact is that we have... I
16 live in district nine and it's a, a district
17 that's consistently been failing to meet academic
18 standards. [foreign dialogue] Nine years ago I
19 joined the Parent Action Committee and here I am
20 nine years later still with the Parent Action
21 Committee because district nine has been
22 consistently failing to meet academic standards
23 and is one of the lowest resource... lowest
24 districts with least access to resources. [foreign
25 dialogue] Our school district is overpopulated,

1
2 there's many... there's high rates of suspensions
3 and arrests and also, we have the biggest
4 population of students that are coming from
5 shelters. [foreign dialogue] What we're here is...
6 to demand is not only that we should be mixing the
7 way... the, the boundaries and allowing other
8 students from other districts to come in but... but
9 we're here to demand that there be an increase in
10 social workers. [foreign dialogue] And we're also
11 talking about that we need policies, real policies
12 so it's not just setting up a metal detector for
13 schools to... for safety in the neighborhood.

14 [foreign dialogue] And what we're also demanding
15 is that the city mandates a culturally... a response
16 to culturally sensitive trainings so... because our
17 students are often seen by the same teachers that
18 are teaching our kids they see our kids as violent
19 and aggressive and so we need teachers that
20 understand our culture and are trained in a manner
21 that allows us... in a way that is sensitive of our
22 cultures. [foreign dialogue] And it is really
23 concerning to me to see eight or nine-year-old
24 kids on the four train at eight in the morning
25 pushing and shoving and having to go and travel to

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2 another school district outside of our boundaries
3 because of the lack of quality of access they have
4 to the current education and so don't talk to us
5 about education when we haven't resolved any of
6 the currently existing problems already. Gracias.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Gracias, thank you.

8 LOURDES DELACRUZ: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you very much.

10 Marco Neira. Is that Shala? Shala Garcia. Robert
11 Gumbs, Robert, you, you can submit it, yeah. Esti
12 Agolie. Dave Subrin [sp?]; Jocelyn Taylor. Is
13 there anyone else who would like to speak? No,
14 thank you. please proceed, thank you.

15 MARCO NEIRA: Good afternoon everyone,
16 my name is Marco Neira, I'm the President of
17 Sunrise Cooperative, Willets Point Boulevard. I'm
18 here today to support all the people from Jerome
19 Avenue on no rezoning of, of the area because what
20 the people tell over here sounds beautiful and is
21 kind of tremendous project but I'm here and a real
22 example of what happened with us in Willets Point.
23 The same situation as these people in Jerome
24 Avenue who they are in the same inducer as we are
25 they promised to us... this hearing remember me 2008

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2 when they promised to us they going to give us
3 allocation, they going to give... whatever we need
4 in order to take us out of the place and then they
5 promised to us a relocation, we found... we, we won
6 a lawsuit against the city five point millions and
7 invest in the Bronx for some reasons the previous
8 council member before in Corona they help us in
9 order to start the project and they... and she
10 promised to us they going to finish the project
11 with us but at the end we went to the Bronx, the
12 project was 95 percent almost ready and the
13 project failed because we didn't have enough money
14 to continue and nobody can help us as right now
15 not even the present council member of Corona, we
16 be... we trying to reach him two... twice at his
17 office and no, we don't have any answer, in order
18 to... why are you going to lend us this money, five
19 point... millions thrown into the trash like nothing
20 and we are on the streets with this weather,
21 people walking on the streets because they don't
22 have any place... they... we don't have money to
23 create an income to bring to our families so it's
24 changed all the... all the politicians don't help us
25 and let the... this greedy landlord get the, the

1
2 project and throw everybody out of the place when
3 the... when the project was 95 percent complete so
4 thank you for listening to me.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Well, well Marco I
6 am the current Council Member so... [cross-talk]

7 MARCO NEIRA: Nice to meet you.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Nice to meet you so
9 if you'd like after this you can come and get my
10 information and... [cross-talk]

11 MARCO NEIRA: Sure... [cross-talk]

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: ...more than happy to
13 sit down and have a conversation... [cross-talk]

14 MARCO NEIRA: Thank you very much.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, absolutely,
16 thank you.

17 DAVE SUBRIN: Hello, okay. Hi, my, my
18 name is Dave Subrin representing CASA. First of
19 all, just, just as observation protest, for every
20 person you see here there's at least ten people
21 who couldn't be here because of the inconvenience
22 of time and once again... and we only get like two
23 minutes, this thing is like very stat. Now too... a
24 lot of people, guests today talked about the, the,
25 the affordability of the apartments, I want to

1
2 talk about the quality of life with the rezoning.
3 The first up is the transportation, the Jerome
4 Avenue rezoning should be scaled back also because
5 of mass transit concern and here's why. Whenever
6 there's an event like a baseball game at Yankee
7 Stadium the four, five, D trains, buses and metro
8 North lines are packed, you actually have to go...
9 hello? You actually have to go downtown to go... to
10 get back up town and that's only for intermittent
11 events. Imagine when over 4,000 people suddenly
12 move into Jerome Avenue corridor and near... and
13 nearby neighbors permanently will be a perineal
14 nightmare every day. There is no way to build more
15 routes except if you use the Harlem River. As a
16 preview and an example look at the L line to and
17 from Williamsburg at Union Square, it now looks
18 like Grand Central Terminal. Another thing with
19 the Yankee Stadium is the broken promises in the
20 form of community benefit agreements which never
21 benefited the surrounding areas of Yankee Stadium
22 and I have here the attachment of... from the New
23 York Times article June 27th, 2017 entitled Yankees
24 Charity Neglects Stadiums Neighbors instead some
25 of the monies went as far as Riverdale and this is

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2 what it looks like. Second is, is my plan for the,
3 the auto workers. The auto repair workers along
4 Jerome Avenue corridor should become worker owned
5 properties which are controlled by the members on
6 the basis of one member one vote, given enough
7 time worker owned corporators tend to increase
8 wages and improve worker conditions resulting in
9 the local co-op staying, staying where, where it
10 was founded an access of leadership building force
11 in the community. There is no greater anecdote for
12 apathy and feelings of living on the edge of
13 society than to see your own work and your voice
14 make a difference. By spreading risk and pooling
15 resources co-ops offer people with little
16 individual wealth a way to start their own
17 businesses and build assets. Another plus is the
18 huge reductions of CEO to minimum wage worker pay
19 ratio. The example is home care associates or HCA
20 from Fordham Road but to be clear passing co-op
21 friendly laws is going to take political will and
22 power of the sort that elected todays progressive
23 city leadership like Helen Rosenthal who has
24 personal experience in a family of small co-ops
25 along with Carlos Menchaca who has introduced a

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2 worker co-op bill called Intro 423 a while ago.
3 Also, Marisol Alcantara, the 31st district state,
4 state senator who has... who also has a bill, S7309,
5 which so far has passed the senate. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

7 ESTI AGOLIE: Hello, good afternoon
8 panel, my name is Esti Agolie. America is a
9 blissful opportunity. I came here for an American
10 dream, I live here, I work... I used to live... I used
11 to be a tenant of... Avenue. The landlord that
12 rented the apartment to me was a good landlord
13 until this landlord bought the building over
14 [inaudible] too and when they came they didn't...
15 they wouldn't make a deal with the tenants, they
16 start harassing the tenants and because of this
17 now I've been displaced, I was in school from 2000
18 when the harassment started I couldn't focus, I
19 couldn't continue with my studies, I couldn't
20 work, they did many things... terrible things to me.
21 [inaudible] Miss Carmen said most of it that
22 concerns me and right now because I wanted an
23 apartment so badly I've been displaced, I used to
24 pay 830 dollars for a one bedroom but now they
25 increase it to 1,200, 1,300. I was unable to pay

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2 that in rent, I was in court fighting for it, I
3 lived in that apartment for 16 and a half years, I
4 became CASA... I became a member of CASA so that it
5 can help me too but by the time we got through
6 they said they didn't want anything which the
7 lawyer, lawyer that represented me just did it
8 once, I got one shot deal to get through with the
9 apartment, they didn't want it so with this
10 rezoning people that are coming, the landlords
11 that are coming in, I don't think they are meant
12 for us, they are meant for the rich and they are
13 going to increase the place. I've already been
14 displaced, right now I'm in Brooklyn, I love the
15 Bronx so much, I've lived in the Bronx for almost
16 31 years, I came here for American dream, but I
17 didn't get the opportunity to accomplish my dream.
18 So, please help us, people like me I still want to
19 come back to the Bronx, right now I'm in Brooklyn
20 shelter, a women's shelter and I'm not living to
21 be comfortable where I want to so please help us
22 residents of the Bronx so that they don't increase
23 the rents of the buildings. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, can you
25 just state your name for the record?

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2 ESTI AGOLIE: Estie Agolie, a g o l i
3 e.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

5 ESTI AGOLIE: Thank you sir.

6 SHALA GARCIA: Hello, I'm Shala Garcia,
7 I am the Director at CASA, I also sit as tenant
8 representative appointed by this current
9 administration. I think that the effect of
10 affordable housing... the effect of the rezoning
11 just a plan and just a statement has affected the
12 affordable housing we currently have in the area
13 that we organize and so just to put it into
14 perspective we put this nice chart in the back of
15 the actual breakdown of income in the rezoning
16 area for community board four and five. My members
17 all 5,000 of them that we engage in one year so
18 that's one person per household are making about
19 18,000 dollars a year that is data that comes
20 directly from legal services and legal aid and UJC
21 when they represent our tenants and so that's the
22 average income of... that's the income of... on
23 average of every tenant that we engage in our
24 district. I think that that is... speaks volumes
25 into the current plan of what you... what the... what

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2 this rezoning would build. I think the other piece
3 to think about is that our statement about cutting
4 the rezoning isn't a statement that sounds pretty
5 or would be nice it's actually that... a thing that
6 makes logical sense so to Council Member Gibson's
7 statement about wanting more affordable housing
8 you can't get that affordable housing if you are
9 thinking that 4,000 is what we're going to get
10 just, just, just do the math in, you know what the
11 breakdowns are and so even MIH doesn't work in the
12 Bronx, right because it's too high. The current
13 term sheets that the landlords choose to take two
14 tiers on the top or in the middle they leave all
15 of our residents out so even if it was 50 percent
16 at those tiers we would... we would be displacing a
17 whole bunch of people and I just want to talk a
18 little bit about the effect of just the rent laws
19 because I know that this, this body and the city
20 and the administration itself doesn't have the
21 ability to effect the rent laws or... as much as we
22 can talk about them but you do have an ability to
23 impact and that impact is really important and so
24 a decision to rezone large... a large portion,
25 right, Cabrera you mentioned earlier that you

1
2 thought the rezoning was too small at the
3 beginning, we think it's too big. A retention of
4 auto workers would happen, deeper affordability
5 that means you focus on 2,000 units, they're
6 currently building at a higher rate than anywhere
7 else in the city, you don't actually have to
8 rezone to build affordable housing, you're already
9 doing it. And so it's really important that we no
10 longer pretend that, you know people couldn't
11 answer questions because they can't actually
12 publicly state that they're going to be able to
13 guarantee affordable housing because they can't
14 and so it's really important that we like stop
15 pretending that it won't effect, it won't
16 displace, we know what happen in Harlem, we know
17 what happened in East New York, you know
18 Williamsburg, you know there was a change of race
19 and income and that isn't by... it didn't happen on
20 its own there were rezoning that were there before
21 and so let's stop pretending that these things
22 don't happen, that they're not racial and that
23 they're not about class because all of our
24 members, you know this room was packed and they
25 all had to leave because they all had to go to

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2 job... work or pick up kids and we are... we're
3 actually not representative of the thousands of
4 people that were engaged in this process who were
5 all, you know vocally saying no again and again
6 and yet the community board voted yes, you know
7 the Borough President voted yes and now the city...
8 the City Planning Commission voted yes even though
9 the community has been saying no again and again
10 and so ignoring all of those questions, all those
11 unanswered questions without any commitment and
12 moving forward would be detrimental to the
13 community and I don't think that the... you know the
14 city council and this administration can continue
15 to move forward like this. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. So, I'd
17 like to turn it over to Council Member Gibson for
18 closing remarks. Thank you to this panel...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you very
20 much to our last panel and certainly as we close
21 today's hearing I want to thank each and everyone
22 of you, all the residents and advocates and
23 community-based organizations that attended today.
24 I certainly want to recognize the land use
25 division for their incredible work, we did not get

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2 here easily, this has been a very, very long
3 journey. I want to thank Chair Moya for his
4 leadership in moving this process along and
5 certainly my partner, Council Member Fernando
6 Cabrera for his partnership in this effort. I, I
7 simply could not allow this hearing to end today
8 without making sure that a couple of things go on
9 record, please understand that moving forward
10 understanding the make up of our community, of our
11 district, I want to make sure that certain things
12 go on record. Do we struggle in school district
13 nine, absolutely but please do not minimize the
14 level of work that has been done because of this
15 city council we aggressively fought the Department
16 of Education to get the first 25 million dollars
17 of money for restorative justice. We have worked
18 together in school district nine with new
19 settlement pack to address the pipeline to prison,
20 to make sure that young people are not facing
21 harsher penalties just because of the color of
22 their skin and because of the work of us district
23 nine was able to reduce it's numbers by over, 50
24 percent less children of color, children with
25 IEP's, children who were immigrants, children with

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2 disabilities that are less likely to be arrested
3 and given summons in our school district. So, yes,
4 we have challenges and there are many schools in
5 district nine that continue to struggle but please
6 let's not minimize the level of work that has been
7 done. In this city council under my leadership
8 every single year I invest thousands of dollars in
9 our schools from PS11, PS126, PS73, the Highbridge
10 Middle School, 55, PS 63, 454, PS294, I can go on
11 and on because I know our schools. We have been
12 making great progress, but we certainly need to do
13 much better. So, I want everyone to be clear and
14 understand we have to do better by our children so
15 that families have confidence in sending their
16 kids to school. We are gracious because we're
17 getting universal Pre-K for three-year olds next
18 year, so we have to talk about that pipeline for
19 three-year olds to get into universal Pre-K. We
20 have recognized the incredible challenges that we
21 face in Jerome, we know that we lack city owned
22 land, we know the uncertainties in working with
23 private owners and landlords but the city of New
24 York has a lot of leverage at it's disposal, if we
25 do absolutely nothing in this community we will

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2 continue to look the way we look now for the next
3 50 years and as the council member of district 16,
4 many of you who voted for me I refuse to accept
5 the future of our community looking the way it is
6 today, it will not happen and we recognize that we
7 have to do things different, the deep
8 affordability, the new construction, the local
9 hiring, the MWBE provisions, making sure that at
10 the end of the day we do everything possible to
11 minimize and or prevent displacement. This city
12 council, this administration invested in right to
13 counsel when no one else did it before we did, 62
14 million dollars of funds for civil legal services,
15 in year five 155 million dollars that we will
16 invest in anti-eviction services, those numbers
17 are real and that effects our district so I don't
18 want anyone to leave here thinking that nothing
19 has been done, a lot has been done, can a lot more
20 be done, absolutely but with the uncertainty of
21 moving forward in a new administration that we
22 don't know who they will be today we have got to
23 take advantage of an opportunity that is
24 presenting itself to us today and I think that's
25 why everyone is simply so passionate because we

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2 realize there is a lot at stake and I agree with
3 you. There are some nuances that are outside of
4 the city's purview and we have talked aggressively
5 and as a former member of the state along with
6 Chair Moya we stood ground with rent regulation,
7 with repealing Earth stat, with reforming IAI and
8 vacancy de-control and vacancy bonuses and all the
9 things we know the state legislature should do and
10 that must continue to happen. We have got to make
11 sure that we're looking at all of the
12 possibilities in this plan and so I certainly want
13 to leave all of you my community that has, has
14 been with me, that has worked with me that we hear
15 you, this has been one of the greatest challenges
16 of my career as an elected official, there is a
17 lot at stake but I am always optimistic of
18 achieving a balance which means that we satisfy as
19 many as we can, that's the spirit of everything we
20 do as elected officials and it is not easy to sit
21 here in these shoes, it's not easy to walk a day
22 in my life because there are a lot of
23 uncertainties, there are a lot of variables and a
24 lot at stake, I get it community but I really and
25 truly believe that in the next few weeks you are

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2 going to hear more commitment and more assurances
3 that this is a plan that moves us in the right
4 direction and so I thank you, I thank the chair
5 for indulging me because I am very passionate
6 about this, I do this work every single day and I
7 hear from many, many residents so please don't
8 think that your concerns fall on death ears they
9 do not, I have tried my best and I will continue
10 to try my best and raise the bar and raise the
11 level of standards that we have always been
12 entitled to in our district. So, I thank you for
13 staying this afternoon, I wish you safe travels
14 and certainly looking forward to working with each
15 and everyone of you. Thank you so much for being
16 here today.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you
18 Councilwoman Gibson, Council Member Cabrera.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Mr. Chairman
20 I'd like to thank you again for allowing us to be
21 here today and for your leadership and also all
22 your staff for land use and for all the work, for
23 all the advocates that were here today. I want to
24 echo what Council Member Gibson had just
25 mentioned, I, I just want to get a little

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2 historical here for a second because perhaps you
3 do not realize that eight years ago when Council
4 Member Helen Foster was the Council Member where
5 Council Member Gibson is now a Council Member and
6 in my district we were receiving... we were in the
7 bottom 20 percent when it came to funding that was
8 coming to our city and so we did rules reforms and
9 I was one of the four involved in those rules
10 reform, we worked on it for, for an entire year to
11 make sure that now every district gets the same
12 amount of capital funding, discretionary funding
13 and as a result of that we have seen in both of
14 our districts an unprecedented amount of funding
15 that has come... I know in my district it brought 20
16 million dollars for education. we have seen
17 unemployment rates go down from 23.5, we were the
18 worst one in the entire city now it's, its below
19 seven percent. We saw violence, murders go down 66
20 percent and graduation rates from 65 to 73 percent
21 so what we're asking today and will continue to
22 ask until we get to the finish line here is not...
23 I, I want to be clear here, it's not to get us
24 what was owed to us, what we are asking here is to
25 make sure that we have the infrastructure

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2 necessary to be able to absorb the people who need
3 affordable housing, I'm with you, I hear you and
4 we've been pressing because of you, because of you
5 the community, the ELLA has moved, it's not the
6 same Ella that I saw when I... when we first started
7 here so we have seen movement take place, we're
8 still working some things out and I believe that
9 at the end of the day if, if everything comes
10 together and rightly so that we will have one of
11 the best rezoning that we have ever seen in the
12 city of New York because we desperately need a
13 change in this Jerome corridor so thank you so
14 much Mr. Chairman, thank you for allowing us to
15 indulge especially here at the very end.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: No, thank you. Thank
17 you to my colleagues and I will close the public
18 hearing on these items, but I want to thank all of
19 the individuals that gave testimony and I just
20 wanted to let you know that we will be considering
21 all aspects of the rezoning in the weeks to come
22 and before we make any decisions on LU... sorry... I'm
23 sorry? That... these... on, on any of the decisions
24 that we make I just want to say that on LU 15, 16,
25 17, 18, and 19 will be laid over for future

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consideration, consideration and this meeting is
adjourned.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date

February 21, 2018