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Gale A. Brewer, Borough President

April 5, 2021

**Testimony of Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer to the City Council
Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
Governors Island Rezoning – South Island - City Council Number C 210127 ZMM**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding this proposed rezoning of Governors Island. I am here to speak in opposition to this application as key issues remain unresolved. However, I'm pleased to see that the Trust has made some modifications and commitments surrounding their proposal in response to community concerns.

First, I note that there is a proposed expansion of the open space on the South Island through a commitment to further widen the waterfront esplanade on the Eastern edge. This will support more room for pedestrians, cyclists, as well as an important public connection to the waterfront. As part of this proposal, open space will be expanded now by at least 7 acres.

Second, I see that the Trust has responded to community concerns regarding open space protections by drastically limiting uses allowed in the open space to only small-scale park amenities.

I commend the Trust for ensuring that the Harbor School is able to get a new facility at Building 515, with room for additional classrooms, a gymnasium, and a pool to support their unique water-dependent programs.

However, I still have concerns about the proposed scale of development and use groups. I believe that what the Trust has continued to put forward has the potential to drastically alter one of the most important public space assets in New York City. The overarching goals of increasing public access and attaining financial self-sufficiency should not come at the expense of the unique character of the island.

The buildings that the Trust is proposing would rise as high as 250 feet. I'm glad to see that a reduction of the maximum heights has been made, as well as a lowering of the maximum base heights of all buildings to be more in line with the Historic District, but that maximum height should be 125 feet to really reflect the scale of the Historic District. The proposed buildings are completely out of scale with the existing historic buildings.

The Trust has stated that it needs additional income to meet the island's operating expenses. Without disclosure of more detailed financial information, it is impossible to understand what scale of development is needed to sustain the park. In addition, since the plan does not allow the Trust to reach a break-even point until 2050, it is hard to anticipate changes that might arise and pose a financial threat to that plan. A superstorm event could significantly set back construction and jeopardize the revenue plan.

If this plan were to go forward, improvements that serve the island's existing tenants should be prioritized. Earth Matters, which has also been on the island since 2010 is now to be preserved under the Trust's latest proposal. However, to fulfill their mission, Earth Matters will need to expand their footprint from 1 ½ acre to 2 acres. In addition, I support new turf fields and lighting for youth leagues and public schools.

I support the concept of a Climate Research tenant as the anchor of this plan. However, the Trust has not demonstrated that there is sufficient need or interest for such a facility at this location. The effects of the pandemic will continue to affect how long-term planning is done, especially with research and higher education. I am worried that organizations that might want to locate on the island will not be nonprofits or public-minded groups. I believe the Trust should demonstrate that this proposed plan will provide public benefits regardless of whether or not a climate center is built. In addition, since the proposed buildings will sit within the 1% annual chance flood plain, the decision to locate any further development on these sites should also be further scrutinized.

Any development on Governors Island must be done in accordance with significant and meaningful community input. I commend the Trust for allowing Community Board 1 review on tenancies over 7,500 zoning square feet on the North Island and applications for City Planning Commission authorizations. However, the Trust should commit to incorporating greater community input in guiding Governors Island's future. I am pleased that the Trust has been working with its Community Advisory Council on input into the future RFP for a climate center, and that they've committed to presenting finalist responses to Community Board 1.

The goal of any development on Governors Island should be to enhance the unique character of the island and its established uses. I believe that the goals of the rezoning can be achieved without a major impact on the pastoral and historic qualities that make this island such a magnet for the public. I exhort the Trust to prioritize the preservation of the island along with its other goals, but I continue to object to the proposed height of the buildings on the South Island.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your careful review of this application.

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

Good afternoon everyone. My name is Anita Chan and I am the coordinator of the Zero Waste Island Initiative on Governors Island. This initiative is a partnership between The Trust for Governors Island and Earth Matter NY with the goal of reducing the island's exported waste to zero.

Through the Zero Waste Island Initiative and the space that we operate in, we are able to educate the public, island partners, island staff, students, aspiring resource managers, and climate activists and provide training opportunities on zero waste practices, sustainable waste management, composting, and more. All of the island generated organic waste is processed into compost at our Compost Learning Center and used to grow food on our Soil Start Farm, nourish the Governors Island landscapes, and give back to the larger NYC community. What we do actively helps to combat climate change and offers a closed-loop model that can be exported elsewhere.

We've had so much success in the past years with the immense support of the Trust and want to be able to continue this partnership. I want to thank the Trust for confirming that Earth Matter and other partners will not be displaced. The next step is to ensure adequate space is provided so that we can operate in a capacity that would meet the needs of the community and address the urgent climate crisis. We need space for our Compost Learning Center, Soil Start Farm, a organic waste collection depot, sorting space, and space for the processing of organic waste. I ask that the City Council vote to designate 2 acres of permanent space in the development zone for Earth Matter NY which will ensure the continuation of our collaborations with The Trust.

Thank you.

Anita Chan

Long Island City, NY 11101

From: [anya krawcheck](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: written testimony re: rezoning of Governors Island land use
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 11:41:01 AM

Hello, my name is Anya Krawcheck and I had signed up to testify at this mornings hearing. I believe my sentiments to be better communicated through a letter and so while I will not be joining via zoom, I would like my letter below to be considered.

Many Thanks,
Anya Krawcheck

"My name is Anya Krawcheck and I am writing against the proposed land rezoning of Governors Island.

Losing Governors Island in it's current form which is a public space for education, art, recreation and escape would be a huge loss for New Yorkers. The island is currently visited by 800,000+ visitors every year who enjoy Governors Island for it's charm, history and feeling of being completely and wonderfully out of place in downtown Manhattan.

Governors Island serves as an incredible historic documentation of the cities military history in Downtown Manhattan. Serving as a memorial to the veterans who served the city and the country through numerous wars.

Being a public park, the loss of public space in lower Manhattan- which is already limited in number but also pales in comparison to the acreage that Governors Island provides- would be most disproportionately felt by lower income individuals who, for \$2 can escape from the closed doors and exclusivity that is entrenched in the financial district and much of the city. The ways that the Governors Island Trust have fostered artists, providing space and resources for art to exist and be interacted with by the visitors is unique and would be difficult to replace in a different location for any amount of money.

Governors Island is a place to captures the imagination. This is evidenced by the numerous historic festivals that take place there. The spirit of the island would be sorely damaged if the proposed rezoning were to be passed.

The wild, untameable, remote essence that draws in so many visitors every year would surely be damaged if those historic structures were surrounded by brand new buildings. The study of climate science is an admirable and necessary pursuit, but to take land away from the public- including lower income groups who are already disproportionately affected by climate change would not fix the problem. In fact it would exacerbate it by reducing the resources available to those most affected by it.

I urge you to reject this proposed re-zoning and maintain the spirit and true value of Governors Island intact as being a place for people, culture and recreation.

Sincerely,
Anya Krawcheck"

From: [Andrea Lieske](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony on land use on Governors Island
Date: Sunday, April 4, 2021 11:21:13 PM

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Andrea Lieske, I have been working for Earth Matter NY for the last 7 years. I started as a volunteer and apprentice and was fortunate to later be hired by the organization that I so admired. I am writing to you today to urge you to oppose the current Governors Island Trust's ULURP the way it stands.

I would like to request that the Council votes to designate 2 acres of space for Earth Matter operation in the proposed ULURP for Governors Island. The ongoing fight of our fellow community compost organization the LESEC and Big Reuse to keep their space illustrates how fragile the position of NYC composters is without designated space. It also illustrates the need for the city to designate space for local composting in addition to funding.

A designated 2 acres of land are necessary to sustain Earth Matter's work and help them continue to thrive as they carry on with the Zero Waste Island collaboration with The Trust , composting residential food scraps, educating New Yorkers about compost and offering hands-on environmental activities to bring home how to be part of the cycle. I respect and admire The Trust and their vision for their climate solutions study center and look forward to seeing it carry on to thrive, especially in partnership with Earth Matter NY.

Please make certain that the proposed ULURP for Governors Island designates the necessary space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. We need dedicated composting spaces to have sustainability thrive in the city.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony.

Sincerely,
Andrea Lieske

New York, NY 10026

From: [Amanda McLoughlin](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island Testimony
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 9:35:20 AM

Hello -

I would like to express my strong disagreement with the proposed rezoning of Governors Island. As one of the city's last remaining open spaces, it is essential that it is protected as a place of recreation and access to the outdoors for New Yorkers. The city already has thousands of empty hotel rooms taking space, resources, and tax revenue away from the unhoused. The absolute last thing that park needs is another half-empty hotel priced for businessmen and the out of town wealthy.

-Amanda McLoughlin
amcloughlin@gmail.com

Brooklyn, NY 11222

From: [alex sol](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: save governors Island!
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 9:23:37 AM

I do not want to see rezoning of Governors Island happen in my lifetime. This is too important a resource for residents to turn it over to the greedy hands of corporate interests. It took long enough for us to get on the island don't take it away from us now.

Sincerely,
Alex Solmssen

From: [Andi Sosin](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Cc: [Seaport Coalition](#)
Subject: Governor's Island Testimony
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 2:24:15 PM

My name is Adrienne Andi Sosin, and I live in downtown Manhattan. I have visited Governors Island many times, basically to walk around, go see the art at Figment, hear Battala practice on a lawn, and my best memory is of my grandson's third birthday party, a picnic in the old historic area where a sweet visiting carnival had rides for children.

Now my idyllic memories may be unrepeatable because of the specter of development of tall towers on the Island. As a member of the Seaport Coalition, we want to protect another historic district from speculation; this historic, beautiful and basically unspoiled land is subject to runaway capitalism, much like in the early 20th century when it took tragedies like the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire to inspire activism that instituted governmental controls to regulate unrestrained private interests from taking advantage of public assets. The Reform movements that generated out of the Triangle Fire benefited everyone. If the progressive era ushered in by the Biden administration is meant to really benefit all the people, vulture capitalism needs to take a pause.

Because where is the benefit to the public to allow Governors Island to become denser with tall buildings, with a hotel? Even with laudable goals of expanding public uses, I am against these speculative and untimely efforts to monetize it with the Trust's proposals. The GI Trust can seek other sources of support from the government, particularly without building tall and massive buildings, and keep it in the public domain.

Governors Island is and should remain a public asset. CB1 has resolved appropriately, protecting public parkland, the MAGIC coalition has proposed better solutions, and there must be a zoned height limit on any building. This current GI Trust rezoning application should be denied.

Thank you.
Adrienne Andi Sosin, Ed.D.

April 5, 2021

Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
Committee on Land Use
New York City Council
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

RE: Written testimony on Governors Island Rezoning: OPPOSED

Dear Members of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to the Governors Island Rezoning. We oppose the rezoning because Earth Matter's request to set aside – on a long-term basis – 2 acres of the proposed 33-acre development zone for its composting and educational operations has yet to be formally incorporated. Earth Matter's activities currently occur across its 1.5 acre site. The increase to 2 acres will allow continued acceptance of all Island organics as development on the Island grows.

As Clare Newman of the Trust for Governors Island stated during the public hearing, Governors Island is a gem – a gem for New York City and for the broader country. Earth Matter NY is likewise a gem and national treasure for the City and for the country. It is a unique site with tremendous value to the City and public. It plays a key role in not only making Governors Island a model of zero waste but also in making food waste recycling and composting a transparent, easily understood process. Given the role of healthy soil in acting as a carbon sink, Earth Matter's operations align perfectly with the planned Center for Climate Solutions. Food loss and food waste in landfills is a top contributor to climate disruption. Compost is a soil amendment widely recognized for its ability to enhance soil fertility, structure, water-holding capacity; to prevent soil erosion and stormwater run-off; and to store carbon in soil and avoid potent greenhouse gas emissions.

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR) is a national nonprofit organization that supports environmentally sound and equitable community development. For more than four decades we have advanced waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting as means for local economic development and healthy communities.

I direct ILSR's Composting for Community Initiative and have 35 years experience promoting non-burn solutions to trash problems. My work includes researching and writing multiple guides and reports on the best recycling and composting programs in the country, and facilitating a national Community Composter Coalition, which has members in 34 states, including many in New York City. Indeed, New York City's master composter training programs and support for composting at community gardens and urban farms have been an inspiration for numerous initiatives and programs across the Big Apple and the United States. I can tell you unequivocally that Earth Matter NY is one of the best community composting sites in the country.

I have personally taken groups from other cities – such as the District of Columbia and Baltimore – to Governors Island to see Earth Matter’s operations. We also held our national Cultivating Community Composting conference in New York City in 2019. That four-day event included a full-day training for groups across the United States at Earth Matter’s composting and education center. More than 90 composters attended.

Community-scaled composting sites are essential and have many benefits. They have the unique ability to:

- Provide low-cost/low-tech organics processing infrastructure and capacity;
- Educate and directly engage with food waste generators on what, why, and how to compost;
- Manage the decomposition process, with careful attention to adhering to best practices and minimizing contaminants;
- Demonstrate first-hand why good compost is important for sustaining our food systems, and how urban green spaces are directly tied to our well-being and our way of life;
- Apply compost to improve soil within the same jurisdiction from where the material was generated, helping to “close the loop” locally and meet local demand for high-quality compost to improve local soils;
- Improve food insecurity in low-income and disadvantaged communities;
- Restore and manage green spaces in urban areas;
- Create local green jobs; and
- Build local resilience to climate change.

Earth Matter NY does all this and more.

I urge the Committee on Land Use and the Trust for Governors Island to help Earth Matter NY secure a long-term 2-acre space either through zoning or a Council requirement that its operations be included in the development RFP. Sounds like the Trust is committed to supporting Earth Matter. Hope that commitment includes a clear long-term commitment to a 2-acre space. Earth Matter needs adequate space designated for its operations and to accommodate growth on the Island.

The future looks brighter when it includes less trash and pollution and more healthy soils, green spaces, locally grown produce, and engaged citizens.

Sincerely,



Brenda Platt
Director, Composting for Community Initiative
Institute for Local Self-Reliance
1200 18th Street, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
bplatt@ilsr.org • 202-827-0842

From: payebwana@yahoo.com
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Oppose zoning!
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 9:00:56 AM

Dear City Councilmembers, Mayor, Borough Presidents, and Public Advocate:

I urge you to oppose the Trust For Governors Island (TGI) zoning proposal: it effectively privatizes 33 public acres and is just too big and too extreme. It is unnecessary and does more harm than good. Better alternatives exist that could generate revenue while doing less harm to the National Historic District and to the function of the island as a calm respite from the city.

The main rationale for this intrusive project – financial self-sufficiency for Governors Island – is not justified. The Trust’s own speculative projections (based on pre-covid conditions) state that financial self-sufficiency wouldn’t be achieved until 2050. Meanwhile it’ll cost taxpayers billions. Also, as Manhattan Community Board 1 points out in their 12/22/21 resolution, the Trust has not provided enough information to evaluate the project. As a City Planning Commissioner said at the March 1st public review, this project is akin to the City giving the Trust a blank check for an unspecified project

As the City is in the middle of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) public review process for Governors Island has been in contravention of the provisions of the City Charter and City Rules as found in the January 15, 2021 temporary restraining order granted to the Voice of Gowanus coalition.

The rezoning “encompassing the entirety of Governors Island” subjects the vast parkland to future encroachment from the currently designated development areas. (CB1 is requesting that the south island “Open space Subarea” be designated as public parkland.)

In the review of the rezoning plan, any discussion regarding a climate research center is irrelevant, misleading, and should be termed off-topic. This is a proposal to upzone the south island, period. There is nothing legally requiring that a climate center be the result. Mainly it serves as a potential “anchor tenant” in order to attract developers and sell the upzoning to the public. In fact, GI is already productive as a climate hub, thanks to the work of Earth Matter, GrowNYC, Billion Oyster Project, the Harbor School and others.

Any future South Island development should preserve GI’s one-of-a-kind feel of open space – defined not simply as pedestrian access as TGI is selling it, but involving sky (think air rights) and non-private areas. The “increased open space” that TGI is presenting is “woven open space similar to Battery Park City.” It’s boxed in by 10 – 30 story buildings and non-public areas. (None of the buildings currently on GI exceed 5 stories.)

We support more public amenities such as for the arts, athletic activities, playgrounds, waterfront access, urban farming, environmental projects, “wild” less-formal spaces, and a bandshell. We also support the Urban Assembly New York Harbor School community’s requests for a pool, a gymnasium and expansion into the neighboring former hospital building.

The priority for GI needs to be preserving our shared country place in the city for future generations – and not only for humans. GI is a haven for nature that yields significant ecosystem service benefits to NYC, and is already productive as a climate hub, thanks to the work of Earth Matter and GrowNYC (which have been sited in the area shown as empty land for several years), along with others.

There is a serious need of New Yorkers at this moment for solace and the last thing that many can afford right now is a vacation. 99% of New York City zip codes use Governor’s Island which offers what other major NYC public spaces can’t – a retreat, an adventure, a change of scenery, and escape from the glass and steel towers. This fight is about the need for tranquility, for solace, and sanctuary, and for the preservation of natural habitat and beauty.

I agree with the following, excerpted from the Manhattan Community Board 1 12/22/20 Resolution.

The city’s current proposed rezoning in its current form needs to be rejected in order to: “ensure the protection and preservation of the natural, cultural and historic qualities of Governors Island, guarantee public access to this magnificent island, promote the quality of public education, and enhance the ability of the public to enjoy Governors Island and the surrounding waterways, thereby increasing the quality of life in the surrounding community, the City,

the State and the United States.”

Currently, Governors Island has a village-type, modest urban density. In terms of mass and height, the proposed development is substantially larger than the existing development on the Island. A majority of public comments indicate that it is the existing density and scale that gives Governors Island its identity as an island refuge in its highly urbanized context within the city

[The current TGI proposal] is nearly three times larger than what was considered as part of the 2013 FSGEIS [...]the public’s understanding for the development program was based on those earlier models and the drastic increase in scale of development is unacceptable

The Trust must prioritize phasing development to allow for leasing the existing millions of square feet already existing on the Island prior to the construction of new buildings

CB1 asks that the Trust identify and consider what the State and Federal government each provide currently to the Island and how this might be increased under the new administration to provide additional support to the Island

The Trust asserts that the proposed level of development is required in order to make the Island financially self-sustaining. However, there is no mandate in the Deed that notes the Trust must become financially self-sustaining. Financial and other modeling done in connection with this proposed project were conducted using assumptions on pre-pandemic conditions. [...]the community does not have confidence that this proposal will develop as expected. Many have expressed fear over an undesirable result, such as more privatization on Island

In July 1997, [...] CB1 wished that Governors Island be kept as a park land with active, open recreational space.

Further, that “one thing that Community Board 1 does not want to see happen is for Governors Island to be converted into some kind of private or semi private area that would prohibit residents and workers and tourists from coming onto the Island. That would include residential communities or campuses.”

--Regards, Bwana Payeye Kizito Test Engineer payebwana@yahoo.com

From: [Catherine Hughes](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony: Governors Island Rezoning Application Number: C 210126 ZMM | Public Hearing — T2021-7382 | Catherine McVay Hughes
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 8:47:39 AM
Attachments: [GovernorsIslandCityPlanningTestimonyCMHApril.pdf](#)

**Testimony of Catherine McVay Hughes before the
New York City Council Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
Public Hearing — T2021-7382**

Governors Island Rezoning Application Number: C 210126 ZMM

Monday, April 5, 2021 10:00AM— Virtual

Good morning NYC Council Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises Chair Moya and Members Reynoso, Grodenchik, Rivera, Ayala, Moay and Levin.

My name is Catherine McVay Hughes, and I am here today testifying in support of the Climate Solutions Center proposed for Governors Island.

When Governors Island was given to the City in 2003 it was like a miracle: 172 acres of grass and trees and beautiful historic buildings suddenly appearing in New York Harbor for the benefit of all New Yorkers.

Governors Island has a unique character and location and as a result has unique needs. Every park needs upkeep and maintenance, and GI needs all that and more: support for the ferries that make it possible, and investment to return its beautiful historic buildings to public use.

But the vision for Governors Island is even bigger: not just to be a gem of a park, but to become the centerpiece of our City's recovery from COVID and our response to climate change and global warming.

Surrounded by the waters of the Harbor, with the skyline and the Statue of Liberty as a backdrop and the serenity of a great urban park, is there anywhere in America, or the world, better suited to be home to a Climate Solutions Center?

As bad as COVID is today, climate change will be worse. As unfair and unjust as COVID is, placing the heaviest burdens on those least able to bear them, climate change will weigh even heavier on those same communities.

As the Island looks to reach its full potential year-round, increase open space on the island (without touching existing park space or closing any of it during construction) and solidify a long-term funding stream, it is clear: now is the time to move ahead with this rezoning plan. It

has responded to community input by lowering maximum heights, committed to ensuring that development incorporates innovative sustainability and resiliency practices, and to work with the community for the signature Climate Solutions Center which is at the center of the plan—one that truly demonstrates that NYC can and will think big coming out of this pandemic.

Thank you.

Affiliations (for purposes of disclosure): Catherine McVay Hughes served as Manhattan Community Board 1 Chair, Governors Island Trustee, Earth Institute at Columbia University Advisory Board, NY Rising Community Reconstruction Program for Southern Manhattan Co-Chair. She is currently a member of the Board of Directors for Battery Park City Authority, CERES Presidents Council, Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, South Street Seaport Museum, WTC Scientific Technical Advisory Committee, Princeton Climate Institute, Storm Surge Working Group, Climate Coalition for the Seaport-Financial District and Financial District Neighborhood Association. She holds an MBA from the Wharton School of Business and a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Princeton University.

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As the Island looks to reach its full potential year-round, increase open space on the island (without touching existing park space or closing any of it during construction) and solidify a long-term funding stream, it is clear: now is the time to move ahead with this rezoning plan. It has responded to community input by lowering maximum heights, committed to ensuring that development incorporates innovative sustainability and resiliency practices, and to work with the community for the signature Climate Solutions Center which is at the center of the plan— one that truly demonstrates that NYC can and will think big coming out of this pandemic.

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From: [Carolyn Ratcliffe](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Opposition to Proposed development of Governor's Island
Date: Sunday, April 4, 2021 10:41:12 PM

I strongly oppose the current proposal before the NYC Land-use Committee for the construction of high rise buildings on Governor's Island. This type of development is out of place and destroys much need green spaces. It is not necessary to cover every square inch of NYC with out of scale mega monolithic buildings in the name of growth. The City needs to reevaluate the current trend to see development as the only financial resource for a tax base. It is destroying the City and is detrimental to the environment by increasing demands on an infrastructure that is already overwhelmed. It further exacerbates climate change and puts the City and its inhabitants at risk from severe weather and increased sea level rise. Please do not approve this plan which is further nail in the coffin of the environment.

Carolyn Ratcliffe
608 E 9th St.#15
NYC NY 10009

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Carla S](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony regarding Governors Island - proposal must be withdrawn
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 1:22:23 PM

I am writing to testify that the current rezoning proposal for Governors Island must be withdrawn.

The main reason given for the rezoning proposal is to bring the island to financial self-sufficiency. However the Trust for Governors Island has not submitted sufficient financial information for this to be properly evaluated.

Governors Island is a rare, unique location in New York City that provides OPEN SPACE to New Yorkers, with gorgeous views, fresh air, interaction with native plants and birds, education via Earth Matter, GrowNYC teaching garden, Harbor School, Billion Oyster Project, and many many more. Governors Island provides habitat for over 100 bird species. The thoughtful plantings provide food and shelter for these birds as well as important native pollinators and other insects.

The idea that the island should jeopardize this habitat, or jeopardize the futures of such important institutions such as Earth Matter, GrowNYC, Billion Oyster Project and the Harbor School - who are doing the real work of fighting climate change and teaching the public about reducing waste, sustainability, clean water, and more - is just preposterous. The proposed climate research center is greenwashing - simply an attempted justification for the rapid development of Governors Island.

There are other ways for the island to reach financial self-sufficiency and those must be properly researched, evaluated and proposed. If the purpose of reaching financial sufficiency is to keep the island open to New Yorkers, and maintain it as the wonderful destination it is for art, culture, education, and more - then it is senseless to jeopardize all of that in the process of reaching that financial security.

The current rezoning proposal for Governors Island must be withdrawn.

Thank you,
Carla Shotwell

Protect Governor's Island - REJECT REZONING PROPOSAL NOW!

landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov

Protect Governor's Island - REJECT REZONING PROPOSAL NOW!

Greetings. Thank you for taking the time to read the concerns of a climate/environmental activist New York City resident .Several summers have contained [the joyous experience of the delightful ferry ride to Governor's Island to participate in the Water Day Festival where we tabled along with scores of other environmental organizations as families and hundreds of people joined the all-day festival. It is one of New York City's best educational, fun summer activities, in my humble opinion. We get to "be part of" the water, promenade with its learning opportunities, wide open spaces, green grass and trees. This water festival - one of many events held here on GI - is an important summer low-cost/high-benefit educational "gift" to be preserved for all New York City residents - especially for our youth - as is Governor's Island!

Being a long-time educator and present Chair of Sierra Club New York City group, I ask you to reject and withdraw the current rezoning proposal for Governor's Island. There are high-density, high-rise areas enough throughout the city but few green, open spaces - we must preserve the few we have for present and future New York City residents. People from 99% of NYC zip codes visit Governor's Island. Although I live in District #1, Governor's Island belongs to people of all Districts - it belongs to ALL NEW YORKERS!

The deed states that the Governor's Island park does not need to be financially self-sufficient. The claim that it does, included in the current proposal, is invalid and could set a negative, regressive precedent for parks and other public assets. The current zoning of 120 feet must be maintained to preserve the island's character. Rezoning GI to allow for any building taller than 120 feet would negatively impact its open air, expansive views, clean, green quality we need. GI is productive as a "climate hub" with Earth Matters, Grow NYC, the Billion Oyster Project, the Harbor School, hosting one-time climate, educational events such as presentations from Drawdown and others. From my own experience, rushing through projects that are not well-thought-out - like this rezoning proposal - can lead to disastrous results, and we could lose something precious and irreplaceable. WITHDRAW THIS REZONING PROPOSAL for GOVERNOR'S ISLAND!

Thank you, Respectfully and in PEACE, Catherine Skopic
Chair, Sierra Club New York City Group

Sans Serif

Send



From: [Christine Zeng](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony for Earth Matters
Date: Thursday, April 1, 2021 4:36:04 AM

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Christine Zeng and was planning to start as an Earth Matter volunteer after covid and am a regular visitor of Governors island. This opportunity to work with my friends for a better green space in NY, however, is being threatened and may be displaced by the rezoning efforts of the Trust.

I am writing to oppose the proposed ULURP for Governors Island because it does not specify long term, designated, adequate space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. Two acres of land, all in one place, is critical and required for the ability for Earth Matter to continue its compost operations and public programming to support and promote composting and sustainable practices for the people of NYC.

However, I do support the proposal by the Trust for Governors Island (TGI) for a center to address and study climate change. TGI has done a wonderful job managing the development of the island and transforming it into an idyllic retreat and creating a cultural center for all New Yorkers. I have the utmost respect for TGI's work, especially their partnership with Earth Matter NY in their Zero Waste Island collaborations.

Earth Matter's physical space should be an integral part of the proposed center for climate change and continue to manage the Island's, and much of NYC's organic resources. Since 2009, Earth Matter has taught on-the-ground, immediately practicable solutions to sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, achieve zero-waste goals, and improve urban soils—all through the practice of composting and public engagement. Earth Matter is an important part of my Governors Island experience.

All New Yorkers should continue to have the opportunity to visit Earth Matter's Compost Learning Center campus that provides for each of us to connect to the earth and with the earth work they do, and share the learnings and experiences that I have experienced. I urge you to oppose the ULURP for Governors Island, unless it provides 2 acres of the 33 acre development plan, to ensure Earth Matter will be able to continue their climate change study and mitigation work, in collaboration with The Trust, as a service to New Yorkers.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony.

Christine Zeng
Brooklyn NY

From: [Carolina Zuniga-Aisa](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: ULURP hearing 4.5.21 - EARTH MATTER, Governors Island
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 12:03:59 PM

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Carolina Zuniga, and I am one of founders of Island Bee Project writing to implore you to provide Earth Matter NY with the 2 acres of land necessary to sustain the important work they do. Our relationship with Earth Matter is how we became aware of the great work TGI has in tackling the huge waste problem we have in NYC. To see Marisa, Charlie and team (more like a family) maintain and educate visitors and apprenticeships learning PRICELESS LIFE AND CAREER SKILLS is unlike any other program you have on the Urban Farm. After a year such as 2020 where compost collection was cut down severely, Earth Matter stepped up to the challenge. We have had the great privilege of keeping our honeybees together with Earth Matters and making the great connections of how compost ultimately is the common factor to growing flowers for our pollinators to forage from. The stories we hear from visitor encounters are also so special, and connect us all. There are so many simple pleasures provided by this organization and their love of what they do. They have taught so many of us to live life with greater consideration as to the role humans play in keeping it going and growing.

Please make certain that the proposed ULURP for Governors Island designates the necessary space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. We need **more** and not fewer programs of this kind to teach our children, and remind our adults, of the value of the earth.

I respect and admire TGI's work and look forward to seeing it continue to thrive, especially in partnership with Earth Matter NY in their Zero Waste Island collaborations.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony and the very important work you do of bringing open space to New Yorkers who greatly need and appreciate it.

Carolina Zuniga-Aisa

Queens Village NY 11427

--

Carolina Zuniga-Aisa

M: 917.945.9799

E: c.zuniga.aisa@gmail.com

*W: www.cza-design.com
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& follow/learn how to [Make Manhattan Fair!](#)*

I shut my eyes in order to see. -Paul Gauguin

From: [Charles Eisenberg](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Keep Governor's Island a Greenspace
Date: Thursday, April 1, 2021 8:37:45 PM

I have lived in New York all my life, having been born in Flushing Queens. Governor's Island has been a big part of my life, here in the city. I have gone to many musical and art festivals. The historic district has hosted several art fairs which I have attended. It is a magic experience to find yourself out of the urban setting, in verdant spaces just on the other side of the New York Bay Please don't destroy the current green oasis by adding developments as currently being proposed.

Charles and Elise Eisenberg

New York, NY 10003

(212) 268-0226

From: [Che Raskin](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Earth Matter's long term space on Governors Island
Date: Friday, April 2, 2021 5:09:16 PM

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Che Raskin and I was born and raised in the East Village.

I am writing to oppose the proposed ULURP for Governors Island because it does not specify long term, designated, adequate space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone.

I do support the proposal by the Trust for Governors Island for a center to address and study climate change. TGI has done a wonderful job managing the development of the island and transforming it into an idyllic retreat and creating a cultural center for all New Yorkers. I have the utmost respect for TGI's work, especially their partnership with Earth Matter NY in their Zero Waste Island collaborations.

Earth Matter's physical space should be an integral part of the proposed center for climate change and continue to manage the Island's, and much of NYC's organic resources. Since 2009, Earth Matter has taught on-the-ground, immediately practicable solutions to sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, achieve zero-waste goals, and improve urban soils—all through the practice of composting and public engagement. Earth Matter is an important part of my Governors Island experience.

All New Yorkers should continue to have the opportunity to visit Earth Matter's Compost Learning Center campus that provides for each of us to connect to the earth and with the earth work they do, and share the learnings and experiences that I have experienced. I urge you to oppose the ULURP for Governors Island, unless it provides 2 acres of the 33 acre development plan, to ensure Earth Matter will be able to continue their climate change study and mitigation work, in collaboration with The Trust, as a service to New Yorkers.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony.

Che Raskin
New York, NY 10009

From: [Debbie Karp](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island Project
Date: Saturday, April 3, 2021 9:52:50 AM

The plan to develop Governors Island is in my view unnecessary - and obscene. This is a quality of life issue. Governors Island provides a swath of green and beauty for so many New Yorkers. Don't turn it into another concrete jungle.

Debbie Karp
zip 10023

From: [Reynolds, Daniel C.](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony for Today's Hearing
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 4:47:17 PM

Dear Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises:

I'm sorry that I wasn't able to attend the entire hearing today, and present my testimony on the Governors Island Rezoning. The testimony that I planned to give is below—I would very much appreciate it if it could be entered into the record. Many thanks,

Dan

SUBMITTED BY: Daniel Reynolds, CBI resident and current Board member, Friends of Governors Island

As a downtown resident and a member of the Board of the Friends of Governors Island (“FGI”), I support the proposed rezoning of the southern portion of Governors Island. The FGI Board is made up of people like me who are passionate about Governors Island, and who are committed to supporting the Island’s long-term success as a resource for the people of New York City.

Anyone who visited the Island over the past year has felt the benefits of this urban escape — even with a shortened season, last summer the Island almost served as an extra lung for the city, especially the Downtown community, giving us a place to relax and release in the middle of an extraordinarily difficult year. But those of us who serve on the FGI Board recognize that the Island is at a turning point. The Island can be so much more than it is today: it can be a 365-day destination, filled with both indoor and outdoor amenities for City residents. Or, dragged down by the expense of maintaining aging infrastructure, the services that are provided now could be slowly but surely cut back.

FGI has made great strides in growing philanthropic support for the Island, but philanthropy alone will never be enough to turn the Island into the year-round destination that it could – and should – be. That is why we have always supported responsible mixed-use development on the Island, development that will provide a stable source of revenue, allowing for increased public ferry service and other crucial services that will help the Island realize its full potential. We often say that the truest measure of success will be when the Island is just as full of life and activity on a Wednesday in February as it is on a Saturday in July. The proposed rezoning is an important step toward that day and toward a bright, financially-sustainable, year-round future for Governors Island.

Daniel C. Reynolds

Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLP

Assistant: rmigliorini@cgsh.com

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dreynolds@cgsh.com | clearygottlieb.com

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From: [Eric Arroyo](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island Rezoning
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 11:17:50 AM

Greetings,

My name is Eric Arroyo and I am a Brooklyn resident in the zip code 11218. I am writing to you in opposition of the proposal to rezone Governors Island for high-density high-rise development.

As a New Yorker, there are not many options for me and my family to experience undisturbed skylines and natural spaces that aren't enclosed by massive buildings. I have also seen too much of this city given up to the interests of real estate developers, along with our tax dollars. This proposed rezoning will not make Governors Island financially sustainable within a reasonable time frame that makes up for the things being exchanged in the process, a unique way to experience the Bay that we cannot ever get back if this proposal goes through.

I urge that the City Council dismisses this plan, and maintains that new buildings constructed on Governors Island meet existing height limits.

Thanks,
Eric Alexander Arroyo

From: [Erin Banks](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Opposing Governor's Island Rezoning
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 11:59:38 AM

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to oppose the rezoning of Governor's Island for private development.

In its current form as a park available to the public, the island is one of the most magical places in New York City. It is one of the only places that's easy to get to for car-less New Yorkers, that still feels like a true escape. I always return from a day there feeling as if I went on vacation. I think it's the absence of people in a hurry - everywhere else in the city, people are trying to get where they need to go. Not on Governors Island - there's nothing to hurry to or from. Some of my most treasured memories are from days spent in the parks there.

One of the treasures is how explorable it feels - nothing off limits, it's all public space. No security guards telling me the benches are only for employees or that we can't loiter. It breaks my heart to think of office buildings and private developers coming in to kick New Yorkers out. Or to imagine the stunning views impeded by 10 stories of metal and glass.

After this year, how have you not learned that our office buildings aren't necessary but our outdoor spaces are vital? Half of Midtown sits empty - how much of it will be refilled? This proposal won't even make Governors Island self sufficient for 30 years, and that's assuming you find tenants - What makes you think, with companies contemplating downsized offices and permanent remote work, that an office only accessible by ferry will be enticing to anyone?

I've often heard people speak about the old Penn Station and the terrible, shortsighted decision to tear it down. Let's not make the same mistake here - preserve Governors Island for the public. It's a city treasure and public good on the level of Central Park and deserves to be treated like one.

Thanks,
Erin Banks
257 Gold St, Brooklyn, NY 11201
erinashleybanks@gmail.com

From: [Ellen Dobbyn-Blackmore](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: New York Harbor School
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 5:17:45 PM

I am writing in support of the New York Harbor School's efforts to acquire the 515 building on Governor's Island. The school is the Island's first tenant and is in a unique position to provide continuity as the island grows, ensuring that issues of environmentalism and Marine science and technology are promoted. With this building the school can achieve its promising potential and increase its contribution to the life of our great Harbor. Our students deserve an aquatic center, a gymnasium, an auditorium, a library, sufficient classroom space, all shamefully lacking now. Please right this wrong and make sure the New York Harbor School gets to grow into building 515. Thank you for hearing this. Sincerely,
Ellen Dobbyn-Blackmore, New York Harbor School PTA.

From: [Emily Glinick](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Oppose "Up-Zoning" Plan for Governors Island
Date: Wednesday, March 31, 2021 7:41:03 PM

To the New York City Council:

The current rezoning proposal for Governors Island must be withdrawn.

Bringing in high-density, high-rise development is not the best use of this unique space that belongs to all New Yorkers and is visited by people from 99% of NYC zip codes. New Yorkers have a serious need for the welcoming, open, expansive, parkland quality (even in areas with buildings) that Governors Island provides and really isn't available elsewhere in the city. This island is also an important stop-over and natural haven for migrating and local bird populations.

2) The main rationale for this intrusive project – financial self-sufficiency for Governors Island – is not justified. The Trust's own speculative projections (based on pre-covid conditions) state that financial self-sufficiency wouldn't be achieved until 2050. Meanwhile it'll cost taxpayers billions.

3) In the review of the rezoning plan, any discussion regarding a climate research center is irrelevant, misleading, and should be termed off-topic. This is a proposal to upzone the south island, period. There is nothing legally requiring that a climate center be the result. Mainly it serves as a potential "anchor tenant" in order to attract developers and sell the upzoning to the public. In fact, GI is already productive as a climate hub, thanks to the work of Earth Matter, GrowNYC, Billion Oyster Project, the Harbor School and others. Five City Planning Commissioners criticized the proposed development and noted that there is no Request For Proposals (RFP) in place to legally require that a climate center be built.

4) This is an awful rush and unfair to all New Yorkers, today and in the future. Land Use public hearings being held virtually due to COVID-19 are too difficult for authentic public participation and should be suspended. There is precedent for this: the ULURP process is currently halted in two Brooklyn rezonings, due to the Voice of Gowanus and MTOPP (Brooklyn Botanical Gardens area).

5) "Open space" is not just pedestrian access, as TGI is selling it, but involves sky and the feeling of openness. The "increased open space" that TGI is presenting is "woven open space similar to Battery Park City." It's boxed in by 10 – 30 story buildings and non-public areas.

6) Any new building on Governors Island should be kept to a minimum and not exceed the four story height of buildings in the historic district or the 35-foot height limit in the current zoning.

Thank you for carefully considering this proposal and delivering a strong vote of opposition to this plan.

Sincerely,

Emily Glinick

Concerned Brooklyn Resident

From: [Eli Hetko](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Re: Governor's Island
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 11:06:02 AM

Dear Land Use officials,

High-density development is not a good use of the one-of-a-kind space that is Governor's Island. The proposed development would detract from the character of the island, and from its function as a get-away for New Yorkers and visitors.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter.

Best,
Elias Hetko



**New York City Council Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
Governors Island: South Island Rezoning, Manhattan
Application N 210126 ZRM, C 210127 ZMM
April 5, 2021
Emily Walker, Director of Outreach and Programs**

My name is Emily Walker, and I am the Director of Outreach and Programs at New Yorkers for Parks (NY4P). Thank you for giving us the opportunity to submit testimony on the Governors Island Rezoning being considered today. NY4P testifies in support of this proposed action. With a mission to be self-sustaining for the long-term, the proposed rezoning will help allow for the development needed to ensure that Governors Island can become a year-round destination, and remain a vital open space asset for New Yorkers for years to come.

We are pleased to note that the rezoning will now bring 9.85 acres of additional open space to Governors Island, bringing the total acreage of public open space on the Island to 55.85 acres. Given the challenges in identifying land for new open space development throughout the City, this is a welcome opportunity to provide more public space for New Yorkers to enjoy. Additionally, the proposed rezoning would help Governors Island become a year-round destination, which would allow for more robust and regular utilization of the Island. This goal has become all the more important in light of the COVID crisis, and the need for New Yorkers to have ample access to parks and open space as safe places to gather, recreate, and seek respite during this challenging time.

We expect this rezoning to bring a reliable funding stream to provide for the maintenance and operations of Governors Island, as well as vital investments in the transportation infrastructure that allows for ongoing and increased public use and access to the island. We encourage the Trust for Governors Island to remain committed to free transport for NYCHA residents and low-income New Yorkers, and hope that the rezoning can be a way to secure the funding to ensure that all New Yorkers, regardless of zip code or income, can have access to Governors Island.

Additionally, we encourage the Trust for Governors Island to take into serious consideration all feedback from the public process to ensure that the development this rezoning will bring will be approached in a thoughtful manner, and one that is appropriately scaled to the Island and its open spaces. The building height and mass reductions that have recently been made to the rezoning application are an encouraging shift, and we hope the final results of the public process will result in site conditions that incorporate as much external feedback as possible, while resulting in development that presents as little negative impact to the existing and new open spaces as possible. Additional site considerations for sunlight access, wind reduction, and wildlife habitability, particularly bird-friendly design methods, should be included in any final designs. Thank you.

April 5, 2021

Gerald N. Forsburg, Assoc. AIA
295 Greenwich Street, 4N
New York, NY, 10007

RE: Opposition to the Trust for Governors Island rezoning request

Dear honorable Chair and members of the Council of the City of New York:

I want to challenge the City of New York to consider a less myopic view of Governors' Island as a single entity separate from the other Islands, and instead request you to step back to look at the Island in its relationship to the rest of the City.

The Island is disconnected from the City.

Underlying the Trust's request for rezoning is a desire, though not a mandate, for the island to be "financially independent".

One problem that has been presented as a block to this financial independence has been year-round access to the island. However, what it seems to mean is that year-round financial support for the Island is what would provide year-round access to the Island – not actual access.

I challenge that the Trust that year-round access to the Island can be had without the need of a new Climate Research Center, and further loss of unique open space.

Instead of a speculative "build it and they will come" approach, why not use data that is readily available. Walkable cities! Pedestrian-friendly cities. Open Spaces. **These are what make cities livable, desirable and healthy.**

I propose that the City of New York take a more proactive approach to preserving the openness of the island, and its financial viability by providing access via a **pedestrian-only bridge** to connect Governor's Island to both lower Manhattan and Brooklyn.

Covid has shown each of us the need for social distancing and outdoor open space. There is a push in urban planning for more walkable cities. Why rely on a ferry to get us to the Island? The Lenape used canoes! Why not build a walkable, pedestrian/bicycle-friendly connection to permit the Hudson Greenway to continue across the Harbor, encompass the Island, and continue to the Brooklyn Waterfront?

Such a structure would not only permit year-round accessibility to Governor's Island, it would spur development of the Brooklyn waterfront, which may incidentally be a better place for a climate research center. Such a structure would become a destination in and of itself, similar to our beloved Brooklyn Bridge, and would spur tourism, providing substantial income to the City in tourism dollars while providing more of what New Yorkers need!

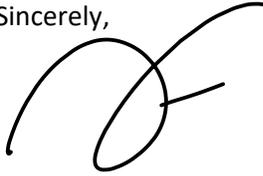
Elements of the M.A.G.I.C. plan, which are much more environmentally and contextually sensitive than constructing new 4.5M s.f., 370 foot tall building on fill dirt, can then be incorporated on the Island.

Significant cities around the world are developing such pedestrian bridges that incorporate public performing spaces, recreational spaces, and so on, not unlike how we are designing our public piers –

walkable recreational, educational and cultural outdoor spaces. A harbor bridge to GI could be a destination of its own, but also link Gotham to the **Heart of the Harbor**, and permit the Island to be preserved.

As a resident of Lower Manhattan, I oppose this request for rezoning, as it is premature to an overarching Vision for the Island, and places the Trust, a City organization, in the position of a private developer rather than an economic development entity serving the City.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, fluid loop that crosses itself, followed by a short horizontal stroke.

Gerald Forsburg

Enclosure (1)

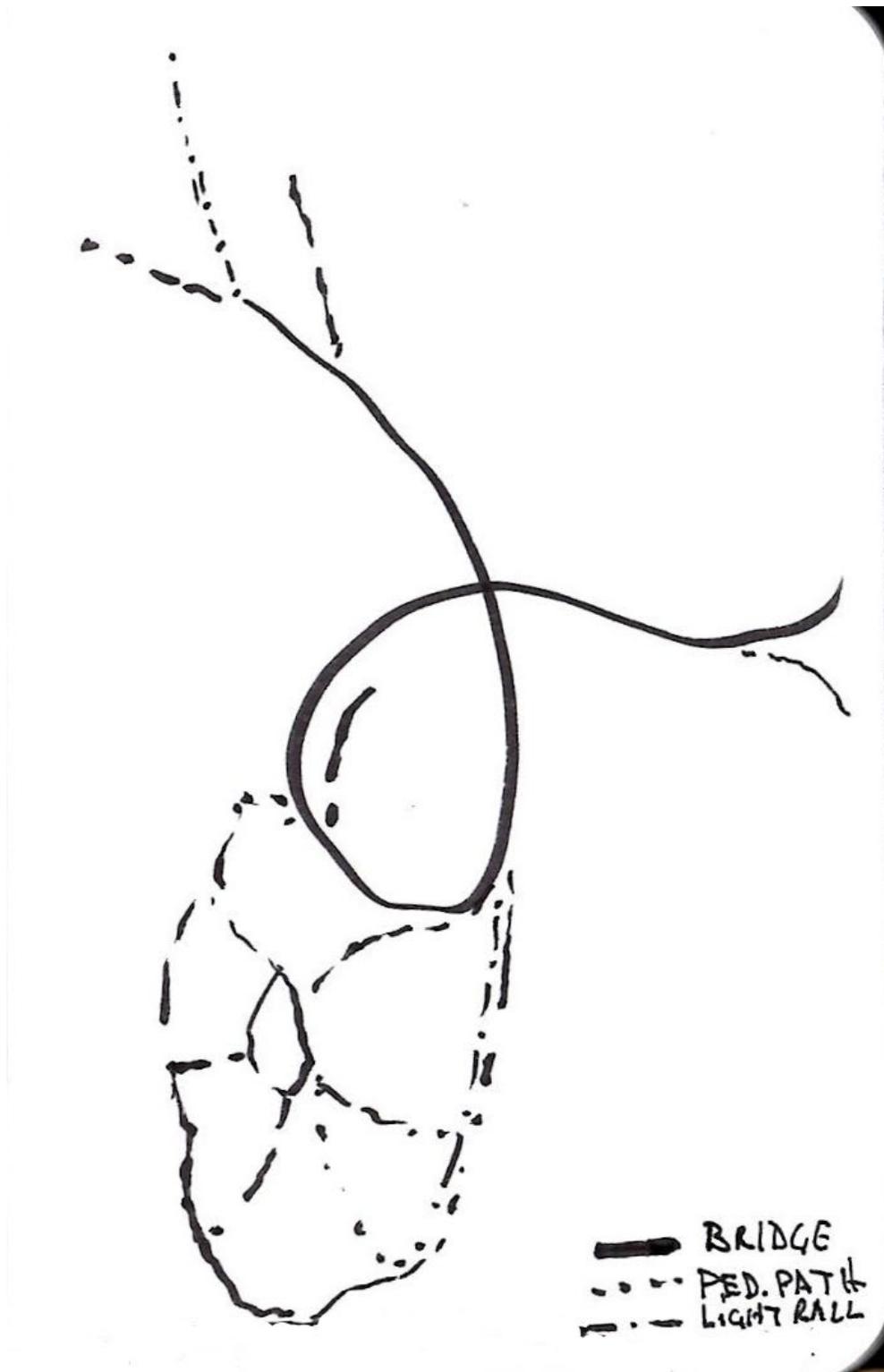


Figure 1 - Schematic design for a bridge connecting Governors Island to Manhattan and Brooklyn

From: [Gayle Raskin](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island ULURP
Date: Sunday, April 4, 2021 2:53:28 PM

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Gayle Raskin, and I am a long time resident of the East Village writing to implore you to provide Earth Matter NY with the 2 acres of land necessary to sustain the important work they do. As a city dweller who would much rather the country come to me, than me to it, Governors Island, and Earth Matter in particular, fully satisfies my desire for the great outdoors and watching nature do its work. I have had the great privilege of tending to Earth Matters chickens during the winter months and seeing the island as it sleeps in the winter and then wakes in the Spring. It is truly magical. I have also had the privilege of seeing the visitor's faces light up when they visit with the goats during the summer months. There are so many simple pleasures provided by this organization and their love of what they do. They have taught so many of us to live life with greater consideration as to the role humans play in keeping it going and growing.

Please make certain that the proposed ULURP for Governors Island designates the necessary space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. We need more and not fewer programs of this kind to teach our children, and remind our adults, of the value of the earth.

I respect and admire TGI's work and look forward to seeing it continue to thrive, especially in partnership with Earth Matter NY in their Zero Waste Island collaborations.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony and the very important work you do of bringing open space to New Yorkers who greatly need and appreciate it.

Gayle Raskin
513 E 11th St. B2
New York, New York 10009

From: [Hikma Abdulghani](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: don't upzone governors island
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 10:02:59 AM

it's a refuge for us!
please keep governors island open for all new yorkers as a place of tranquility, beauty and recreation. There's
nowhere else like it.
thank you!
a concerned parent

From: [Hollis Hillhouse](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Land use zoning on Governors Island-upcoming April 5 testimony
Date: Wednesday, March 31, 2021 4:00:21 PM

I am writing to express my support of Earth Matter NY in permanently keeping 2 contiguous acres of land out of the 33 acres available in the eastern development zone on Governors Island.

I am a volunteer with Earth Matter. One of my responsibilities is training volunteers to take care of our permanent flock of free ranging chickens and seasonal goats. I also help facilitate one-of-a-kind learning experiences for school children, corporate groups, and individuals. They get to feed a goat, pet a chicken, collect fresh eggs and discover the importance of animals (and people) in the composting loop. There is no other place in NYC where this unique combination of compost, animals and education co-exist in one location. The animals and the composting facility are an inseparable and magical combination: moving or splitting them up would be devastating to these educational opportunities.

Earth Matter is (and long has been) an important contributor to the successes of Governors island. We represent inclusive interactions with BIPOC Communities, grassroots environmental organizations, the NYC school systems, and countless ecological minded entities. Earth Matter's desire is to permanently maintain our current home on GI and continue to help the island grow as good environmental stewards.

The Earth Matter Compost Learning Center has been an exemplary tenant on the island for 12 years, and in fact is one of the oldest continuous residents. EM would be a natural and harmonious neighbor to the GI Trust's proposed climate study center, and together would comprise a sort of "eco-hub destination" on the island.

Earth Matter's physical land needs are specific and can only be satisfied in the eastern development zone where we are currently located. Any other places on the island are unsuitable for the unique climate solution programming, compost facility operations, and programmatic needs.

I would like to personally invite you to come and visit our Earth Matter Compost Learning Center. See chicken eggs in colors from the deepest chocolate brown to sky blue, watch the chickens bathing in the dust, and experience the wondrous miracles at the center- as I have had the privilege of doing weekly for the past 11 years.

Sincerely,

Hollis Hillhouse (she/her)

From: [Hannah Orlove](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: DO NOT REZONE GOVERNORS ISLAND
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 1:01:22 PM

It's unfair and unkind to rezone the south portion of the island! Unnecessary, unimportant! The island's space is being put to long-term use as nonprofit spaces and artist zones and a space for children and families to gather and play. It's one of the safest spaces in all of New York City to do so! One of the last such spaces! To destroy it for a short-sighted cash-grab that will destroy this piece of urban heritage is a heinous act, and a condemnation of the people who are already making use of the island in all its current permutations. Nothing good will come of this in the long-term. Think of the long term!

Governors Island need not be self-sufficient! To say it has to be is to play into falsehoods promised by corporations and libertarians! It's a part of the city. No one asks the George Washington Bridge or Inwood Park to be self-sufficient! Let the city pay for the Island and let the people use it as they use other public parks! It would cost more now to change the direction of the island's future. Again, think of the long term! The very long term.

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Dian Xiang He and I live in Chinatown and am a weekly volunteer at the Earth Matter Farm where I volunteer a senior of Hamilton Madison House Smith NORC Senior Center.

I am writing to oppose the proposed ULURP for Governors Island because it does not specify long term, designated, adequate space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. Two acres of land, all in one place, is critical and required for the ability for Earth Matter to continue its compost operations and public programming to support and promote composting and sustainable practices for the people of NYC.

However, I do support the proposal by the Trust for Governors Island (TGI) for a center to address and study climate change. TGI has done a wonderful job managing the development of the island and transforming it into an idyllic retreat and creating a cultural center for all New Yorkers. I have the utmost respect for TGI's work, especially their partnership with Earth Matter NY in their Zero Waste Governors Island collaborations.

Earth Matter's physical space should be an integral part of the proposed center for climate change and continue to manage the Island's, and much of NYC's organic resources. Since 2009, Earth Matter has taught on-the-ground, immediately practicable solutions to sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, achieve zero-waste goals, and improve urban soils—all through the practice of composting and public engagement. Earth Matter is an important part of my Governors Island experience.

I started volunteering on the Earth Matter farm's lavender field last spring and was one of the essential workers who a little about your history with Earth Matter and why it's important to you; specifically reference the experience through being in the space and the experiences one gets in the space (chickens, farm, windrows) that make the existing contiguous space unique, valuable and worthy of being relocated as one parcel, in the development zone]

All New Yorkers should continue to have the opportunity to visit Earth Matter's Compost Learning Center campus that provides for each of us to connect to the earth and with the earth work they do, and share the learnings and experiences that I have experienced. I urge you to oppose the ULURP for Governors Island, unless it provides 2 acres of the 33 acre development plan, to ensure Earth Matter will be able to continue their climate change study and mitigation work, in collaboration with The Trust, as a service to New Yorkers.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony.

Dian Xiang He
50 Madison Street New York NY 10038

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Fannie Lai and I live in Chinatown and am a weekly volunteer at the Earth Matter Farm where I volunteer a senior of Hamilton Madison House Smith NORC Senior Center.

I am writing to oppose the proposed ULURP for Governors Island because it does not specify long term, designated, adequate space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. Two acres of land, all in one place, is critical and required for the ability for Earth Matter to continue its compost operations and public programming to support and promote composting and sustainable practices for the people of NYC.

However, I do support the proposal by the Trust for Governors Island (TGI) for a center to address and study climate change. TGI has done a wonderful job managing the development of the island and transforming it into an idyllic retreat and creating a cultural center for all New Yorkers. I have the utmost respect for TGI's work, especially their partnership with Earth Matter NY in their Zero Waste Governors Island collaborations.

Earth Matter's physical space should be an integral part of the proposed center for climate change and continue to manage the Island's, and much of NYC's organic resources. Since 2009, Earth Matter has taught on-the-ground, immediately practicable solutions to sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, achieve zero-waste goals, and improve urban soils—all through the practice of composting and public engagement. Earth Matter is an important part of my Governors Island experience.

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Thank you for your attention to this testimony.

Fannie Lai
50 Madison Street New York NY 10038

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Linda Leung and I live in Chinatown and am a weekly volunteer at the Earth Matter Farm where I volunteer a New York Cares team leader.

I am writing to oppose the proposed ULURP for Governors Island because it does not specify long term, designated, adequate space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. Two acres of land, all in one place, is critical and required for the ability for Earth Matter to continue its compost operations and public programming to support and promote composting and sustainable practices for the people of NYC.

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Thank you for your attention to this testimony.

Linda Leung
50 Madison Street New York NY 10038



Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Isabel Ching, I am the Executive Director for Hamilton-Madison House based in the area in Chinatown, LES and Two Bridges neighborhood. Our Alfred E. Smith Houses NORC has been working in collaboration with Earth Matter NY for the past few years in planting the heritage beds. During the pandemic this has given our seniors an opportunity to volunteer safely and keep them active and to serve a purpose while the senior centers have been closed for over a year. It has provided a critical place for the seniors to be less isolated and involved with their community.

I am writing to oppose the proposed ULURP for Governors Island because it does not specify long term, designated, adequate space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. Two acres of land, all in one place, is critical and required for the ability for Earth Matter to continue its compost operations and public programming to support and promote composting and sustainable practices for the people of NYC.

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All New Yorkers should continue to have the opportunity to visit Earth Matter's Compost Learning Center campus that provides for each of us to connect to the earth and with the earth work they do, and share the learnings and experiences that I have experienced. I urge you to oppose the ULURP for Governors Island, unless it provides 2 acres of the 33 acre development plan, to ensure Earth Matter will be able to continue

their climate change study and mitigation work, in collaboration with The Trust, as a service to New Yorkers.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony.

Isabel Ching, LMSW
253 South Street
New York, NY 10002

From: [Jennifer Belt](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Upzoning of Governors Island
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 11:23:24 AM

To the New York City Council:

I have been a resident of New York City for over 30 years, and I have lived in Prospect Heights for 16 years. I frequently spend time on Governor's Island. It is truly one of my favorite places in the city. There is still a wild, untamed beauty to it that is unrivaled by any other place in the New York City area. I also enjoy the arts and music events that take place there.

I am writing to you because I am concerned about the current rezoning proposal for Governor's Island. The plan is ostensibly in support of the building of a climate change research center, but this rezoning opens the door to more commercial development which could be devastating to the island. We need to preserve and protect the island's natural beauty and spaciousness, as well as the ecosystems that exist within it. This is a public park, enjoyed by all NYC residents, and it should continue to exist as a respite from the glass towers and overcrowding of the city. I understand, and theoretically support, the building of a climate change research center, but there are other ways of accomplishing this goal without threatening the integrity of Governor's Island.

The Trust asserts that the proposed level of development is required in order to make the Island financially self-sustaining. However, there is no mandate in the Deed that notes the Trust must become financially self-sustaining.

Also, as Manhattan Community Board 1 points out in their 12/22/21 resolution, the Trust has not provided enough information to evaluate the project. As a City Planning Commissioner said at the March 1st public review, this project is akin to the City giving the Trust a blank check for an unspecified project. There should be no rush to make these decisions given that we are in the midst of a pandemic which makes the proper vetting and review of the proposal by the public difficult.

I urge you to do what you can to halt the Trust for Governors Island zoning proposal and preserve one of New York City's most unique spaces. New Yorkers deserve a space that is not blighted by overdevelopment.

Thank you,

Jennifer Belt

341 Saint Johns Place, #2F

Brooklyn, NY 11238

jbelt90@hotmail.com

From: [Jackie Chadwick](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Re: Today's Hearing on Governors Island will not start before 11:30am
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 2:48:11 PM

I oppose all commercial re-zoning of Governors Island. Up-zoning the island is an egregious use of sanctuary land and all efforts should be made to preserve the Island's public mission dating to its reopening in 2010; a mission for the Island to be an urban refuge, arts mecca, and environmental studies. Essentially conceived by the people for the people.

New York City has already sold its soul 500 times over siphoning the work of the grassroots efforts of beautifying neighborhood after neighborhood as leverage for its commercial interests in development of hotels, high-rises, tourist traps, and one outdoor mall after another, rendering those neighborhoods uninhabitable by its own inhabitants for over 30 years. This commercial exploitation cycle thereby ruins one area after another in NYC by pushing and pricing its residents out (the very residents who made it interesting and beautiful in the first place). This re-zoning proposal is just another demonstration of this diabolical cycle. Governors Island should not and cannot become another casualty of the City's incessant bartering and capitalistic system. It will always be at our cost. Whether at its inception or not far down the road. Given the countless examples of up-zoning and development for commerce in the past demonstrating how commercial based plans under the guise of a public greater good, within only a matter of years, the tables turn, and the public and its non-profits are no longer hold sway at the decision-making table. The commercial projects gain sway and soon hold the majority vote. This must be avoided in all long term plans by keeping commercial projects off the island entirely.

The proposal is not without its merits, I recognize and appreciate the proposed improvements to the Island that are a benefit to the existing and future non-profits, specifically the Harbor School, Oyster Earth Matter that occupy the Island. Those who testified today have expressed how this is very clearly needed. However, Earth Matter should remain on the Island with a long term agreement (ideally one in perpetuity) of 2+ acres of use. Earth Matter is an invaluable resource in the future of NYC's goal for composting and closing the "system."

It is also pertinent that re-zoning include a prioritization of maintaining all natural habitat measures, such as low light and low to no sound pollution, a low ecological impact overall, et. al... I believe that the Island should include a mission of free and low-cost access to island throughout its lifetime.

All decisions and re-zoning should always be in support of these base missions and should be supported by lessening the scale of any new buildings and removing all commercial aspects from the proposal.

Without question, I strongly disapprove of the proposed Hotel and the current Glamping site. These are exploitations of the established Island's refuge and its genuine, artistic, and inclusive nature. I ask that the grass-roots and independent intentions of the Island be the main ethos of the Island forever.

Thank you for your time,

Jacqueline Neale

On Monday, April 5, 2021, 02:47:17 PM EDT, Jackie Chadwick <jaxx222@yahoo.com> wrote:

I oppose all commercial re-zoning of Governors Island. Up-zoning the island is an egregious use of sanctuary land and all efforts should be made to preserve the Island's public mission dating to its reopening in 2010; a mission for the Island to be an urban refuge, arts mecca, and environmental studies. Essentially conceived by the people for the people.

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Thank you for your time,

Jacqueline Neale

On Monday, April 5, 2021, 10:11:47 AM EDT, Kelley, Chelsea <ckelley@council.nyc.gov> wrote:

Good morning,

This is a friendly reminder that the portion of today's hearing for Governors Island will not begin before 11:30am, so no need to log on to Zoom before then.

Best,
Chelsea

Thank you for registering to testify for our hearing on April 5, 2021, which begins at 10:00 am.

The Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises will be hearing the following item(s):

- 135-137 Bedford Avenue
- Suydam Street Rezoning
- Resilient Neighborhoods Gerritsen Beach
- Resilient Neighborhoods Sheepshead Bay
- Resilient Neighborhoods Old Howard Beach

- Zoning for Coastal Resiliency (ZFCR)
- Governors Island Rezoning (the hearing for this item will not commence before 11:30 AM)

If you are joining by Zoom Webcam,

There is just one more step to verify your registration and receive your Zoom link to testify at the hearing. Please use the following link to verify your name and email:

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_7teLCcdPToCgl1kH6t42tg

The Zoom host (Arthur Huh or Andrew Lassiter) will email you a link that you can use to access the hearing on April 5th starting at 10am

Please do not share the zoom registration link or your personal link! If you are in contact with others who would like to register for our hearing, please direct them to our registration form [here](#) or have them reach out to me directly by email or phone (contact info below). Others who would like to watch the hearing without testifying can watch at <https://council.nyc.gov/livestream/>

If you are joining by phone, you can use one of the following numbers to access the hearing:

Dial (for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 929 436 2866 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 669 900 6833 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799

Webinar ID: 950 5240 4599

Passcode: 270064 (may not be needed)

Or One tap mobile: +19294362866,,95052404599# or +13126266799,,95052404599#

A few important notes:

- Land Use hearings go in order of Land Use (L.U.) Item – please be patient as Council Land Use staff works to ensure your testimony is heard on the correct L.U. item. You may be waiting as a Zoom Attendee for an extended period of time.
- Please do not use the raise hand function in Zoom – if you are receiving this email, you have registered and will be called upon by the Subcommittee Chair after you join the meeting.
- Please do not login more than once, it just makes it more confusing for our staff.
- Please log off when your panel has been dismissed. You can continue to watch the hearing via livestream for the duration of the meeting here: <https://council.nyc.gov/livestream/>
- **Zoom Webcam Attendees:** Please make sure the zoom username you log into zoom with matches the name you provided during registration.
- **Phone-call Attendees:** Please call-in with the phone number you provided during registration.
- If you are watching the hearing via livestream, please be sure to mute the livestream device you are watching on, once the Chair calls on you to testify. If you get disconnected for any reason, please call back. Council Land Use staff will have your information in the system.
- **Submit written testimony to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov**

Chelsea Kelley
New York City Council | Land Use Division
646 370 0171 | cell
ckelley@council.nyc.gov

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From: [jada fab](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island testimony
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 2:11:15 PM

For over a decade community arts groups have enhanced the experience of visitors on Governors Island.

As an independent artist the who has shown work in the Governors Island art fair with 4heads artists group I would like to state that people come to the island as a respite from the city but also in search of cultural experiences.

However, I am sincerely concerned that the rezoning of Governors Island, will create an environment in which community-based arts and culture will inevitably suffer and fade. I hope that the trust will continue to support community-based arts organizations and will be willing to make multi-year commitments to the islands long standing partners as well as access to resources for the islands legacy arts groups.

--

Jada Fabrizio

www.jadafab.com

From: [Janet Fish](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: support for EarthMatter on Gov. Island
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 7:47:39 AM

Dear NYC Council Land Use Committee,

I am writing today in support to designate 2 acres of land on Governors Island in the development zone for EarthMatter NY as part of the vote to approve the ULURP.

EarthMatter is a vital resource for the New York City for ecology awareness and practice. Governors Island is the optimum location for EarthMatter to exist and thrive.

I personally am so thankful for the hard and committed work of EarthMatter. I bring my foodscraps to the Bowling Green EarthMatter stand weekly so that my foodscraps are recycled rather than landfill. On my visits to Governors Island I have witnessed the fine and dedicated work that they do to make our environment more healthy.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony and the very important work you do of bringing open space to new Yorkers who greatly need this oasis in the city.

Sincerely,

Janet Fish
3 Hanover Square, Apt 9J
New York, 10004



Alliance for Downtown New York, Inc.
120 Broadway, Suite 3340
New York, NY 10271
212 566-6700 Fax 212 566-6707
www.DowntownNY.com

**Testimony of Jessica Lappin, President of the Alliance of Downtown New York
New York City Council Zoning and Franchises Subcommittee
April 5th, 2021**

Good morning Chair Moya and members of the committee. I am Jessica Lappin President of the Alliance for Downtown New York, which manages the business improvement district for Lower Manhattan south of Chambers Street. I am pleased to be here today to speak today in support of the Trust for Governors Island's rezoning application for a climate solutions center on the South Island.

In Lower Manhattan, we like to think of Governors Island as our unofficial backyard. It has always been an oasis in the Harbor and so many of us have enjoyed spending time on this beautiful island. This past summer, it was even more essential, providing New Yorkers with a place to safely bike, walk, picnic and generally enjoy the outdoors during the pandemic. We expect the island to again be an invaluable resource for New Yorkers when it opens on May 1st.

The proposal before you today will allow within the development sites on the South Island plans that were long envisioned as part of the Master Plan following over twenty years of advocacy and community planning which do not impact the Island's existing park.

As you know, the Island is only open 6 months per year. We can all agree that it SHOULD be open and accessible year-round. This plan will enable the Trust to expand public access to the island, ensuring that a broader, more diverse set of New Yorkers will be able to enjoy it.

There were several community meetings and outreach done to gather feedback on various aspects of the plan. Based on these discussions the Trust made modifications to their zoning application and commitments to the community that centered on height changes, density reduction, park uses, governance and future development design guidelines. A few changes I wanted to highlight were the creation of additional 7 acres of open public space, the widening of the waterfront esplanade and the restriction of development uses to park related amenities only.

Thinking ahead, a climate solutions center seems like a wise use of the space. We are in an unprecedented moment. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a grave effect on the city's economy. Unemployment is high. Many businesses are hanging on by a thread. And COVID-19 isn't the only crisis we face. Climate change is here. It's threatening Lower Manhattan, the city, the country, and the world.

As you know well, we got our own taste of the effects of climate change when Superstorm Sandy breached our seawalls and flooded our streets, subways and power plants. A climate solutions center would help address both of these crises and further the city's position as a global leader in climate science innovation, education and research. It's projected to bring the city 8,000 direct jobs and \$1B in fiscal impact for NY in addition to supporting the island's operations by generating a sustainable revenue stream to support the park, cultural activities, and expanded year-round public access.

On behalf of the Alliance, I urge you to support Governors Island's rezoning proposal before you today.

***About the Alliance for Downtown New York:** The Alliance for Downtown New York operates one of the largest business improvement districts in New York City. It manages the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Business Improvement District (BID), serving an area roughly from City Hall to the Battery, from the East River to West Street. For more information visit downtownny.com.*

###

From: [John C. Lief](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governor's Island
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 12:06:57 PM

The development plan for Governor's island would bring to the island just what visitors to the island are trying to escape from, crowding and density. The magic would be gone.

John Cameron Lief

Testimony for Governor's Island at City Council Hearing on April 5, 2021

Jenny Low
354 Broome Street, #5D
New York, NY 10013
Jennylow28@gmail.com

Good afternoon. Thank you, Chair Moya for allowing me to testify. I'm Jenny Low, a lifelong resident of Lower Manhattan and a candidate for City Council.

First, I'd like to thank the Trust for Governors Island for taking good care of the Island for so many years.

Governor's Island is a unique and beloved public space in our city. The Island's long and fascinating history and the important role it plays for residents today make it especially important that any new development on Governor's Island is done right and that community voices are at the center of this process. There are several concerns about this proposed project that need to be addressed, and as it currently stands, I cannot support it moving forward.

As many community leaders have stated, including Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer and members of Community Board 1, it's critical that any new development on Governor's Island preserves its unique landscapes and prioritizes the protection of open space. Many New Yorkers see Governor's Island as a much-needed escape from the city. This proposal is unfortunately out of sync with the existing infrastructure on the Island, including its low-scale structures and open parkland, and would overwhelm this carefully preserved space.

Some community members have proposed lower density development and a height cap so that new buildings are consistent with existing historic structures. Others have called for a more rigorous review of the environmental impact of this new project. And many community members have expressed their wish for Governor's Island to continue functioning as a public park. It's clear that this project can't move forward until these voices are heard and have a real seat at the table in this process.

Throughout this pandemic, we've seen just how critical parks and open spaces are to our wellbeing in this city and I'm committed to fighting for their preservation. The proposed development on Governor's Island does not do enough to protect our open spaces, preserve the historic nature of the Island, address environmental concerns, and ensure our families can enjoy it for years to come. Until community voices are heard and these concerns are addressed, I strongly oppose this plan.

4-5-2021

Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises

Jonathan Andrew Perez, representing the group, Birders of Color-

I am by trade a criminal justice attorney, and equity and justice advocate and entrepreneur who started my own firm, Justice Equity Design. I have been a birder for my whole life, importantly, for the last 20 years actively appreciating the flora and fauna of NYC and Brooklyn as a contributor to Ebirds, run by Cornell, and rare bird alerts in Brooklyn and New York on twitter.

Governors island represents one of the most important sites for equity, shared experiences of appreciating nature, and birding.

On Equity and Nature

Birding has been shown to be the great equalizer, for people from all backgrounds. It is one of the only activities that brings people of all different backgrounds together and creates a map of equity and appreciation for the city based on nature.

Most prominently the interaction of a birder of color, Christian Cooper in Central Park in June 2020, galvanized and began a number of organizations, like my own, which are devoted to improving equity among city residents through the easiest form of shared experience – birdwatching, or birding – which is free.

Flaura and Fauna on Governor's Island

Governor's island offers one of the only historically and environmentally preserved spaces, which improves equity and appreciation for the city, its history, and importantly, its communal spaces. It is open to the public from May 1 through October 31st this year. Rare birds are common there, and they

Especially after covid-19 has rightfully cut us off from the neighborhoods we love, the opportunity to see rare birds, learn about our geography and the precious breeding sites of birds is crucial.

Some birds that have been critically protected in the Governors' island environment have been: Eastern Meadowlarks (on migration, in spring and fall), Red Shouldered Hawks (in winter), and common terns and other breeding birds on the piers in the island. Wilson's Snipe and American Woodcock (four were seen recently over Liggett Hall and near the Parade grounds), a vulnerable species that many use the land to find crustaceans and the important wet and grasslands to feed.

Great Horned Owls have been seen there and breed.

The most important site is the flowering pads and grasslands. These include the Variegated Fritillary, a butterfly that I have only seen twice in the five boroughs, Greenwood cemetery, and multiple times on Governors Island.

Most importantly, there are a number of Variegated Fritillary butterflies on the flowering pads and grasslands on Governors Island.

I am urging the City not to build on this remaining green pastoral island and equitable. Seen from the bay, New York Harbor, Brooklyn, and Sunset Park – to all those visiting the New York City, tourists also see the island as a shining example of equitable public spaces and the City's devotion to preserving green spaces and the environment.

It is a point of pride for all of us. Building up the landscape would cause great detriment to these equitable spaces.

From: [Jaya Saxena](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony on proposed Governors Island upzoning
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 9:23:47 AM

As a lifelong New Yorker, I'm submitting testimony that the Governors Island rezoning proposal should be withdrawn. Governors Island is a wonderful, open space that belongs to all New Yorkers. It has been beautifully developed as parkland over the past few years. High-density, luxury high rises and hotels would ruin the value the island has to all New Yorkers. We need more green spaces, not more private buildings that can only be enjoyed by the wealthy.

Best,
Jaya Saxena
11106

From: [Jada](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors island zoning
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 9:37:29 AM

On reading the Re zoning plans for governors island, I am very concerned by the proposed scale of the development as well as the fact that the final details of the project are sketchy and would not be finalized till after the Re zoning. New Yorkers deserve to have this paradise preserved
Jada Fabrizio

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Kaare Christian](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Land Use Committee Hearing
Date: Sunday, April 4, 2021 11:03:59 PM

We are writing to urge you to provide Earth Matter with the land necessary to continue their important work. We have visited their site several times, and have always learned something interesting and important. When we've enjoyed a meal at one of the vendors on Governor's Island, we're happy to know that waste food is being recycled by Earth Matter. It's a model that needs to be expanded, not eliminated. We've observed kids attending programs at Earth Matter, and they were engaged and excited. Again, this is what we need to expand, not contract.

We hope you can find a way to keep Earth Matter on Governor's Island. It's an important program that deserves our support.

Kaare Christian and Robin Raskin
801 West End Ave, Apt 10-D
New York, NY 10025



New York City Council
Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
Monday, April 5, 2021

Testimony Concerning the Governors Island Rezoning Request

Good afternoon, Councilmembers. I am Kathryn Heintz, Executive Director of New York City Audubon, a grassroots urban conservation organization representing 10,000 members and followers in the City of New York. I testify today in support of the proposed rezoning requested by the Trust for Governors Island.

I serve on the Trust's Community Advisory Council since 2016. We have operated a summer house in Nolan Park since 2017 (albeit without plumbing). Our interest is more than cultural. New York City Audubon's scientists have monitored nesting Common Terns on the island's piers since 2013, and our volunteers have collected bird census and breeding data since 2008. We now collect data year round. Some 217 bird species have so far been recorded in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird database. Governors Island is a bona fide birding hotspot—and, more important, it is critical foraging, nesting, and stopover habitat for tens of thousands of North American migratory birds.

We are confident in the integrity of the Trust's leadership. From Leslie Koch to Michael Samuelian to Clare Newman, we have found proven partners in conservation and habitat creation who share our desire for a green and environmentally embracing urban space that is good for birds and people. This vision has led to Hammock Grove, The Hills, the grassy Play Lawn and restoration of the Parade Ground, all of which include native trees, shrubs, and tender plantings, and even bird nest boxes. This is a built and reclaimed bird paradise.

Growing and nurturing a thriving public and mixed use Governors Island is a mammoth task. The proposal before the commission is the result of 20 years of careful planning. As a longtime partner and follower of the Trust's progress, we have tremendous enthusiasm for the climate solutions theme—global warming threatens nearly all North American bird species. New York City Audubon supports the Trust's vision, and we are disappointed by the misinformation and alternative spin that is circulating about its intentions.

We agree with many comments expressed in testimony by colleagues and neighbors, some for and some against. We appreciate and share their passion for this island oasis. We too desire green jobs and equitable and just development and access. Frankly, we would gladly relocate our offices to Governors Island should comparable, affordable Class B office space become available. We can imagine a home for the environmental and cultural communities—especially those connected to the harbor in some way—and an incubator of environmental and cultural organizations operating out of the older buildings. For this to happen, the older buildings would need running water, heat, electric that supports business machines and air conditioning, reliable business-quality internet, up-to-date fire safety, a plan for regular mail and package delivery (even if from a ferry base on the mainland or at the dock), and ADA compliant entry/exit/floor-office access/restrooms. Upgrading the historic buildings to support even small grassroots nonprofit businesses like ours will take significant

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Kathryn Heintz
Executive Director

investment that can only happen if the island is allowed to become a thriving, self-sustaining mixed use environment.

the dock), and ADA compliant entry/exit/floor-office access/restrooms. Upgrading the historic buildings to support even small grassroots nonprofit businesses like ours will take significant investment that can only happen if the island is allowed to become a thriving, self-sustaining mixed use environment.

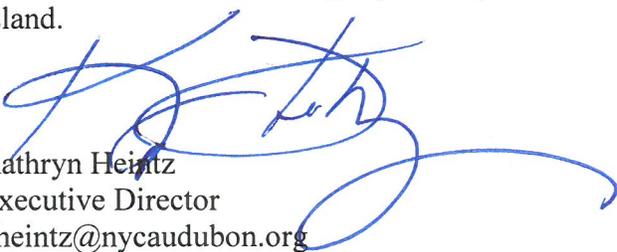
Again, NYC Audubon is an *urban* conservation organization and we *expect* that buildings will be part of our city for the foreseeable future. New building is an opportunity for better building. New building on Governors Island—literally on South Island’s landfill—has the potential to show the city, the state, our country and the world what a green future city embracing wildlife looks like.

New York City Audubon does not oppose sustainable development within the development zones that were established in the 2010 masterplan. Development of these zones was always part of the agreement and planning.

We do have concerns:

- We see no benefit to very tall buildings on Governors Island. Our concerns include shadow, density, and loss of pastoral character. We prefer an absolute limit no greater than 120 feet, with most buildings limited to 75 feet.
- We ask that any buildings above 75 feet incorporate Bird Friendly Building Design for their full height as otherwise required by Local Law 15.
- We ask that all buildings have habitat-quality green roofs, and we yearn for design that offers interconnecting intensive green roofs, where larger spaces are part of the park and accessible to the public from ground level (imagine in your mind’s eye buildings that appear to be under rolling hills).
- We ask that the development zones include habitat-quality landscape architecture with wetlands, grasslands, trees, and shorelines that provide ecosystem services to wildlife.
- We oppose unnecessary building illumination and would want any lighting plan to follow Dark Skies lighting standards—that is safety lighting that reduces skyglow and minimizes glare and blue light in the nighttime environment.
- We absolutely oppose the installation of artificial turf fields and stadium-style lighting.
- Lastly, we support Earth Matter in its efforts to continue its important work and to remain a prominent anchor partner in the island’s earth-embracing and climate-friendly community.

Thank you for your time and for hearing New York City Audubon’s requests and concerns on behalf of birds and birders who eagerly await year-round, affordable, welcoming access to Governors Island.



Kathryn Heintz
Executive Director
kheintz@nycaudubon.org
646.434.0423



**TESTIMONY FROM THE ASSOCIATION FOR A BETTER NEW YORK
BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL LAND USE COMMITTEE, SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES
REGARDING GOVERNORS ISLAND REZONING**

April 5, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Association for a Better New York (ABNY). My name is Laura Colacurcio, and I am the Vice President of ABNY.

The Association for a Better New York (ABNY) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the healthy growth and renewal of New York City's people, businesses, and communities. We are a 50-year-old civic organization representing corporations, nonprofits, unions, government authorities, and educational, cultural, and health institutions. We strive to promote connections between the public and private sectors to make New York City a better place to live, work, and visit for all.

ABNY presently serves on the Community Advisory Council for Governors Island along with several other stakeholders. As a member of the Council, we have learned that the proposal to rezone Governors Island and allow for the creation of a year-round center for climate solutions will bring together opportunities for learning, skills training, and public programming related to one of the most pressing issues of our time.

As ABNY focuses on the city's inclusive and equitable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, we are eager to support projects that present a bold vision for city's future. The climate center provides an opportunity to prepare for the existential threat of climate change while creating more than \$1 billion in economic impact and more than 8,000 jobs and career training opportunities that will ensure New York City has the available workforce to take on this critical issue.

Further, ABNY believes that every New Yorker should have access to public assets like Governors Island, and year-round access and increased transportation connectivity are critical to achieving this goal. This proposal will create increased ferry service to more New Yorkers allowing the Island to serve a more diverse user base. This will make the Island a more inclusive place to enjoy free and low-cost access to open space, recreational opportunities, and arts and culture. Moreover, this proposal limits new development to specific areas and does not impact the Island's beloved open spaces.

In addition, the vision for a climate center on Governors Island is aligned with its existing character and ethos—from its resilient award-winning park to the work of its partners—the Harbor School, Billion Oyster Project, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, the Climate Museum, and more.

For these reasons, ABNY supports the rezoning proposal for Governors Island. Thank you for your time.

Opinion: Wrong Vision for Gov. Island

 tribecatrib.com/content/opinion-wrong-vision-gov-island-0

Dec. 17, 2020

By Lynn Ellsworth

Governors Island is public land and home to an excellent park that is self-supporting. Yet 33 acres of it is about to be redeveloped for glass towers under a bad rezoning plan pushed by Alicia Glen, the city's gentrifier-in-chief and current head of the "Trust" that manages the island. The vision she is proposing should be rejected.

Once owned by the Federal Government, part of the island was designated a National Historic District and another a National Monument. The remaining 150 acres were transferred to the City and State of New York with a restricted deed: use had to be for public benefit, there could be no permanent housing, and all revenue had to be recycled into the island. That's okay. It's a great park "as is" and a huge asset to the congested core of the city. There's a public high school, summer camps, arts and cultural festivals, space to bike and hike, and a few simple places to eat. Aside from festival days, it's a charming place to get some respite from tourists and crowds.

In 2010 a "Trust" was formed to oversee the island's future and much of what they did was good (except maybe for the silly high-end Aquaspa they approved). Recently, Alicia Glen took charge of the Trust. Long time friend to real estate Carl Weisbrod is staunchly at her side. They work closely with the "Friends of Governors Island," a non-profit dominated by Big Real Estate firms such as Tishman Speyer, Related, and Blackstone. Glen quickly got the Trust's mission changed to be about "bold visions" and "full potential" and then produced a real estate-driven plan that if implemented, would damage the island's quality as a public park. Kicking the plan's tires, it also looks more like a bait and switch scheme to hide the usual Glen product: speculative offices and luxury condos.

How would that work? First, the Trust creates a "red herring" to serve as bait and distract us: a non-profit "Center for Climate Solutions" whose function is to justify a massive upzoning on 33 acres of the island by the ferry landing. Glen argues that once upzoned, she can get new buildings constructed and then flog them to unnamed educational institutions, hoteliers, and developers who will agree to pay the city \$120 million a year for them. There will be splashy new faculty housing, new dorms, and a variety of hotels. Buildings as high as 300 feet will be allowed. The research center would be the smallest part of the plan (and does not seem to need a new building at all to happen). Taxpayers will pay for the necessary demolitions and the unspecified cost of raising the south part of the island to protect it from sea-level rise. The switch would come when the fiction of a public good "center" proves impossible to sustain,

thus requiring a deed change (like at Rivington House) to allow for speculative office towers and luxury condos. But \$120 Million in promised annual revenue! As E.B. White said, that's "some pig," or rather, some astonishing Goldman Sachs voodoo.

But wait. What non-profit or educational institution will pay \$120 million a year to be there? Columbia University? They already have a climate research center as well as the disastrous Manhattanville project on their hands. New York University? They are over their heads in real estate projects around the world. CUNY? No money there. Cornell? They already committed to a big tech campus on Randall's Island. And who will construct the buildings? One of the Big Real Estate firms on the Friends of Governors Island board, perhaps? That seems likely.

Is this the right vision for a public island? Currently, the city earns a respectable \$5 million a year from Governors Island events, vendors, rents, and grants. That covers maintenance and operations. The city tops that budget up with \$15 million from general tax revenues. That pays for the ferries and city employees. Why not just charge some user fees on the ferries?

Governors Island is a beautiful, history-filled place that should stay a low-key public park, with a mild subsidy from the city, like all parks. No need to turn it into a financial black hole like Hudson River Park, Diller Island, or the Highline. If more facilities are needed they should be along the lines of an all-season tennis, skating, and swimming complex. Go ahead and charge some modest user fees for that. Children can play there all year long and learn how to be lifeguards. Governor's Island should stay public, park-like, low-rise, filled with trees not buildings. Don't turn it into a real estate project.

Lynn Ellsworth is the founder of Human-Scale NYC and Tribeca Trust

From: [Lynn Ellsworth](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 11:49:04 AM

Testimony on Governors Island Plans

Lynn Ellsworth
Humanscale NYC
April 5, 2021

I am Lynn Ellsworth of Human-scale NYC and the Tribeca Trust. We oppose totally this ill-conceived vision for Governors Island. We consider it to be a speculative real estate fantasy, with the climate center as just a silly red herring that should not fool anyone. We do not consider this vision to be financially necessary, nor in the best interests of the city. Other, more low-key commercial uses for the existing buildings can and should be found. We call for a new team in place, an overhaul of the Trust, and removing the real-estate dominated Friends of Governors Island from any role on the island.

From: [Lorenz Fish](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governor's Island - Dedicated Land Use for Earth Matter
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 11:02:53 AM

Dear NYC Council Land Use Committee,

I write in support of the plan to designate two acres of land on Governor's Island in the development zone for Earth Matter NY as part of the vote to approve the ULURP.

Earth Matter continues to be a vital resource for NYC citizens. Their educational work is unparalleled in the city, and their day-to-day operations provide composting and other services that are sorely needed and if anything should be expanded with city support.

Governors Island is an excellent location for Earth Matter operations as it is well-located for people from most boroughs, and attracts visitors from the park to see first-hand the well-run programs of Earth Matter. People can get familiar with gardening, animal rearing, and composting skills - experiences in short supply otherwise.

Earth Matter has had to move multiple times in the past few years, fortunately the current location is a good one. Please help Earth Matter continue their work on Governor's Island without disruption.

Please consider this and other testimony about the real ongoing value of Earth Matters work and the importance of a stable location for their educational programs, and composting and recycling programs.

Very Truly Yours,

Lorenz Fish
NYC

**Friends of Governors Island Testimony Before the New York City Council
on the Proposed Rezoning of the South Island of Governors Island
ULURP: 210126-ZRM & 210127-ZMM
April 5, 2021**

I'm Merritt Birnbaum, Executive Director of the Friends of Governors Island. **Our primary mission is to support expanded public access to – and increased enjoyment of – this extraordinary place.**

We strongly support the proposed rezoning. The Trust's proposal represents the culmination of more than twenty years of collaborative, community-based planning initiated by our predecessor organization, the Governors Island Alliance.

Since the mid-nineties, when we first brought together hundreds of conservationists, urban planners, park managers and community members to envision a future for the Island, *every* plan has included responsible, mixed-use development in support of public use and public benefit.

Right now, as we speak, Governors Island's spectacular new park is beginning to bloom, but no one is there to enjoy it. More than one million square feet of historic buildings are unheated, lacking occupants and falling into greater disrepair. And two land parcels on the South Island are fenced off and filled with crumbling warehouses. In a city starved for space, this is a tragedy.

The reason the Island is empty right now is because Governors Island is much more than a park and a historic district. As its owner and operator, the Trust is wholly responsible for running -- among other things -- a public transportation network, a public utilities system, public marine infrastructure, public facilities maintenance *and* public parkland. Access to the park is not possible without *all* of the above-mentioned services – and those services are not possible without significant revenue.

Currently, the Trust's budget is only covering the bare minimum to keep the Island going 6 months of the year. A sustainable funding mechanism is necessary to expand, improve and enhance park space on the Island, including field space, public programming and visitor amenities, and most especially: **increased ferry access.**

The Friends is responsible for raising private funds to care for the park, and we know firsthand that philanthropy alone cannot fill the enormous gap needed to make the Island a year-round public resource. While other parks raise the majority of their funding from people who live within 2 blocks, Governors Island is not adjacent to any specific neighborhood, making our fundraising burden uniquely challenging.

The proposed rezoning will increase ferry service and connectivity to serve more New Yorkers. It will also allow for expanded amenities and support other long-envisioned public uses such as education, arts and culture, and limited commercial activity.

Critics have argued that the rezoning does not explicitly mandate a Climate Center be built on the site, and they are correct. But their argument that the proposal paves the way for privatization is entirely unfounded. The Trust is a nonprofit formed in the public interest, and it has demonstrated time and again over two decades that its foremost goal is to make the Island an extraordinary public place, accessible to all, and sustainable in perpetuity. The proposed rezoning makes this possible.

Dear Council Members, good afternoon

4.5.21

I'm Marisa DeDominicis, co-founder and Director of Earth Matter NY, a stakeholder who would need relocation based on the proposed ULURP.

In 2008 I worked to create land trust operations committees for 64 NYC gardens. I advocated for composting workshops and met resistance and pushback from garden leaders who said their members were not interested in composting.

Ten years later, one of these leaders asked if I would be the keynote speaker at their annual garden convention, focusing on composting!

Last Friday, Parks Dept. Green Thumb told us Earth Matter's spring compost apprenticeship had such a demand, would we host a second apprenticeship this Fall.

Council members, the number of foot soldiers who support composting as a climate mitigation solution is a rapidly growing force.

We believe in, and support The Trust's proposal for The Climate Study Center. It is a great fit with our work. The Trust has shown incredible commitment to our Zero Waste Island collaborations, the City Council's work, DSNY's Compost Project, and to NYC community composting.

We are excited to take the first step with The Trust, tomorrow, to explore relocation of Earth Matter in the Southern Development zone.

Our expectations are tempered, however, by examples of what our City has supported and committed to, so far as land use for community scale composting.

LESEC's compost yard is supposedly part of the Park, but LESEC's Yard does not have a dot on the East River Park's redevelopment map.

It is hard for Earth Matter to raise funds for a stable future when our physical home base of 1.5 acres is uncertain.

We humbly request that the Council close the gap from exploring a potential space status, to a definitive, designated 2 acre adequate relocation space in the development zone- all together. This preserves Earth Matter's **ability** to assist The Trust's goals, and serve the people of New York City

Thanks all, today for listening and considering this request, special thanks to CM Chin, the Council's compost caucus, MBP Brewer, and all at The Trust for your support.

From: [Meghan Maguire](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Provide Earth Matter NY With The 2 Acres of Land Necessary to Sustain the Important Work They Do
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 11:01:56 AM

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Meghan Maguire, and I am a long time resident of Astoria, NY writing to implore you to provide Earth Matter NY with the 2 acres of land necessary to sustain the important work they do. Please make certain that the proposed ULURP for Governors Island designates the necessary space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. We need more and not fewer programs of this kind to teach our children, and remind our adults, of the value of the earth.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony and the very important work you do of bringing open space to New Yorkers who greatly need and appreciate it.

Meghan Maguire | Executive Assistant
W. P. Carey Inc.
One Manhattan West
395 9th Avenue, 58th Floor | New York, NY 10001
p: (212) 492-1196 | **f:** (212) 492-8922
e: mmaguire@wpcarey.com | **w:** www.wpcarey.com

From: [Margaret Maugenest](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governor's Island
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 1:12:48 PM

I am writing to oppose the proposed rezoning plan of Governors Island.

1) The current rezoning proposal for Governors Island must be withdrawn. Bringing in high-density high-rise development is not the best use of this unique space that belongs to all New Yorkers and is visited by people from 99% of NYC zip codes. New Yorkers have a serious need for the welcoming, open, expansive, parkland quality (even in areas with buildings) that Governors Island provides and really isn't available elsewhere in the city.

2) The main rationale for this intrusive project – financial self-sufficiency for Governors Island – is not justified. The Trust's own speculative projections (based on pre-covid conditions) state that financial self-sufficiency wouldn't be achieved until 2050. Meanwhile it'll cost taxpayers billions.

Also, as Manhattan Community Board 1 points out in their 12/22/21 resolution, the Trust has not provided enough information to evaluate the project. As a City Planning Commissioner said at the March 1st public review, this project is akin to the City giving the Trust a blank check for an unspecified project.

3) As a resident of Gowanus, Brooklyn, I am concerned that the Owl's Head and Red Hook sewage treatment systems will be overwhelmed by all the new development that is planned. The City must be proactive in planning for the cumulative impacts to our sewer system and invest in the necessary infrastructure to support added impacts before new buildings are built.

4) In the review of the rezoning plan, any discussion regarding a climate research center is irrelevant, misleading, and should be termed off-topic. This is a proposal to upzone the south island, period. There is nothing legally requiring that a climate center be the result. Mainly it serves as a potential "anchor tenant" in order to attract developers and sell the upzoning to the public. In fact, GI is already productive as a climate hub, thanks to the work of Earth Matter, GrowNYC, Billion Oyster Project, the Harbor School and others. Five City Planning Commissioners criticized the proposed development and noted that there is no Request For Proposals (RFP) in place to legally require that a climate center be built.

5) This is an awful rush and unfair to all New Yorkers, today and in the future. Land Use public hearings being held virtually due to COVID-19 are too difficult for authentic public participation and should be suspended. There is precedent for this: the ULURP process is currently halted in two Brooklyn rezonings, due to lawsuits in Gowanus and Crown Heights.

6) "Open space" is not just pedestrian access, as TGI is selling it, but involves sky and the feeling of openness. The "increased open space" that TGI is presenting is "woven open space similar to Battery Park City." It's boxed in by 10 – 30 story buildings and non-public areas.

7) Any new building on Governors Island should be kept to a minimum and not exceed the four story height of buildings in the historic district or the 35-foot height limit in the current zoning. I support the Metro Area Governors Island Coalition's vision for Governors Island.

For these reasons I oppose the current proposal for rezoning on Governors Island.

Margaret Maugenest
Friends and Residents of Greater Gowanus (FROGG)
280 Nevins Street
Brooklyn, NY 11217

Marc Ricks Testimony
In Favor of the Rezoning of Governors Island
April 5, 2021

Good afternoon, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the rezoning of Governors Island.

My name is Marc Ricks. My association with Governors Island dates to 2005, when I began working on the project as a member of the Mayor's Office. Later I became involved as a board member and eventually chairman of the organization now known as the Friends of Governors Island.

It's easy for those of us who have been visiting and working on this Island the longest to view it as our own, secret garden... our own special getaway.

But Governors Island does not belong to the people who were there first. It belongs to all New Yorkers.

It was never meant to be mummified as a ghost town for half the year. And as magical as the open space is, it was never meant to serve solely as that. Not in a city starved for space to accommodate cultural, educational, and other uses that can enrich our lives and our economy.

That's just one of the reasons I strongly support this rezoning, which I believe will finally enable Governors Island to become the year-round resource it was meant to be for all New Yorkers.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

From: [Miranda Sielaff](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 10:24:50 AM

April 5, 2021

I am writing to oppose the proposed rezoning plan of Governors Island.

1) The current rezoning proposal for Governors Island must be withdrawn. Bringing in high-density high-rise development is not the best use of this unique space that belongs to all New Yorkers and is visited by people from 99% of NYC zip codes. New Yorkers have a serious need for the welcoming, open, expansive, parkland quality (even in areas with buildings) that Governors Island provides and really isn't available elsewhere in the city.

2) The main rationale for this intrusive project – financial self-sufficiency for Governors Island – is not justified. The Trust's own speculative projections (based on pre-covid conditions) state that financial self-sufficiency wouldn't be achieved until 2050. Meanwhile it'll cost taxpayers billions.

Also, as Manhattan Community Board 1 points out in their 12/22/21 resolution, the Trust has not provided enough information to evaluate the project. As a City Planning Commissioner said at the March 1st public review, this project is akin to the City giving the Trust a blank check for an unspecified project.

3) As a resident of Gowanus, Brooklyn, I am concerned that the Owl's Head and Red Hook sewage treatment systems will be overwhelmed by all the new development that is planned. The City must be proactive in planning for the cumulative impacts to our sewer system and invest in the necessary infrastructure to support added impacts before new buildings are built.

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7) Any new building on Governors Island should be kept to a minimum and not exceed the

four story height of buildings in the historic district or the 35-foot height limit in the current zoning. I support the Metro Area Governors Island Coalition's vision for Governors Island.

For these reasons I oppose the current proposal for rezoning on Governors Island.

Miranda Sielaff
195 Luquer St #3R
Brooklyn, NY 11231



Committee on Land Use

April 4, 2021

Support Local Composting Infrastructure

Good afternoon, my name is Meredith Danberg-Ficarelli. I am the Director of Common Ground Compost LLC, a member of the Save Our Compost Coalition, a member of the Manhattan Solid Waste Advisory Board, and a Board Member of the US Composting Council. Through my work, I build zero waste programs, advocate for the expansion of access to waste reduction services, and center education on materials literacy, the power of individual behavioral change, and the recognition that all people must demand structural change in order to build a livable and just future for all.

We initially signed up to testify in opposition of the rezoning of Governors Island because as recently as last week, the plan seemed to include the eviction of yet another essential piece of compost infrastructure in NYC.

We were grateful to learn over the weekend that the Trust for Governors Island plans to designate space in the South Island zone specifically for Earth Matter. We will support a development strategy that integrates an appropriately sized footprint for Earth Matter's composting operations, and that ensures their access to utilities, transportation and all other essential services.

We look forward to reviewing a development strategy that recognizes Earth Matter as an alternative model which, if replicated across the City, would save money and drastically reduce our City's impact on the environment and on chronically disenfranchised communities impacted by dirty waste infrastructure.

The City budget allocates more than \$400 Million every year to export waste, and 34+ % of our waste is heavy wet organic material that should remain as close to the City as possible. Sites like Earth Matter, The Lower East Side Ecology Center, and Big Reuse present community-scale solutions that should be praised and replicated.

We hope to see a development plan for Governors Island that celebrates Earth Matter as a pearl in NYC's estuary ecosystem, and we ask that all City Council members recognize that climate change is real. All decisions should be made with climate and social justice at their core.

Thank you

Meredith Danberg-Ficarelli

Common Ground Compost LLC

Save Our Compost

From: [Nicole Crook](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Written Testimony RE: Governor's Island
Date: Wednesday, March 31, 2021 7:19:20 PM
Attachments: [Governor's Island Testimony.pdf](#)

Hello,

My name is Nicole Crook. I am a New Yorker and grew up in Manhattan. I am now raising two young children in Brooklyn and I am a public school teacher. I am testifying today because the current rezoning proposal for Governors Island must be withdrawn.

Governor's Island is special. It is unique and provides green space that NYC and New Yorkers need desperately. Green space is even more prized now in the midst of a pandemic and will be prized long after. I have enjoyed a wedding on Governor's Island, bike rides, the night of 1,000 Jack-o-lanterns, and days of fun for my children when I have been able to let them run around away from the confines of our small apartment.

I read that, "The main rationale for this intrusive project – financial self-sufficiency for Governors Island – is not justified. The Trust's own speculative projections (based on pre-covid conditions) state that financial self-sufficiency wouldn't be achieved until 2050. Meanwhile it'll cost taxpayers billions."

I can testify that families like mine have less and less incentive to remain in a New York City that continues to prioritize overdevelopment at cost to taxpayers, our quality of life, and, most importantly, the quality of life of our children.

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden could lose sunlight needed for their plant collections due to development. Our playground on South Oxford Street is now shrouded in shade due to the tall new buildings. Governor's Island must be kept as a park with active open, educational, recreational green space. NYC will suffer greatly long term without MORE, not less, public space. I might add that we have suffered enough this past year. We cannot watch green space be taken away from us.

Thank you for your time,
Nicole Crook
Public School Teacher and Parent
Brooklyn, NY
nikkicrook@gmail.com

Wednesday, March 31, 2021

Hello,

My name is Nicole Crook. I am a New Yorker and grew up in Manhattan. I am now raising two young children in Brooklyn and I am a public school teacher. I am testifying today because the current rezoning proposal for Governors Island must be withdrawn.

Governor's Island is special. It is unique and provides green space that NYC and New Yorkers need desperately. Green space is even more prized now in the midst of a pandemic and will be prized long after. I have enjoyed a wedding on Governor's Island, bike rides, the night of 1,000 Jack-o-lanterns, and days of fun for my children when I have been able to let them run around away from the confines of our small apartment.

I read that, "The main rationale for this intrusive project – financial self-sufficiency for Governors Island – is not justified. The Trust's own speculative projections (based on pre-covid conditions) state that financial self-sufficiency wouldn't be achieved until 2050. Meanwhile it'll cost taxpayers billions."

I can testify that families like mine have less and less incentive to remain in a New York City that continues to prioritize overdevelopment at cost to taxpayers, our quality of life, and, most importantly, the quality of life of our children.

The Brooklyn Botanic Garden could lose sunlight needed for their plant collections due to development. Our playground on South Oxford Street is now shrouded in shade due to the tall new buildings. Governor's Island must be kept as a park with active open, educational, recreational green space. NYC will suffer greatly long term without MORE, not less, public space. I might add that we have suffered enough this past year. We cannot watch green space be taken away from us.

Thank you for your time,
Nicole Crook
Public School Teacher and Parent
Brooklyn, NY
nikkicrook@gmail.com

From: [Nancy Idaka Sheran](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: I oppose upzoning Governor's Governor's Island
Date: Friday, April 2, 2021 9:08:57 AM

We must stop thinking that all areas in NYC need to be upzoned to the point where the city becomes so dense that it is unlivable. Usually the upzoning just adds luxury development and does nothing to address the lack of deeply affordable housing and affordable commercial spaces.

But more important, why do we continue to think that it's a good idea to encourage development in areas that will be very prone to flooding as the ocean water levels rise? If masses of people are encouraged to live there you'll need to have evacuation plans during storms. Isn't this the ultimate hubris? I saw a very moving talk a couple of years ago by the head of a small island nation in the Pacific. They were taking climate change very seriously as an existential threat. Governor's Island is a small Island with no high land. It should be preserved as a public green space and a historic military and naval site.

Why not think about repurposing some of those barracks as artist spaces and inexpensive resorts for city people?

The old model of building luxury housing isn't working. Apartments are not being sold, they are not providing needed deeply affordable housing, those apartments that are sold remain empty for most of the year and the owners are not contributing to NYC's life or culture. This idea, which I think started with Bloomberg, was a bad idea and it's time to move on to a new model.

From: [Pablo Garcia](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island development
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 3:13:06 AM

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

I am Pablo O. Garcia, an Earth Science Systems educator who is excited by the development of the Climate Solutions Study Center on Governors Island.

The creative value and connection of all the Informal Learning Sites on Governors Island will be an asset multiplier for solving problems from the extreme weather events in the New York harbor.

One of my favorite learning sites, EarthMatter provides leadership training for students interested in the organic industry of recovering and composting organic waste into useful soil amendments. It is with great regret that I ask the land use committee not to approve the Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) as is currently written.

My concern is that when the City Council approves the required ULURP for the Climate Solutions Study Center, EarthMatter will not be provided with a dedicated 2 acres of space in the South Island, the only suitable area on Gov Island for them to continue their compost processing and educational facility.

Neither the zoning or the trust's request for proposal stipulates that Earth Matter is required to have space and this is necessary to assure they can continue with their mid-scale operations and education. Also, in the Southern Development Zone Requests for Proposals, I noticed that the EarthMatter complex is not mentioned or listed on any maps or diagrams.

The Trust for Governors Island has partnered with EarthMatter, on Zero Waste Island for 12 years, formally through waste reduction agreements for 3 years on all levels of resource management. Two acres should be set aside for informational activities and for processing organics diverted from city landfills. Students have learned the value of recovering organics, stewardship, and science.

EarthMatter is a pioneer in **Value Creation**; value creation is giving something valuable (like education in composting) to receive something else, (reduced carbon footprint) that is more valuable to you (improved quality of life, lowered health costs).

The concept of **Value Creation for business Success**, combines these values to owners (city), value to customers (taxpayers) and value to employers (organic industry).

Our current GDP (Gross Domestic Product) economic model for the city is antiquated as there is no value measured for all the green information emerging from the new green workforce.

It would distance the immediacy of a climate solutions center collaboration if EarthMatter is not guaranteed a location on Governors Island for their continued development of research in creating value for carbon capture.

Thank You,

Pablo O. Garcia BFA, MA

Earth Science Education

249 Eldridge St.

New York, NY 10002

g.pablo2012@gmail.com

From: gar_28909@msn.com
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Cc: [Marisa Dedominicis](#)
Subject: Fwd: Governors Island ULURP
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 3:27:38 AM

Testimony attached.

Thank you
Pablo Garcia
In person Personell Support
UANY Harbor School

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Pablo Garcia <g.pablo2012@gmail.com>
Date: Apr 5, 2021 03:20
Subject: Fwd: Governors Island ULURP
To: Pablo <GAR_28909@msn.com>
Cc:

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Pablo Garcia** <g.pablo2012@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Apr 5, 2021 at 3:15 AM
Subject: Governors Island ULURP
To: Pablo <g.pablo2012@gmail.com>

To the NYC Council Land Use Committee,

I object to approving the current Uniform Land Use Review Process as written because there is no mention of EarthMatter as a component of The Climate Solution Study Center Southern Development Zone on Governors Island.

EarthMatter has provided the best Sustainable Solutions practices for leadership development in the recovery and processing of urban organic waste. Not only do at risk students learn the value of sustainable farming practices but teachers have learned the art of engaging students in environmental science and technology such as solar energy from photovoltaics to power aeration blowers for the compost windrows.

As an in-person science teacher, I have seen the flexibility in EarthMatter's partnership with the Governors Island Trust. Relocated three times, Earthmatter was able to keep with the Trust's schedule, and was still able to assist the Urban Assembly New York Harbor school's Compost Club and Organic Recovery Internships.

Our students get to meet and interact with a diverse population from other schools. I observed inner city students marvel at the goats and chickens and the smoking windrows of compost. Living Environment Science teachers were amazed at the practical knowledge that immigrant students acquired from subsistence farming.

The NY City Council, The Department of Sanitation, and the Manhattan Borough President have supported these formal and informal activities. With development of the study center, the next generation neighborhood leaders and students will experience the possibilities of collective action of sharing thoughts and concerns of Earth, Water, and Climate interaction.

This Testimony by:

Pablo Garcia

In person Personnel Support

UANY Harbor School

10 South Street Slip 7

New York, NY 10004

GAR_28909@msn.com

Cell/Text: 347 733 3469

From: [patty heffley](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governor's Island comment
Date: Wednesday, March 31, 2021 2:41:38 PM

Hello NYC City Council,

As a new member of the County Committee I say NO. I oppose the Governor's Island real estate, construction, and all other manner of graft, from NYC's budget and future tax revenue pot.

We all know what this is. It's a giveaway from the taxpayer's pockets, knowing it's 2050 before it could even break even!! The whole time tax payers are paying taxes and upkeep and expenses, while the above grifters are getting giant tax breaks right out of the box!! NYC can't afford another Hudson Yards boondoggle.

Hudson Yards for the rich and dullards. It has failed and we the taxpayers are paying for it. No one will go to Governor's Island for opulence. They want grass, open skies and little to do!!!

The High Line works because it is ACCESSIBLE by walking and trains and busses. It's a small commitment. It's New York City when you stop off of the stairs again. No one will go to Governor's island for the day and have to eat what is there and do what is there to do very often. It will be a one time thing, an outing. How many people do you need to be constant users of the Island and how will they get there? Come on!

Will Governor's Island be like the Hudson Rail Yards? A giant failure of ideas and a waste of money, taxpayer's money!

We need affordable housing on a massive scale. we need COVID ventilation city wide. We need better schools in every corner of the city. We need to Tax the rich to pay for their own mistakes, not the taxpayers.

NO NO NO on this boondoggle.

I will not vote for you in my district and will certainly check others' votes and send them around to your constituents if you do support this awful project.

Sincerely,

Patty Heffley

NYC, NY 10011

----Uh, no, my name isn't "schnooky pootsie"-----

From: [Richard Corman](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island Rezoning
Date: Sunday, April 4, 2021 6:13:48 PM
Attachments: [2020-12-07 Protect Governors Island.pdf](#)

NY City Council Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises:

In anticipation of your hearing on the matter scheduled for Monday, April 5, 10am, please find attached the resolution passed by the membership of Downtown Independent Democrats on December 7, 2020 urging rejection of the current plan to rezone Governors Island and create a 4.5 million sq. ft. development on the southern portion of the island.

This resolution was sent to our key elected officials along with a letter urging the city to withdraw this plan and reassess this and any future Governors Island development proposal to reflect a reprioritization of public open space over real estate development.

Thank you.

Richard J Corman
President
Downtown Independent Democrats

M: 201.513.8897
richard.corman@gmail.com
www.didnyc.org



December 7, 2020

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Mayor of New York City

Hon. Gale Brewer
Manhattan Borough President

Hon. Corey Johnson
NYC Council Speaker

Hon. Margaret Chin
NYC Council Member

Dear Mayor de Blasio, Borough President Brewer, and Council Member Chin,

Enclosed please find a Resolution approved by Downtown Independent Democrats General Membership on December 7, 2020:

Resolution to Protect Governors Island

The Trust for Governors Island (the "Trust"), an instrument of New York City, has presented a major development plan encompassing 45% of the southern portion of Governors Island. This plan would create 4.5 million sq. ft. of development with 300 foot tall buildings along parts of the waterfront that will vastly diminish public views, island use and access justified by unclear financial need, uncertain gain yet at potential large taxpayer cost.

DID urges the City to withdraw this plan and reassess this and any future development proposal to reflect a reprioritization such that public open space takes precedence over real estate development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Corman', is written over a horizontal line.

Richard Corman

President, Downtown Independent Democrats

Enclosure

cc: Hon. Chuck Schumer, U.S. Senator
Hon. Kirsten Gillibrand, U.S. Senator
Hon. Carolyn Maloney, U.S. Representative
Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, U.S. Representative
Hon. Nydia Velázquez, U.S. Representative
Hon. Andrew Cuomo, NYS Governor
Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, NYS Sen. Leader
Hon. Carl Heastie, NYS Assembly Speaker

Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator
Hon. Brian Kavanaugh, NY State Senator
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NY State Assembly
Hon. Yuh-Line Niou, NY State Assembly
Hon. Scott M. Stringer, NYC Comptroller
Hon. Jumaane Williams, NYC Public Advocate
Tammy Meltzer, Chair, Manhattan Community Board
1



Resolution to Protect Governors Island

December 7, 2020

Whereas:

1. **Governors Island** (the “Island”) is located 800 yards from lower Manhattan and provides 172 acres of public land. The National Park Service owns 22 acres operated as a National Monument and The Trust for Governors Island (the “Trust”), a nonprofit organization of the City of New York, operates the remaining 150 acres:
 - a. The Island is subject to numerous deed restrictions, the most significant is the prohibition of permanent residential uses, except for specific non-permanent residential such as hotels and dormitories. The Island must be used for public open space or education and permits other uses such as arts and culture, recreation and entertainment, hospitality and retail, health, and commercial offices. Finally, all funds generated on the Island must be used on the Island.
 - b. The Island is divided into two sections: (1) the North Island, which includes the Governors Island Historic District and (2) the South Island, which includes 33 acres designated for future development.
 - c. The island is zoned R3-2 throughout, with a Special Governors Island District mapped over the northern part of the island to permit a wide range of commercial, recreational, cultural, and educational uses that provide flexibility in the adaptive reuse of the historic buildings;
 - d. Basic maintenance and operations cost \$5 million, which is now generated by existing activities on the Island. The City contributes an additional \$15 million that covers ferry service and city employee salaries.
 - e. There is great unfulfilled demand for public open space in downtown Manhattan. For example, 40,000 students attend schools in community boards 1, 2 and 3 and in lower Manhattan alone, there are 40 high schools, many of which do not have access to sports fields or facilities. Governors Island could fill a significant portion of this need.
2. **2013 Rezoning.** In 2013, the City rezoned the Island, establishing the Special Governors Island District on the North Island and permitting 3 million sq. ft. of development, 1.5 million sq. ft. on the North Island and 1.5 million sq. ft. on the South Island.
3. **Proposed 2020 Rezoning.** The Trust proposes a plan to redevelop 33 acres of the South Island, permit 4.5 million gross square feet, up *three times* from the 1.5 million sq. ft. approved in 2013 and allow buildings up to 300 feet tall. The development would



encompass 45% of the South Island, 6 acres in the Western Development Zone and 27 acres in the Eastern Development Zone (“The Plan”).

- a. The Trust would change the underlying zoning on the southern part of the island from R3-2 to a mid-density commercial zoning district, such as C4-5;
- b. There is no legal obligation for the Trust to be financially self-sufficient even though The Trust has a strategic vision to make the operation of the Island financially independent of the City’s budget cycle and claims that this would require it to further develop the South Island.
- c. The Trust projects the Plan would generate \$120 million of annual income from tenants, but has not i) disclosed financials to the public that demonstrate why this level of development, three times its prior projection, is required, ii) indicated how these funds, \$100 million more than the current operating budget would be used, nor iii) identified a future tenant, simply justifying the rezoning for a speculative non-profit called a “Center for Climate Solutions” -- to be run by an unnamed anchor tenant from the education or nonprofit sector. It is highly suspect that an education or nonprofit institution could be found that would provide that level of projected income and if found, existing buildings on the island could be adapted to such a use.
- d. The plan also calls for substantial, but undefined, taxpayer investment for infrastructure to support the anticipated development with no clarity on how much or when those investments are to be made.
- e. The plan proposes 4.5 million sq. ft. of development with 300 foot tall buildings along parts of the waterfront that will vastly diminish public views, island use and access.
- f. The plan calls for the public to cede ***forever*** a substantial, unique and desperately needed amount of public open space directly adjacent to the National Historic District in the 1% coastal flood plain, justified by an unclear financial need, uncertain gain and potential large taxpayer cost.

Therefore be it resolved that Downtown Independent Democrats insists that the City:

1. Reject the Plan;
2. Reassess this and any future development proposal to reflect a reprioritization such that public open space takes precedence over real estate development;
3. Reconsider the less dense plan approved in 2013, should any development be necessary;
4. Require public disclosure of all financial costs and benefits that are used to justify any loss of public open space and development;

5. Ensure and demonstrate the clear public benefit in return for any loss of public open space and development;
6. Specify and gain community approval for the use of any surplus funds deriving from development;
7. In any proposed development plan, permit allowable FAR and height only for low-rise development and minimal bulk provisions to reduce the impact to public enjoyment of this unique public place and waterfront.

PROGRESS TO DATE

Governors Island at a Glance

172 acres at the center of New York Harbor

Minutes by ferry from Lower Manhattan and Brooklyn

120 acres of open space including new 43-acre park

1.3M SF of Historic Buildings, plus 33 acres designated for new development

The Trust for Governors Island

4



Governors Island is approximately 1/2 the size of Lower Manhattan below the Brooklyn Bridge

Proposed Actions

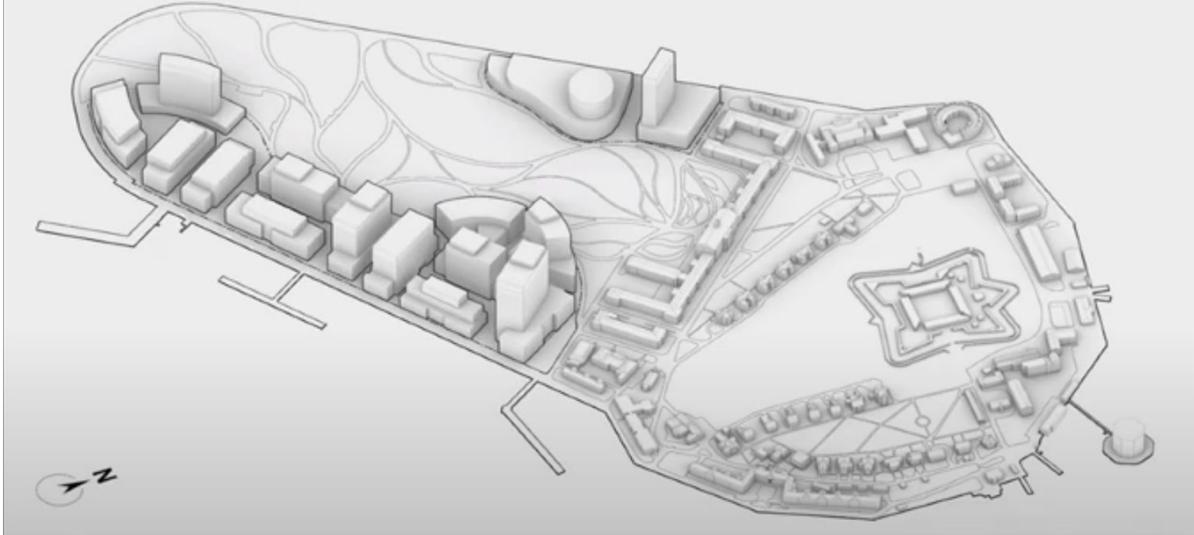
Bulk Rules

- Mechanicals and Permitted Obstructions (gray)
 - 100% floorplate coverage up to 40 ft.
 - Additional 20 ft at 50% lot coverage
- Building Orientation
 - Parallel with Division Road, East-West orientation or anything inbetween.
 - Towers permitted to be wider as they move away from water.
- Within 150 ft of Historic District, max 90 ft height



Proposed Actions

Illustrative Development



From: [Rebecca Hoffman](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Date: Sunday, April 4, 2021 12:56:27 PM

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

I am Rebecca Hoffman, life-long New Yorker and avid composter. I support Earth Matters, an institution that promotes a sustainable world and teaches and children and adults how we can create one.

I am writing to oppose the proposed ULURP for Governors Island because it does not specify long term, designated, adequate space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. Two acres of land, all in one place, is critical and required for the ability for Earth Matter to continue its compost operations and public programming to support and promote composting and sustainable practices for the people of NYC.

However, I do support the proposal by the Trust for Governors Island (TGI) for a center to address and study climate change. TGI has done a wonderful job managing the development of the island and transforming it into an idyllic retreat and creating a cultural center for all New Yorkers. I have the utmost respect for TGI's work, especially their partnership with Earth Matter NY in their Zero Waste Island collaborations.

Earth Matter's physical space should be an integral part of the proposed center for climate change and continue to manage the Island's, and much of NYC's organic resources. Since 2009, Earth Matter has taught on-the-ground, immediately practicable solutions to sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, achieve zero-waste goals, and improve urban soils—all through the practice of composting and public engagement. Earth Matter is an important part of my Governors Island experience.

All New Yorkers should continue to have the opportunity to visit Earth Matter's Compost Learning Center campus that provides for each of us to connect to the earth and with the earth work they do, and share the learnings and experiences that I have experienced. I urge you to oppose the ULURP for Governors Island, unless it provides 2 acres of the 33 acre development plan, to ensure Earth Matter will be able to continue their climate change study and mitigation work, in collaboration with The Trust, as a service to New Yorkers.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony.

Rebecca Hoffman, LMSW

Brooklyn, NY 11218

From: [RICHARD KUNTZEVICH](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Earth Matter
Date: Thursday, April 1, 2021 3:39:03 PM

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Lisa Edmondson and I live in Chelsea and am a weekly volunteer at the Earth Matter Farm where I volunteer as a New York Cares team leader.

I am writing to oppose the proposed ULURP for Governors Island because it does not specify long term, designated, adequate space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. Two acres of land, all in one place, is critical and required for the ability for Earth Matter to continue its compost operations and public programming to support and promote composting and sustainable practices for the people of NYC.

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Earth Matter's physical space should be an integral part of the proposed center for climate change and continue to manage the Island's, and much of NYC's organic resources. Since 2009, Earth Matter has taught on-the-ground, immediately practicable solutions to sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, achieve zero-waste goals, and improve urban soils—all through the practice of composting and public engagement. Earth Matter is an important part of my Governors Island experience.

All New Yorkers should continue to have the opportunity to visit Earth Matter's Compost Learning Center campus that provides for each of us to connect to the earth and with the earth work they do, and share the learnings and experiences that I have experienced. I urge you to oppose the ULURP for Governors Island, unless it provides 2 acres of the 33 acre development plan, to ensure Earth Matter will be able to continue their climate change study and mitigation work, in collaboration with The Trust, as a service to New Yorkers.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony.

Richard Kuntzevich
50 East 8th Street #4T
New York, NY 10003

From: [Ryan D. Matthews](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Opposition to the up-zoning proposal for Governors Island
Date: Friday, April 2, 2021 5:56:03 PM

To whom it may concern,

I urge you to oppose the Trust For Governors Island (TGI) zoning proposal: it effectively privatizes 33 public acres and is just too big and too extreme. It is unnecessary and does more harm than good. I've been an artist in residence on GI for the last several months and it has provided an incredibly peaceful and calming atmosphere.

Better alternatives exist that could generate revenue while doing less harm to the National Historic District and to the function of the island as a calm respite from the city.

Best,

--

Ryan D. Matthews

From: [Renee Monroe](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: OPPOSITION to Governors Island Up-zoning Proposal
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 11:06:18 AM

To the Members of the Land Use Committee,

As a resident of lower Manhattan and frequent visitor to Governors Island, I am writing in **OPPOSITION** to the city's misguided proposal to up-zone this unique green space.

Governors Island is a beautiful and accessible space that belongs to all New Yorkers. I love the experience of going from the skyscrapers of downtown to the of the flat lawns and plantings of an island, all within short ferry ride from South Ferry. Imposing high-density, high rise development on this flat parkland would be a grotesque misuse of this precious public land.

Defending this project on the basis of financial self-sufficiency for Governors Island is a false premise. The Governors Island Trust's own projections, which are based on pre-Covid data), state that self-sufficiency would not be reached until 2050 at best. In the meanwhile, it will cost taxpayers billions of dollars.

In the rezoning plan, **any discussion regarding a climate center is irrelevant and misleading. This is a proposal to up-zone the south island, pure and simple.** There is nothing legally requiring that a climate center actually be built. The center is primarily a potential "anchor tenant" that would serve to attract developers and sell the upzoning to the public.

Thanks to organizations such as Earth Matter, GrowNYC, Billion Oyster Project and the Harbor School, Governors Island is *already* a very productive climate hub.

I also want to register my vehement opposition to public meetings being held virtually due to Covid-19. These are not authentic public meetings and should be **SUSPENDED** until the public can meet in person.

PLEASE REJECT THE UP-ZONING OF GOVERNORS ISLAND.

Sincerely,

Renée Monroe
542 Broadway 3F
New York, NY 10012

Robert Pirani

**Testimony Before the New York City Council
Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
on the Proposed Rezoning of the South Island of Governors Island**

April 5, 2021

Thanks for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Robert Pirani, the Founding Executive Director of the Governors Island Alliance and a current Board member of its successor organization, the Friends of Governors Island. My testimony today, which is in favor of the proposed rezoning, is based on more than 25 years of experience advocating for this treasured New York Harbor resource.

The Island today is home to an extraordinary park, and it is enjoyed by almost one million visitors each summer. Successive City administrations and the Council deserve much credit for transforming this once off-limits federal facility to an extraordinary public place.

But the progress to date is only a partial fulfilment of the Island's promise. The shared vision for Governors Island has always included new, mixed-use development in service of the public interest. Even in the early days, our planning and financial models showed that new development and private tenancies is not only desirable but necessary to ensure a year-round visitation and a dedicated revenue stream critical to sustain the Island's open spaces, historic structures, infrastructure and ferry services.

Making space available for new construction within the narrowly defined development parcels on the South Island will help solve the Island's "chicken and egg" infrastructure problems. The zoning process will define both allowable uses and establish what can be built where – important guidance and a measure of certainty for a real estate market that to date has not been willing to make needed investments on the Island despite multiple RFPs over the decades.

The mix of uses proposed under the zoning - education, hospitality and conference spaces, and offices - reflect two decades worth of planning studies. They are precisely aligned with the terms of the federal deed restrictions.

Of course, the Council should take this opportunity to ensure that appropriate guardrails are in place. The final zoning should pay special attention to design guidelines, view and pedestrian corridors and park-to-esplanade connection points that can reinforce the Island's current campus-like atmosphere. Public investments in the Island's parkland and historic district must also be protected.

But now is the time to ensure that Governors Island is truly integrated with the fabric of the City. That every New Yorker can hop a ferry not just in the summer but year-round, whether to enjoy its park space or to be part of a vibrant public and private uses that complement and enhance the Island. The proposed rezoning can help make that happen. Thank you.

From: [Sara Gosses](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island Rezoning
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 9:42:51 AM

Dear All:

I am very concerned about the rezoning of Governors Island. It is clean, beautiful, and accessible. It provides an affordable escape for individuals and families, especially those who can't afford a day out on Long Island in or up to the Hudson Valley region. The 24/7 nature and dormitories will change the sense of ownership of the island. It currently feels and is for the public. The lack of people rushing to class means space for kids to learn to ride their bike without being in someone's way. While it's not paramount the visual quiet of the island at the start and end of the day is beyond remarkable and so, so rare in the city. I am far more supportive of academic buildings than businesses being sold the space, but to have SO MUCH of the island be allocated and with such tall buildings is excessive. Its current zoning and the wonderful board give space for art, history, science, and play to all take place. I appreciate that the science element continues, but the inevitable changes that will occur when people live on the island will change the opportunities it gives the rest of the New Yorkers.

Please consider not rezoning and maintaining this unique and amazing island. Plant trees instead.

From: [Sonja Haroldson](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Trust For Governors Island (TGI) zoning proposal - please oppose
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 12:02:50 PM

Dear City Council members,

My name is Sonja Haroldson. I have been a resident of NYC for 8 years. I attended NYU, and decided to stay because I love this city.

I still remember my first visit to Governor's Island. I was immediately drawn to the uniqueness of the island; the buildings, the lawns, the views. I first attended the 4Heads art fair (back when it was called the Governor's Island Art Fair) and was so hooked on the space that I proceeded to bring more and more friends to the island to explore, to breathe, to relax, to bike, to walk, to eat, to live. I have gone to the island for all types of events, and also to simply visit and get some much needed time away from the vehicles, the sounds, and the crowding of Manhattan. It is easily my favorite place in New York City, and I know I am not alone in that sentiment.

The impulse to plop a corporate campus onto this island is completely uncreative and lacking in respect for both the public and the island itself. The proposal does not make sense for this space, and there are so many other options and solutions that can maintain the integrity of the island while also providing research space for environmental and creative institutions.

The fact that the "suggestion" of a climate research facility is being used in order to force this proposal through is frankly an abuse of power and a tactic to push through a blank real estate project that is an unimaginative, incredibly costly, long term erasure of open public green space.

We, as the people of NYC, with our green and open spaces constantly under threat, deserve better.

I urge you to reject this proposal so that we can develop more conscientiously, with respect for the citizens that you represent, and for Governor's Island itself.

Thank you for your time,

Sonja

From: [Sandra Noble](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Gov.Island
Date: Thursday, April 1, 2021 11:18:12 AM

To whom it may concern,

I have frequently enjoyed going to Gov Island as a beautiful open space, providing respite from Brooklyn. I also have enjoyed Informative and cultural events held on the island such as, environmental fairs, cultural art exhibitions, and music performances.

While on the island I have purchased food from the vendors as well walking and exercising.

Please save the island as a park land and as an important NYC historical landmark.

New Yorkers deserve to enjoy this clean, open, green, space for now and into the future, without for profit business ventures of residential housing that will surely take away from the island's current natural beauty.

Has it been explored to have our island annexed to Gateway National Park as an option or preserved as a NY/NYC State Park?

Thank you for doing what you can to preserve this NYC treasure.

Sincerely yours,
Sandra Noble
NYC Resident

Bklyn, NY 11215

From: [Scott Woledge](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island rezoning
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 12:02:06 PM

The proposed heights seem too high to me. Five or ten stories at most seems plenty to me. I also would like to encourage the Trust and City Council to look more closely at repurposing the historic buildings on the island as a place of expansion. How can we make it easier for potential tenants to inhabit large buildings like Liggett Hall, the Hospital and building 12? It is heartbreaking to see them further slide into disrepair and also hear talk of building new structures.

Scott Woledge

Brooklyn, 11201

From: [Toni](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Keep Earth Matters Where it is!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Date: Sunday, April 4, 2021 11:07:09 PM

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Toni Ceaser, and I am a life long time resident of the Long Island City writing to implore you to do the right move for all of New York and provide Earth Matter NY with the 2 acres of land necessary to sustain the important work they do. Although I live in the city, I cherish green space and the "country spaces" within the city, Governors Island, and Earth Matter in particular, helps satisfy my desire for the great outdoors and watching nature do its work. I have had the great privilege of tending to Earth Matters chickens, help separate food scraps for composting and planting. It is truly magical. I have also had the privilege of seeing the visitor's faces light up when they visit with the goats during the summer months. There are so many simple pleasures provided by this organization and their love of what they do. They have taught so many of us to live life with greater consideration as to the role humans play in keeping it going and growing.

Please make certain that the proposed ULURP for Governors Island designates the necessary space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. We need more and not fewer programs of this kind to teach our children, and remind our adults, of the value of the earth.

I respect and admire TGI's work and look forward to seeing it continue to thrive, especially in partnership with Earth Matter NY in their Zero Waste Island collaborations.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony and the very important work you do of bringing open space to New Yorkers who greatly need and appreciate it.

All the very best,
Toni Ceaser

Dear Chair Salamanca and Distinguished Council Members,

My name is Trevor Dines. I have been a New York City resident for 7 years; after graduating from Public Performing Arts School, I attended Columbia University and am an involved and passionate advocate for the city I have chosen as my home. I have always loved exploring New York, and have long been interested in historic buildings as well as urban design and planning.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed rezoning of Governors Island. The rezoning and construction in the proposal are incompatible with the historic character of the island, and will render this oasis within New York City little more than a generic maze of modern buildings meant to enrich and entertain the city's elite. In order to preserve this unique space for its artists in residence, urban farming and composting, and relaxed day visitors, you must reject the rezoning plan.

Already, parts of the Island have been handed over to private companies looking to profit off of public land. I and others have long feared that the existing hotel operation and the spa opening this year were harbingers of further privatization of what is supposed to be a public space. The rezoning plan takes this further than I could have imagined, shamelessly seizing historic space for developers and wealthy residents to create a playground for themselves.

Of course the funding of the Island's operations is an important consideration, but educational activities, public enjoyment, and preservation must come before profiteering. I am certain that there are plenty of nonprofit organizations that would welcome the opportunity to act as stewards of these historic places as they are, and will provide tangible benefits to real New Yorkers, instead of enriching the investors clamoring for this land. There are numerous other paths towards financial self-sufficiency that will preserve the Island's unique character and appeal. We must not destroy its very character in order to "preserve" it: if this rezoning continues, then the very aspects of the Island that make it so special will cease to exist.

The proposed "green uses" for the land in no way justify the proposed overdevelopment. This blatant greenwashing (the deceptive coopting of sustainability to justify or distract from harmful, damaging and offensive conduct) is an insult to the intelligence of New Yorkers. The rezoning plan attempts to con the public into believing that this development will be a public space dedicated to climate research. The proposal does not guarantee an academic anchor tenant, nor account for the vast amount of space that will be occupied by other tenants. Nor does it give the public any idea of or control over further development and land-grabbing in the future. There is already ample space in New York City that is zoned for commercial uses such as offices, hotels, and retail – I suggest that the Land Use Committee encourage the interested parties to purchase or lease land in those areas, rather than packaging public land up for corporate profit.

Each summer for years, I have visited the Island precisely because of how peaceful and restorative it is. Freed from downtown shopping districts and the bustle of commercial areas, Governors Island is incomparable to any other part of New York City. The Covid crisis has made

the desperate need for outdoor space in the City even clearer, yet the Land Use Committee is entertaining the idea of shrinking this space on Governors Island. Its appeal derives from its open space and serenity, and not from its suitability for office space, nor its convenience for conventions, nor its bounty of expensive exercise studios with a view of the Manhattan skyline. Do not allow this rezoning plan to ruin the relaxed, historic, low-key beauty of the Island.

I hope that your Committee will reject this rezoning, and choose to preserve a historic site and invaluable place of respite. Our cherished Island must not be the latest victim of relentless development in New York City. Please prioritize residents, preserve open space, and protect the historic buildings and character of Governors Island.

Sincerely,

Trevor Dines
Brooklyn Resident (11207)
415-488-7942
Trevor.dines@columbia.edu

Udo M. Drescher

New York NY 10009
udrescher@verizon.net

April 2, 2021

While I conceptually support the Trust for Governors Island's (TGI's) proposal to establish a center to study and address climate change, I nevertheless must submit this letter in opposition to the rezoning proposal as it is currently on the table.

Waste reduction (through composting of organic waste) and carbon sequestration, rooted in soil health (by applying the compost), are quintessential components of a balanced climate policy. Consequently, composting should be an integral component of any proposal to remake the island into a center for, and leader of, climate change studies and education.

TGI's proposed rezoning, however, falls short. It does not provide for designated and adequate long term space for Earth Matter, the community composting organization that

- has taught so many New Yorkers not only how to slim their waste stream but also how to create and use healthy soils for plant growth and carbon sequestration;
- partners with TGI to create the model of a circular economy through the Zero Waste Island project;
- delights young and old visitors by showing us how animals (not only worms but also chickens and goats) can be part of the composting process;
- has a long track records of reaching out to communities across the city, modeling our diversity, for example, through its heritage beds; Soil Start Farm apprenticeship; and educational programs;
- maintains what is probably the biggest and purplest lavender field in the city.

If we want to practice what we preach on Governors Island, the climate center redevelopment proposal is deficient unless and until the appropriate space is reserved for composting, that is, two (2) acres out of the thirty-three (33) that are currently slated for development.

I respectfully request that the project be amended accordingly to ensure Earth Matter's continued operation on the island, and that you so condition any approval.

Thank you for your attention and concern.

Sincerely,



From: [Ushma Pandya Mehta](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: testimony to support earth matter
Date: Friday, April 2, 2021 2:46:39 PM

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Ushma Pandya, I am a longtime resident of NYC and co founder of Think Zero LLC. My family visits Governors Island every year for recreation and I have volunteered with Earth Matter on their compost program.

I am writing to oppose the proposed ULURP for Governors Island because it does not specify long term, designated, adequate space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. Two acres of land, all in one place, is critical and required for the ability for Earth Matter to continue its compost operations and public programming to support and promote composting and sustainable practices for the people of NYC.

However, I do support the proposal by the Trust for Governors Island (TGI) for a center to address and study climate change. TGI has done a wonderful job managing the development of the island and transforming it into an idyllic retreat and creating a cultural center for all New Yorkers. I have the utmost respect for TGI's work, especially their partnership with Earth Matter NY in their Zero Waste Island collaborations.

Earth Matter's physical space should be an integral part of the proposed center for climate change and continue to manage the Island's, and much of NYC's organic resources. Since 2009, Earth Matter has taught on-the-ground, immediately practicable solutions to sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, achieve zero-waste goals, and improve urban soils—all through the practice of composting and public engagement. Earth Matter is an important part of my Governors Island experience.

All New Yorkers should continue to have the opportunity to visit Earth Matter's Compost Learning Center campus that provides for each of us to connect to the earth and with the earth work they do, and share the learnings and experiences that I have experienced. I urge you to oppose the ULURP for Governors Island, unless it provides 2 acres of the 33 acre development plan, to ensure Earth Matter will be able to continue their climate change study and mitigation work, in collaboration with The Trust, as a service to New Yorkers.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony.

Ushma Pandya

NY NY10013

Ushma Pandya

Co-Founder and Partner

Think Zero LLC

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ushma@thinkzero.com

www.thinkzerollc.com

Commercial & residential waste diversion & reduction consulting

GBCI True Zero Waste Advisor + LEED Green Associate

From: [Scott Wooledge](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Hotel
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 12:58:24 PM

Strongly disagree with Councilwoman Chin on hotel. I think a hotel is an essential service for convention travelers, weddings or other destination parties. I think success of Collective Retreats proves there is a small but committed market of people here in the tristate area who want a staycation on the island.

Scott Wooledge

Brooklyn



**Green Map
System**
175 Rivington #1D
New York, NY 10002
Tel: +1 212 674 1631

Wendy E Brawer
Director
web@greenmap.org

GreenMap.org
Think Global, Map Local!

April 5, 2021

I'm Wendy Brawer and I'm inviting you to my birthday party on Governor's Island (GI) in June. It's an annual tradition to gather far from the fumes of traffic on this peaceful green jewel, with Ms. Liberty aglow.

I have 30 years of sustainable design experience, but last year GI saved my sanity. I volunteered weekly at Earth Matter. This zero waste nonprofit pivoted to raising food for soup kitchens last spring, and we grew a ton of produce on one-eighth of an acre. We need to preserve food security, so please support dedicating 2 acres to their climate-smart education program and ensure that composting is on GI's list of future uses.

We don't need a multi-year unneeded construction debacle, GI is already on its way to becoming a citywide community 'green culture and climate center' that can be rapidly expanded to build capacity for social resilience and eco system services. Cultivate green jobs and stewardship skills with the programs already in place and add a public bike R&D lab, a repair and circularity center, pool and water play, renewable energy, street tree farm, and benefit the whole city, as visualized in the M.A.G.I.C. alternative plan. Adults will take home better habits and children who have experiential environmental education test better across the board. It's our country place in the city and needs to be preserved for future generations of the all species that depend on this last green space!

Councilmembers Cumbo, Eugene, Lander, Levin, Menchaca, Rivera, and my own Councilmember Chin - your constituents visit GI most often, please please keep their health and wellbeing prioritized.

There really hasn't been time to include all voices in this rushed ULURP. As a Lower East Side resident I know I'll see a surge from this side as ESCR and BMCR get underway, impacting our Environmental Justice Neighborhood for years. The whole city needs the open space for pandemics to come as well as to recuperate from this one. Especially with Sunset Park coming on with a major wind energy hub, and all the uncertainties around the impacts on sewage, shading etc., don't let your legacy be marred by permanent overdevelopment on Governors Island.

Watch over this land, or as said by its first inhabitants in the Lenape - Muncee language *Kenahkitu yu haki*.

Wendy Brawer
Director. Green Map System

From: [Will Kurtz](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors island developmment
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 10:32:25 AM

Hi,

An am strongly opposed to the proposed development of governors island. I am a full time artist and have spent much time on the island doing a residency and art shoes with the 4 head's organization. The beauty and tranquility of the island is unparalleled. It is the proximity to manhattan that makes it so unique. There is very little open space like this in and around NewYork. To lose this because a developer finally found a way to put up more buildings, would be a travesty that cannot be reversed. I also want to put in a word for the 4Heads arts organization that has tirelessly put together beautiful art shoes for the public, free of charge years after year. I cannot imagine losing this to the greed of a developer.

All my best,
Will Kurtz
1270 5th ave
New York, Ny

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Annie Barry](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island re-zoning
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 8:17:03 PM

I write to add my voice regarding rezoning of Governors Island. It is troubling that the plan will use so much space for new structures when there are so many buildings on Governors Island that can be re-used. The announcement that building 515 will be converted for use by the Harbor School, itself in an historic building, proves that this is viable. It would also avoid the use of space which should instead be used for additional parkland, which the public deserves, and the development of habitat for wildlife. A wetland was in an early plan for the island. This idea should be resurrected. Environmental justice and conservation of wildlife must take priority in the development of Governors Island. The climate would benefit from re-use of existing space. A climate center should value re-use of buildings, parkland and wildlife habitat over new construction.

Testimony of Alida Camp
Regarding Proposed Rezoning of the South Island of Governors
Before the City Council
April 7, 2021

Thank you for considering my testimony in opposition to the proposed rezoning of Governors Island—South Island. My name is Alida Camp. I am a Manhattan resident.

The proposal to develop the south side of Governors Island should be rejected. The inappropriate proposal will ruin a pristine natural resource, beloved by New Yorkers across the City. Once the essential nature of Governors Island is gone, it will be gone forever.

The essential nature of Governors Island is its unique status as a place of refuge in New York, unencumbered by commercial interests, unobstructed by development, unmolested by uses inappropriate to a Park. Governors Island is a treasure that the City Council holds in its hands for the benefit of all New Yorkers.

Three low-lying islands guard the approaches to New York's inner Harbor: Liberty, Ellis, and Governors. Each occupies a unique, yet interconnected, place in the story of our City and Nation.

Without buildings on the southern part of Governors Island, the view visitors to Liberty Island and Ellis Island experience of Governors Island is close to what it was for the millions of immigrants who arrived here in the last century. Governors Island is a symbol of the United States Government and the protections it offers those who come here, just as surely as the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island remind us of the welcome we extend to all.

Perhaps the irony of tall buildings on Governors Island will tell a more honest story of twenty-first century New York, but is this the story, or the view we wish to offer future generations? Governor's Island sits low, with the fortress development on the North end dominating the east side of the harbor. The essential character of the historic island would be lost forever were this proposal to go forward.

If you haven't visited Governors Island, you should go before voting. You should envision what it would look like were this proposal built. You should close your eyes and imagine 30-story buildings, cars, grocery stores, the necessary construction to ensure resiliency of new structures, the environmental impact, and the destruction of the natural beauty that will last forever.

Take the Staten Island Ferry to see the views of Governors Island from the ferry. Go to Ellis or Liberty Island and see the views from there. Then, imagine the difference were Governors Island to be developed.

COVID-19 has magnified the need for green space. Why is there consideration for giving up this treasure that attracts New Yorkers and tourists alike to an unsullied haven for contemplation, exercise, appreciation of New York as a series of islands, views, proximity to water, history and culture in one location? It is difficult to overestimate the impact that the proposal would have on the essential nature of Governor's Island.

The proposal to develop 33 acres on the south side of the island is out-of-whack with the nature (literal and figurative) of Governors Island. The proposed development has grown from over 1 million to over 4 million square feet. Doesn't this speak to the intent of the Trust, the entity that, as trustee, should have the best interests of the Park and its users in mind? Doesn't the change in size without seeking and including public input speak to the alliances between the Trust and forces other than Governors Island well-being?. Doesn't the accommodation of cars speak to the Trust's belief that Governors Island is merely the same as every other City district?

This refuge, park, natural resource should remain pristine, unencumbered by out-of-scale construction and usage suitable instead for an already-populated area. The 2003 Deed specifies that changes to Governors Island must ensure "the protection and preservation of the natural, cultural and historic qualities of Governors Island, guarantee public access to this magnificent island, promote the quality of public education, and enhance the ability of the public to enjoy Governors Island and the surrounding waterways, ... thereby increasing the quality of life in the surrounding community, the City, the State and the United States." Instead of ensuring that these qualities are not only maintained but enhanced, the proposal will reduce the public enjoyment of Governor's Island by diminishing its natural, cultural and historic qualities. Think about the attraction of Governors Island to tourists, as well as residents.

The description of the development as a mix of academic, commercial, non-profit, cultural, and hospitality uses that will support the island as an environmental center is non-sensical on its face. The idea that Governors Island would be developed with (excluding mechanicals) 20-30- story buildings yet would function as an environmental study and preservation center is an oxymoron. Where would it leave the island's and New York harbor's environments? There is an irony that sounds more like a cartoon than a serious proposal.

Consider for a moment the impact on the historic north side. The renderings of the future as a snow-filled wonderland on the Historic precinct is overshadowed by the hulks of the overbuilt development immediately to the south. What kind of wonderland will it be to play amidst the shadows and bulk of too many and too tall buildings? What impact will the development have on the historic and cultural features of the National Monument ?

Let's think about the proximity of the development to the water, a high-risk area for flooding. How much will need to be spent to protect those buildings from flooding during a Sandy-like storm? What will it cost to make the area resilient? The buildings will need to be even taller to create the sacrificial lobbies at the ground floor. Will the necessary flood prevention add to the environmental financial and other costs of the project?

Let's think about the impact on the nature of the south island. I attended the presentation to CB1 and noted the amount of time spent promoting as idyllic the paths through the remaining parkland and through the buildings edging the water. Paths through buildings are not green space. They are not enjoyable outdoor areas. Instead, they are paths through buildings.

The paths in the middle of the island would be paths where the distant views are obstructed by the proposed buildings. They will no longer be paths through a park with changing views of the island, Brooklyn, Manhattan and New Jersey, the Statue of Liberty and the New York Harbor. Instead, they will be walkways where the idea of pristine space, a respite from the built city is a memory. Is this how we want to preserve the island?

Let's think about the stores, banks, movie theatres, dry cleaners, restaurants, necessary infrastructure for the many additional ferries, and other boats. Let's think about the utilities, water usage, sewage, lab equipment. Where will the necessary fire station be built? Will there need to be a police station? How will deliveries be made? What impact will 24-hour light have on the birds and other wildlife?

Lets think about how temporary housing and permanent housing will have close to, if not the same, environmental impact on Governors Island. What is the difference between dorms that are occupied semester after semester and rental or condo units? This would subject Governor's Island to a makeover as a residential/commercial/academic community with some parkland, instead of as a park. The intangible impact of this development on the nature of Governor's Island as a recreational and contemplative haven is undeniable and must not be minimized.

Think about cars and parking. Central Park removed all cars from roads other than the transverses precisely because cars and parks are incompatible. Will there be gas stations and repair shops. What if a car breaks down, or there is an accident. Where and how will the car(s) be towed. Will tow trucks also need to make Governor's Island their home. Will there be repair shops and gas stations. Why should there be parking on Governor's Island? There shouldn't be, but there will be if the plan is approved.

Let's think about the comparison to Roosevelt Island and other developed "communities," such as Hudson Yards and Battery Park City. They are not comparitors. Roosevelt Island was already built as a residential community when Cornell Tech was sited there. It has a subway, a bridge, and buses. Hudson Yards and Battery Park City speak for themselves as inapposite. They are in the midst of a built City, surrounded by dense commercial and residential streets, subways, a convention center, and a commuter and long-distance rail station. Any reference to these developments as comparable is misplaced.

Let's think about the environmental impact of the development on the ocean, the birds and other wildlife and the concept of the island as a sanctuary. Central Park is a well-known pit stop for migrating birds. Do birds use Governors Island for a rest on their long migrations? Will they be affected? Parks are refuges. They deserve to be pristine preserves of nature, not just for New Yorkers and visitors, but for the wildlife that benefit from it.

Let's think about the future if parks are meant to be financially self-sustaining. Why not build a luxury hotel in Central Park, a casino in Prospect Park, or charge folks to enter our cherished parks. Imagine Ellis Island converted to luxury condos, or the Statue of Liberty surrounded by 300 foot tall office buildings.

This proposal impacts all of New York. Residents from every borough use it. They enjoy the organic farm, the art shows, the food trucks, as well as the unique greenspace. Visitors want to enjoy it too.

We have little enough green space in this City, let alone a pristine island where we could take a short vacation from the busyness of the City.

Every City Council member has a responsibility to the citizens of this City to ensure that Governors Island remain the historic, cultural and nature center that it currently is.

I urge you, as custodians for that which we cherish, which is unique, which is irreplaceable, to vote no.

From: [Alicia Canary](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Application No. N 210126 ZRM (Governors Island Rezoning)
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 7:42:33 AM

This is awful. Taking this much land from the public, 33 acres, for this plan is way too much.

So much more could be done without destroying the historic district and the sanctuary the island now provides as this plan does.

The plan alludes to self sufficiency but is vague on details. But very specific that it would cost us billions before that.

It seems like a scam just based on the outline they have provided. We deserve better.

Thank you,
Alicia Canary
Jackson Heights, NYC

From: [Andreas Friedberg](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Opposition to the proposed Governors Island rezoning
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 10:14:38 PM

Hi,

please note my opposition to the proposed Governors Island rezoning. I am a registered voter.

Andreas Friedberg

New York, NY 10009-5439

From: [Anna Harsanyi](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Oppose the Trust For Governors Island (TGI) zoning proposal.
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 10:55:07 AM

Dear City Councilmembers, Mayor, Borough Presidents, and Public Advocate:

I am a resident of the Lower East Side and a member of Art Against Displacement and the Coalition to Protect Chinatown and the Lower East Side. I am writing to urge you to oppose the Trust For Governors Island (TGI) zoning proposal. It transforms public land into private space, and will effectively eliminate one of the most treasured and accessible greenspaces in the City, solely serving the interests of corporate real estate developers and large companies. There is no public benefit for this upzoning, it only serves the private sector while simultaneously harming and disengaging everyday New Yorkers.

The current proposal effectively privatizes 33 public acres and is just too big and too extreme. It is unnecessary and does more harm than good. Better alternatives exist that could generate revenue while doing less harm to the National Historic District and to the function of the island as a calm respite from the city.

1. The main rationale for this intrusive project – financial self-sufficiency for Governors Island – is not justified. The Trust’s own speculative projections (based on pre-covid conditions) state that financial self-sufficiency wouldn’t be achieved until 2050. Meanwhile it’ll cost taxpayers billions. Also, as Manhattan Community Board 1 points out in their 12/22/20 resolution, the Trust has not provided enough information to evaluate the project. As a City Planning Commissioner said at the March 1st public review, this project is akin to the City giving the Trust a blank check for an unspecified project
2. As the City is in the middle of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) public review process for Governors Island has been in contravention of the provisions of the City Charter and City Rules as found in the January 15, 2021 temporary restraining order granted to the Voice of Gowanus coalition.
3. The rezoning “encompassing the entirety of Governors Island” subjects the vast parkland to future encroachment from the currently designated development areas. (CB1 is requesting that the south island “Open space Subarea” be designated as public parkland.)
4. In the review of the rezoning plan, any discussion regarding a climate research center is irrelevant, misleading, and should be termed off-topic. **This is a proposal to upzone the south island, period.** There is nothing legally requiring that a climate center be the result. Mainly it serves as a potential “anchor tenant” in order to attract developers and sell the upzoning to the public. In fact, GI is already productive as a climate hub, thanks to the work of Earth Matter, GrowNYC, Billion Oyster Project, the Harbor School and others.

5. Any future South Island development should preserve GI's one-of-a-kind feel of open space – defined not simply as pedestrian access as TGI is selling it, but involving sky (think air rights) and non-private areas. The “increased open space” that TGI is presenting is “woven open space similar to Battery Park City.” It's boxed in by 10 – 30 story buildings and non-public areas. (None of the buildings currently on GI exceed 5 stories.)
6. We support more public amenities such as for the arts, athletic activities, playgrounds, waterfront access, urban farming, environmental projects, “wild” less-formal spaces, and a bandshell. We also support the Urban Assembly New York Harbor School community's requests for a pool, a gymnasium and expansion into the neighboring former hospital building.

The priority for GI needs to be preserving our shared country place in the city for future generations – and not only for humans. GI is a haven for nature that yields significant ecosystem service benefits to NYC, and is already productive as a climate hub, thanks to the work of Earth Matter and GrowNYC (which have been sited in the area shown as empty land for several years), along with others.

There is a serious need of New Yorkers at this moment for solace and the last thing that many can afford right now is a vacation. 99% of New York City zip codes use Governor's Island which offers what other major NYC public spaces can't – a retreat, an adventure, a change of scenery, and escape from the glass and steel towers. This fight is about the need for tranquility, for solace, and sanctuary, and for the preservation of natural habitat and beauty.

I agree with the following, excerpted from the Manhattan Community Board 1 12/22/20 Resolution.

- The city's current proposed rezoning in its current form needs to be rejected in order to: “ensure the protection and preservation of the natural, cultural and historic qualities of Governors Island, guarantee public access to this magnificent island, promote the quality of public education, and enhance the ability of the public to enjoy Governors Island and the surrounding waterways, thereby increasing the quality of life in the surrounding community, the City, the State and the United States.”
- Currently, Governors Island has a village-type, modest urban density. In terms of mass and height, the proposed development is substantially larger than the existing development on the Island. A majority of public comments indicate that it is the existing density and scale that gives Governors Island its identity as an island refuge in its highly urbanized context within the city
- [The current TGI proposal] is nearly three times larger than what was considered as part of the 2013 FSGEIS [...]the public's understanding for the development program was based on those earlier models and the drastic increase in scale of development is unacceptable

- The Trust must prioritize phasing development to allow for leasing the existing millions of square feet already existing on the Island prior to the construction of new buildings
- CB1 asks that the Trust identify and consider what the State and Federal government each provide currently to the Island and how this might be increased under the new administration to provide additional support to the Island
- The Trust asserts that the proposed level of development is required in order to make the Island financially self-sustaining. However, there is no mandate in the Deed that notes the Trust must become financially self-sustaining
- Financial and other modeling done in connection with this proposed project were conducted using assumptions on pre-pandemic conditions. [...]the community does not have confidence that this proposal will develop as expected. Many have expressed fear over an undesirable result, such as more privatization on Island
- In July 1997, [...] CB1 wished that Governors Island be kept as a park land with active, open recreational space. Further, that “one thing that Community Board 1 does not want to see happen is for Governors Island to be converted into some kind of private or semi private area that would prohibit residents and workers and tourists from coming onto the Island. That would include residential communities or campuses.”

From: [Ashley Mcdonald](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governor's Island Privatization
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 11:42:22 AM

Hello Councilfolk,

I don't know why we must always meet like this, but for some reason the people of New York City must always write to you and tell you how spectacularly bad an idea it is to let corporations run amuck in our historical and public spaces. They constantly tell you that this is for the better but ask those rich dimwits in the tower overlooking Central Park and they will tell you that there's no wonder why half the luxury condos in NY are empty. It's misery in there. And the environmental impact will just keep adding to the damage done over years by the city letting the rich run over. Governor's Island is a place where an ecological restoration project and the future minds in biology are birthed and we are just going to give that up to these people? Yeah, no.

For such a 'liberal' city we sure do have representatives who still believe in the Republican lie of the rich will bring money to our communities. I have lived in the South Street Seaport for 8 years and I can attest that the local farmers' market before it was kicked out by Howard Hughes brought more regular business to the area than these stupid luxury stores no one in their right mind can afford. Honestly what is the difference between these people and the mob that used to run the Fulton Fishmarket? The mob probably has more of a moral code.

And back to that silly tower that has ruined so much of the skyline uptown, can you imagine if they let corporations take over Central Park? We would have a Home Alone 2 Theme Park, another empty Westfield and towers with one single tree and solar panel on the roof as some feeble attempt to make up for the fact the building alone is AWFUL for the environment let alone what it does to our unserved homeless communities (a middle finger to them being no one even middle or lower class could dream of staying there let alone them). So why on God's green Earth are we going to even think about giving these people a protected green space with a school dedicated to the environment to the antithesis of all those beautiful things? Honestly feeding the the oyster beds with the rich is a better idea but a bit too extreme for most, so telling them to fuck off will just have to suffice.

Maybe just maybe in addition to telling these greedy animals they cannot build, as their promises are false and will not uphold and build up our public space, we could also, I dunno, make law that historical neighborhoods and public parks (of which there are not enough downtown to begin with) are off limits for good.

Sincerely,
Your seriously annoyed neighbor
Ashley McDonald (female, 28)

From: [Allie Ryan](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Written Testimony - Governors Island Rezoning Application -
Date: Thursday, April 8, 2021 5:08:24 PM

648 E. 11th St, #D1
New York, NY 10009
April 5, 2021

City Council Land Use Committee
Zoning and Franchises Sub Committee
250 Broadway
New York, NY 10007

Dear City Council Members,

Thank you Chairman Moya, Council Member Chin and Zoning and Franchises Committee members for the opportunity to speak today. I ask all City Council Members to vote NO on the Governors Island Rezoning Plan. First, I like to speak as a co-founder of Metro Area Governors Island Coalition (M.A.G.I.C.)

Chief Dwaine Perry of the Ramapough Lunaape Nation who have not been consulted in the planning for Governors Island met with M.A.G.I.C. and made the following statement:

When we have such a natural open breathable place such as this it should be left for people and wildlife as it was originally intended. It's a rare blessing to have a place like Governors Island in New York City. Preserve the openness and sacredness.

In response to the Trust's proposed Governors Island rezoning plan, M.A.G.I.C. created an Alternative South Island Visualization that provides for a Lenape facility and there is interest in holding the annual pow-wow which draws members from all over the northeast as well as other traditional Lenape events.

Now, I like to speak as a New Yorker, a wife and a mother of two children. Governors Island is very dear to my family. My husband and I got married at Picnic Point on Governors Island ten years ago on Talk Like a Pirate Day. We celebrated our 10th wedding anniversary at the Governors Island grill area this past September with family and friends. Even Leslie Koch who was CEO/President of the Trust for Governors Island in 2010, gave a TedxGotham Talk and used my wedding as an example of collaboration on Governors Island's parkland/ public space.

<https://youtu.be/Cd8oonkJzps>. — 9:28 mark

The Trust for Governors Island's application to upzone Governors Island to potentially make way for a climate change research center is not legally binding with a RFP. This means that the Trust's proposed climate change center is a speculative real estate development that could be built elsewhere in New York City. I do not know who benefits from this venture, but I do know that the one million New Yorkers who visit Governors Island every summer, will lose. A campus of 20-30 story buildings with a lawn in the middle does not encourage visitors. I bet whoever becomes the anchor tenant will probably not want touristy folks to explore leisurely in what the Trust and its supporters claim as additional public space between the future buildings much less the inner 40 acres of recreational public space.

New Yorkers deserve not just a better plan for Governors Island, but a better vision and master plan for Governors Island.

In light of what's happened during the Governors Island Rezoning Plan's ULURP timeline, such as Mayor de Blasio's past threats to lockdown the city, numerous Candidate debates, the debate of remote learning versus in person learning, and NYC Public middle school and high school admissions monumental changes, uncertainty about the SHSAT and G&T programs as well as other controversial development plans being pushed around the city, it's no wonder that my neighbors and friends are not aware of the Governors Island Redevelopment plan. They do not know that they need to call or email their elected's that they care about Governors Island's fate.

On Dec. 22, 2020 Community Board 1 voted NO, with conditions and Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer advised no with conditions, and the City Planning Commission voted 7 yay, 1 no, 3 abstained with modifications. Five City Planning Commissioners criticized the plan. The public discussions held every step of the way demonstrate that the Governors Island rezoning plan is not the right vision nor plan to be approved.

The proposed climate change research center would be built on 33 acres in the southern end of the island plus opportunity to take over nearby Liggett Hall and Colonel's Row. I like to contend the current playground areas would effectively become a collegiate lawn-like area similar to those found on campus-style colleges and universities and corporate headquarters around the country, so really the proposed climate change research center will take up half of the 172 acres of Governors Island.

This plan highlights the hypocrisy of the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project and the impending demolition of East River Park. East River Park, a 60 acre park in a floodplain, will be raised 8 - 10 feet to withstand flood waters for 50-100 years in the future. Whereas the proposed climate change center's two sites are in a floodplain on Governors Island. Clare Newman, Trust for Governors Island CEO and President, acknowledged at a Nov. 2nd CB1 meeting that the two sites were in a floodplain, but with innovative architecture, the future building sites would be raised to avoid flooding issues. This means that the buildings will be raised 8 to 10 feet, which means that this proposed plan will destroy the bucolic setting of the southern end of the island and disrupt the views from the Great Promenade running the complete periphery of the island.

At this time, Earth Matter, GrowNYC and Urban Farm offer public art and environmental educational programs to the island's one million annual visitors. Establishing Governors Island into a 24/7 community has already been created with the Harbor School, Lower Manhattan Arts Community Center, NYU's 100 Billion Oyster Project, play:groundNYC and Works on Water. The Trust has presented financials that show that this new building project would not enable Governors Island to achieve financial self-sufficiency until 2050 under pre-COVID conditions. So the Trust's desire to make Governors financially self sufficient, just the Trust's way of pushing its project through and furthering Bloomberg's public - private partnership model for parks.

A 2010 master plan ushered in a 40 acre park, including features such Picnic Point, two ball fields, The Hills: Grassy Hill, children's favorite Slide Hill, Discovery Hill and Outlook Hill where a photo is worth a 1000 words, Hammock Grove, food truck vendors on the southern end of the island that are mainly accessed during the summer season. The 2018 zoning changes enabled new development on Governors Island to include mixed-use buildings, and office space for "academic, commercial, non-profit, cultural, convening and hospitality facilities." So it is questionable why the Trust is applying to upzone the southern end of the island for commercial use when many historic buildings are still empty, including Liggett Hall, which Untapped described as larger as "the Chrysler Building on its side."

During COVID10 lockdown New Yorkers desperately needed outdoor green space. In fact City Council implemented an Open Streets program to create more outdoor space so New Yorkers could comply with social distancing 6 feet apart. In 2019 Mayor de Blasio and Councilmember Rivera approved the East Side Coastal Resiliency Project, which basically proposed to demolish East River Park because it is in a floodplain and raise the park 8 - 10 feet. de Blasio's administration and Councilmember Rivera are still willingly closing a heavily used active 60 acre park for at least five years at a projected \$1.45 billion cost to tax payers. And now de Blasio's appointed Trust for Governors Island is proposing to close Governors Island's southern end, another popular heavily used active recreational public space into a construction site for at least ten years, projected reopening in 2030, is outright inhumane.

According to the Gotham Gazette in March 2021, "[New York City's] budget is heavily dependent on property tax revenue, which is expected to fall by \$2.5 billion in the next fiscal year, beginning July 1, because of plummeting values of office buildings and hotels which have largely been empty since the pandemic hit."¹ The Trust has not released any financials about what tax incentives they will offer to attract an anchor tenant or other tenants. Collaborating with the Deputy Mayor of Housing and Economic Development, the Trust projects rental income as the 2050 as the breakeven year for the island to become financially self-sufficient; and Community Board 1 repeatedly says, as recently as March 2020, that the Trust has not publicly shared alternative scenarios involved to build this "climate change center."

This rezoning proposal is NOT about funding Governors Island. It is not about a climate research hub. It is essentially a real estate deal with no formal requirement for an academic anchor tenant. This is a blanket rezoning that subjects all existing parklands and open space to future takeover. The resulting development from this proposal will NOT enable Governors Island to achieve financial self sustainability for many years to come, and in fact will cost taxpayers millions during that period.

This Governors Island rezoning plan was obviously primarily created pre-COVID-19 lockdown. I would like to suggest a paradigm shift away from the 15 years old plan for these set aside development sites of 33 acres and South Island. I think many parents will agree with me, when I say that we need parkland, especially sports recreational spaces more than an academic institution or corporate office complex. New Yorkers for Parks data and research show that the nearby Manhattan and Brooklyn neighborhoods have only 6-7% public parkland set aside, so I can not state enough how crucial Governors Island's expansive green space is to New Yorkers such as those who live in Red Hook, Park Slope, Lower East Side, Chinatown, Downtown Brooklyn and Fort Greene.²

Common sense should prevail. Parkland and public space are scarce in New York. New York City taxpayers do not want to foot the bill for a corporate office complex / academic campus. The City cannot afford to go forward with building a climate change complex. For the sake of New Yorkers' health and mental stability, we need Governors Island to retain its welcoming open expansive parkland quality. Please vote NO against The Governors Island rezoning plan.

Sincerely,

Allie Ryan
Metro Area Governors Island Coalition
<https://govislandcoalition.org/>

1. <https://www.gothamgazette.com/city/10229-new-york-city-state-budget-federal-bailout-cuomo-de-blasio-biden->

stimulus#:~:text=Cuomo's%20%24193%20billion%20executive%20budget,billion%20and%20%249.5%20billion%2C%20respectively.
2. <http://www.ny4p.org/data-and-research/research-library/open-space-profiles#4964>

From: [Bruce Trigg](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Oppose the Re-zoning of Governors Island
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 5:27:31 PM
Attachments: [GI Re-Zoning final .docx](#)

City Council Land Use Committee,

I am Dr. Bruce Trigg, a public health physician from the West Village, a member of the Metro Area Governors Island Coalition and a frequent visitor to Governors Island.

I urge the City Council to completely reject this re-zoning scheme. The Trust for Governors Island is dominated by developers, real estate brokers and other corporate and Wall Street special interests. This plan seeks to privatize public land and to profit from a massive commercial development. In other words; this will be business as usual in our city. This must stop now.

Governor Island is a public park. The City Council would never allow for 4 million square feet of 20 and 25 story luxury office buildings with a luxury hotel to be built on Central Park, or in Prospect Park. The Climate Research Center is simply sheep's clothing for the Wall Street wolves. The end result is predictable. Like the like now almost bankrupt Hudson Yards, the taxpayers will wind up paying billions to develop infrastructure for the benefit of the few.

The million New Yorkers who visited GI before COVID are mostly working- class families who go to enjoy the ambiance of a peaceful small New England town, without commercial hype. At this time especially, New Yorkers need open space for our mental and physical health. Open space enclosed by tall office buildings is not "open space" it is enclosed space!

I also want to protest the lack of transparency and democratic participation in this entire re-zoning process which has been rushed through under the cover of this once in a century public health crisis with minimal public scrutiny.

New Yorkers without computer access or skills and those with disabilities have been excluded from the re-zoning process. The Trust for GI speakers always get all the time they wish to present their plan. They also have the resources to pack the public webinar meeting with their supporters. Many who speak in favor of the project are dependent on the Trust to be able to operate on the Island.

The Harbor School should receive the full support that it deserves for its mission but that does not require turning the South Island into an office and hotel development.

The voices of the many New Yorkers who use and love the park and wish to protect the park from commercial development have not been heard. This entire re-zoning process has been flawed , is illegal, and should be rejected by the City Council.

I urge the City Council to reject this Wall Steet re-zoning application. The Council should implement the M.A.G.I.C. revisioning plan and include the Lenape people in any future planning for Island.

Sincerely,

Bruce G. Trigg, MD

City Council Land Use Committee,

I am Dr. Bruce Trigg, a public health physician from the West Village, a member of the Metro Area Governors Island Coalition, and a frequent visitor to Governors Island.

I urge the City Council to completely reject this re-zoning scheme. The Trust for Governors Island is dominated by developers, real estate brokers and other corporate and Wall Street special interests. This plan seeks to privatize public land and to profit from a massive commercial development. In other words; this will be business as usual in our city. This must stop now.

Governor Island is a public park. The City Council would never allow for 4 million square feet of 20 and 25 story luxury office buildings with a luxury hotel to be built on Central Park, or in Prospect Park. The Climate Research Center is simply sheep's clothing for the Wall Street wolves. The end result is predictable. Like the almost bankrupt Hudson Yards, the taxpayers will wind up paying billions to develop infrastructure for the benefit of the few.

The million New Yorkers who visited GI before COVID are mostly working- class families who go to enjoy the ambiance of a peaceful small New England town without commercial hype. At this time especially, New Yorkers need open space for our mental and physical health. Open space enclosed by tall office buildings is not "open space" it is enclosed space!

I also want to protest the lack of transparency and democratic participation in this entire re-zoning process which has been rushed through under the cover of this once in a century public health crisis and with minimal public scrutiny.

New Yorkers without computer access or skills and those with disabilities have been excluded from the re-zoning process. The Trust for GI speakers always get all the time they need to present their plan. The public gets only 2 minutes each to respond. The Trust also has the resources to arrange to pack the public webinar meeting with their supporters. Most of those who speak in favor of the project are fully dependent on the good will of the Trust to be able to operate on the Island. The Harbor School should receive the full public support that it

deserves to fulfill its mission but that does not require turning the South Island into a mega office and hotel development.

The voices of the many New Yorkers who use and love the park and wish to protect the park from commercial development have not been heard. This entire re-zoning process has been flawed, is likely illegal, and should be rejected definitely by the City Council.

I urge the City Council to reject this Wall Street re-zoning application. The Council should implement the M.A.G.I.C. revisioning plan and also include the Lenape people in any future planning for Island.

Sincerely,
Bruce G. Trigg, MD

NY NY 10014

From: blaneweber@aol.com
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Future generations need Governors Island to remain open space in our crowded city!!!
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 10:04:38 AM

My adult daughter, who is now a mother of teenagers herself said, "how amazing it was to see all that open space" when a child on Governors Island. It is an experience money cannot buy. Or certainly many city families cannot buy it for their children. Wealthy developers are able to get their families out of the city so they cannot understand this need for space for many in the city.

We must not allow Governors Island to be opened to development.

Many thanks for the hearing yesterday,

Bonnie Lane Webber

NYC 10128

From: [B. Winters](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Application No. N 210126 ZRM (Governors Island Rezoning) and Application No. C 210127 ZMM (Governors Island Rezoning)
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 11:52:47 AM

Hello,

I am writing today in opposition to the Trust For Governors Island (TGI) zoning proposal: it effectively privatizes 33 public acres and is just too big and too extreme. It is unnecessary and does more harm than good. Better alternatives exist that could generate revenue while doing less harm to the National Historic District and to the function of the island as a calm respite from the city.

The main rationale for this intrusive project – financial self-sufficiency for Governors Island – is not justified. The Trust’s own speculative projections (based on pre-covid conditions) state that financial self-sufficiency wouldn’t be achieved until 2050. Meanwhile it’ll cost taxpayers billions. Also, as Manhattan Community Board 1 points out in their 12/22/20 resolution, the Trust has not provided enough information to evaluate the project. As a City Planning Commissioner said at the March 1st public review, this project is akin to the City giving the Trust a blank check for an unspecified project

As the City is in the middle of the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) public review process for Governors Island has been in contravention of the provisions of the City Charter and City Rules as found in the January 15, 2021 temporary restraining order granted to the Voice of Gowanus coalition.

The rezoning “encompassing the entirety of Governors Island” subjects the vast parkland to future encroachment from the currently designated development areas. (CB1 is requesting that the south island “Open space Subarea” be designated as public parkland.)

In the review of the rezoning plan, any discussion regarding a climate research center is irrelevant, misleading, and should be termed off-topic. This is a proposal to upzone the south island, period. There is nothing legally requiring that a climate center be the result. Mainly it serves as a potential “anchor tenant” in order to attract developers and sell the upzoning to the public. In fact, GI is already productive as a climate hub, thanks to the work of Earth Matter, GrowNYC, Billion Oyster Project, the Harbor School and others.

Any future South Island development should preserve GI’s one-of-a-kind feel of open space – defined not simply as pedestrian access as TGI is selling it, but involving sky (think air rights) and non-private areas. The “increased open space” that TGI is presenting is “woven open space similar to Battery Park City.” It’s boxed in by 10 – 30 story buildings and non-public areas. (None of the buildings currently on GI exceed 5 stories.)

We support more public amenities such as for the arts, athletic activities, playgrounds, waterfront access, urban farming, environmental projects, “wild” less-formal spaces, and a

bandshell. We also support the Urban Assembly New York Harbor School community's requests for a pool, a gymnasium and expansion into the neighboring former hospital building.

The priority for GI needs to be preserving our shared country place in the city for future generations – and not only for humans. GI is a haven for nature that yields significant ecosystem service benefits to NYC, and is already productive as a climate hub, thanks to the work of Earth Matter and GrowNYC (which have been sited in the area shown as empty land for several years), along with others.

There is a serious need of New Yorkers at this moment for solace and the last thing that many can afford right now is a vacation. 99% of New York City zip codes use Governor's Island which offers what other major NYC public spaces can't – a retreat, an adventure, a change of scenery, and escape from the glass and steel towers. This fight is about the need for tranquility, for solace, and sanctuary, and for the preservation of natural habitat and beauty.

I agree with the following, excerpted from the Manhattan Community Board 1 12/22/20 Resolution:

The city's current proposed rezoning in its current form needs to be rejected in order to: "ensure the protection and preservation of the natural, cultural and historic qualities of Governors Island, guarantee public access to this magnificent island, promote the quality of public education, and enhance the ability of the public to enjoy Governors Island and the surrounding waterways, thereby increasing the quality of life in the surrounding community, the City, the State and the United States."

Currently, Governors Island has a village-type, modest urban density. In terms of mass and height, the proposed development is substantially larger than the existing development on the Island. A majority of public comments indicate that it is the existing density and scale that gives Governors Island its identity as an island refuge in its highly urbanized context within the city

[The current TGI proposal] is nearly three times larger than what was considered as part of the 2013 FSGEIS [...]the public's understanding for the development program was based on those earlier models and the drastic increase in scale of development is unacceptable

The Trust must prioritize phasing development to allow for leasing the existing millions of square feet already existing on the Island prior to the construction of new buildings

CB1 asks that the Trust identify and consider what the State and Federal government each provide currently to the Island and how this might be increased under the new administration to provide additional support to the Island

The Trust asserts that the proposed level of development is required in order to make the Island financially self-sustaining. However, there is no mandate in the Deed that notes the Trust must become financially self-sustaining

Financial and other modeling done in connection with this proposed project were conducted using assumptions on pre-pandemic conditions. [...]the community does not have confidence that this proposal will develop as expected. Many have expressed fear over an undesirable result, such as more privatization on Island

In July 1997, [...] CB1 wished that Governors Island be kept as a park land with active, open recreational space. Further, that “one thing that Community Board 1 does not want to see happen is for Governors Island to be converted into some kind of private or semi private area that would prohibit residents and workers and tourists from coming onto the Island. That would include residential communities or campuses.”

Best,

Briar Winters

New York, NY 10002

From: [C.Ashley](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island rezoning
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 3:01:33 PM

Dear Chair Moya and all Land Use Committee Members:

Thank you very much for your patience and stamina conducting the hearing yesterday. I listened to and watched the entire hearing, and after it ended wondered if you also noticed who was notably absent.

Governors Island is praised for its inclusiveness, and several speakers drew attention to the fact that people go there from all boroughs and zip codes. Except for the Ramapough-Lenape speaker, there were no people of color on the panels, and I got the impression we were not only nearly all white, but also mostly from Lower Manhattan.

Re-zoning affects communities, and in this case the entire city. The Trust's plan does not take into consideration how beautifully Governors Island has satisfied the need to escape from the city. You have heard many of us call it our 'country retreat,' but the people who most need a country-retreat-within-the-city are the poorest New Yorkers who don't have country cottages and can't afford to go on trips.

I'm going to put it very bluntly: I think the Trust's plan, which will destroy that intangibly valuable experience of being *apart from the city*, is environmentally classist and racist.

We've heard a lot about mental stress and mental illness in the last few years, not only during the pandemic, so let's put both mental health and climate resiliency front and center and save Governors Island for what it represents to so many: a green oasis, and an idyllic escape from urban ills. And, as there are no cars, dogs or coyotes, it's the safest place in the entire city for young children to run free.

Please insist that all future projects require restoration and refurbishment of the beautiful old buildings in the historic district. The 'climate center' could also be in a restored building. We don't need a mini Hudson Yards on Governors Island.

When New Yorkers start returning to the island I suggest that they be given ample opportunity to choose between the Trust's plan and M.A.G.I.C.'s.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to contribute to this discussion.

Sincerely,

Carole Ashley

NYC 10013
212-966-9753

I participated in the very first public hearing on the future of Governors Island and I've been going there ever since it opened to the public. I'm an artist/photographer/writer. I've lived in Lower Manhattan for nearly 46 years.



Testimony by Save Our Compost Coalition for City Council Land Use Committee Hearing
Monday, April 5, 2021 at 11:30am

Save our Compost is a coalition of groups working to #Save Our Compost in NYC while uplifting environmental and climate justice. My name is Christine Datz-Romero and I am testifying as a member of the #Save Our Compost Coalition today against the proposed ULURP for Governors Island because it does not include a long term, designated space for Earth Matter NY, one of our coalition members, in the proposed redevelopment zone.

The Save Our Compost coalition firmly believes that community based composting programs belong in public open space, and while we support the proposal by the Trust for Governors Island to create a center to address and study climate change, we would like to ensure that the **ULURP explicitly provides 2 acres of space for Earth Matter's Compost Learning Center** to ensure that the important work of Earth Matter on Governors Island, which began in 2009, will continue.

Right now, small community driven compost sites are the backbone of the Sanitation Department's newly restored food scrap recycling program - a nimble and already highly popular sustainability program that dozens of City Council members and tens of thousands of committed New Yorkers pushed to fund in the spring of 2020, after severe budget cuts eliminated all funding for composting in NYC.

Without robust composting programs, even more recyclable organic waste is being hauled to landfills and incinerators, passing through transfer stations and utilizing waste infrastructure overwhelmingly located in low-income communities and communities of color polluted by particulate matter linked to severe cases of COVID-19. Community compost sites such as Earth Matter compost organic waste and use the finished compost to green New York City, repair our depleted soils and fight climate change.

By allocating space for Earth Matter you will not only ensure that all New Yorkers continue to have opportunities to benefit from the educational programs offered by Earth Matter, preserve a unique closed loop system as part of the Zero Waste Island vision but also allow us to move forward in the urgent fight against the climate crisis. **Composting is part of the climate solution, please ensure that Earth Matter is able to continue their decade long program at Governors Island.**

From: [CB McVay](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Why I oppose Governors Island rezoning and redevelopment
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 9:01:53 PM

Dear Council Members,

As a Chelsea resident, I use and love Governors Island as it is. I vehemently oppose the Trust for Governor's Island zoning proposal which would convert much of what is now a lush green oasis for all New Yorkers into the same overbuilt urban environment from which they need respite. Converting this beautiful open space into a development opportunity for hotels, commercial retail and offices is a basic violation of the public trust that city officials should instead be serving. There is no document that requires Governor's Island to be self-supporting. "Self-sufficiency" is a euphemism for privatization and profits based on infrastructure investment funded by taxes.

A glitzy glamorous 'Climate Research Hub' is unnecessary. The nearby Lamont-Doherty Earth Sciences lab of Columbia University and other facilities provide more climate research data than is currently understood by the public or usable by the city and nation. What we need are small-scale projects that ordinary New Yorkers can participate in — restocking the estuary with native species, growing food, composting, learning maritime skills and trades. Governor's Island now provides such facilities in the form of the Billion Oyster Project, the EarthMatter compost facility, the GrowNYC teaching farm and the Harbor School. Such initiatives not only sustain the earth directly, they also educate our residents and children with hands-on experiences. The spectacle of a Climate Research Hub would only impoverish the earth and further abstract it from human experience .

For the sake of the city, city residents and the earth itself, please put a stop to rezoning and redeveloping Governor's Island. Let it be the public park that is so beloved by so many rather than another giveaway to private profiteering.

Sincerely yours,
Christine McVay

From: [Ceci Pineda](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: BK ROT Testimony on Governor's Island Rezoning
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 5:36:54 PM
Attachments: [BK ROT 4621 Testimony - Governor's Island Redevelopment Plan.pdf](#)

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

Please find attached below and within this email my testimony on behalf of BK ROT to advocate for the continuity of Earth Matter NY in the redevelopment of Governor's Island. If you have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best,
Ceci Pineda

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Ceci Pineda and I am the Executive Director at BK ROT. We are a youth powered composting project that collects food scraps by bike and composts them at our partner gardens based in Brooklyn, New York. I am testifying on behalf of BK ROT to underscore the need of preserving local composting sites, such as Earth Matter NY.

Earth Matter provides critical services to Governor's Island, not only serving as a local resource to manage organic waste, but also providing high quality organic matter than builds up soils. In a City that relies heavily on external resources when it comes to water, food, energy, and more for our community and exports most of our waste, it is critical that we preserve and invest in infrastructure and systems like composting that allow us to manage our own waste.

As we move further into an era of climate crisis, composting is a critical tool that diverts greenhouse gas emissions, supports soils in storing carbon as more stable form, and also provides several benefits to adapt to increasing climate impacts. Compost has the ability to retain up to 20 times its weight in water. As we face increasing shifts in precipitation, compost-supported soils will allow us to better adapt to times of drought as well as predicted heavy rainfalls and flooding. Furthermore, different studies have shown compost's capacity to support growing greater tree canopies and cover, which along with other green spaces can reduce our urban heat island effect.

We love that NYC is transitioning Governor's Island to better understand how

we can face this growing climate crisis. We believe that Earth Matter's work and mission goes hand in hand with this vision, and are eager to see this critical component integrated in the City's redevelopment plan.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony and the very important work you do of bringing open space to New Yorkers who greatly need and appreciate it.

Gratefully,

--

Ceci Pineda
Executive Director
They/Them

BK ROT

Bushwick's Composting Services

100% Fossil Fuel Free | Locally Processed | Handmade Compost
904-579-1278 | www.bkrot.org | Facebook: [BK ROT](#) | [@BKROT](#) | [#BK_ROT](#)
[Support our work](#)

Visit us on Sundays from 12-3PM at:

[Know Waste Lands](#)
1278 Myrtle Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11237
(bring your food scraps too)



**1278 Myrtle Ave
Brooklyn, NY 11221
www.bkrot.org**

BK ROT Testimony to the Committee of Land Use & NYC City Council
April 6, 2021

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Ceci Pineda and I am the Executive Director at BK ROT. We are a youth powered composting project that collects food scraps by bike and composts them at our partner gardens based in Brooklyn, New York. I am testifying on behalf of BK ROT to underscore the need of preserving local composting sites, such as Earth Matter NY.

Earth Matter provides critical services to Governor's Island, not only serving as a local resource to manage organic waste, but also providing high quality organic matter than builds up soils. In a City that relies heavily on external resources when it comes to water, food, energy, and more for our community and exports most of our waste, it is critical that we preserve and invest in infrastructure and systems like composting that allow us to manage our own waste.

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We love that NYC is transitioning Governor's Island to better understand how we can face this growing climate crisis. We believe that Earth Matter's work and mission goes hand in hand with this vision, and are eager to see this critical component integrated in the City's redevelopment plan.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony and the very important work you do of bringing open space to New Yorkers who greatly need and appreciate it.

Gratefully,

Ceci Pineda

Executive Director
BK ROT

From: [Cathy Weiner](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island Land Use Written Testimony
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 8:25:55 PM

April 5, 2021

To whom it may concern,

Governors Island is a short ferry ride away from one of the densest cities in the US. It is a paradise. I have been birding there for 6 years. Yellow-crowned Night Herons, Red-tailed Hawks, Fish Crows, Common Terns, Tree Swallows, Barn Swallows, Red-winged Blackbirds, Eastern Kingbirds, Killdeer, Herring Gulls, Great Black-backed Gulls, Mallards and others nest on the island in the Spring and Summer. The Island is not only an historic site and park it is a habitat for birds, butterflies, and insects. Governors Island has wonderful areas of diverse habitats for the resident and migrating wildlife that rest, feed and breed there every year.

My concern with the proposal is the environmental impact on these birds and wildlife as well as the need for new numerous tall buildings. The Common Terns nest on Lima pier. The construction and building heights will most certainly be a threat for this endangered species. The proposal does not address the impact of construction on the resident and migrating wildlife that share the island with us. I do not see the benefit of creating new buildings when existing buildings in Colonels Row or Nolan Park could be used, leaving the park space as is. Building new 25 story hotels and office space are a shameful waste of precious resources. If Governors Island is concerned enough to build a Climate Center, surely this is a wrongheaded decision when existing buildings should be renovated.

Please consider how this commercialization will destroy the character that makes Governors Island so admired as well as the impact this proposal will have on its wildlife.

Thank you,

Cathy Weiner

From: [Debbie Herdan](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: No Rezoning on Governor's Island
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 8:01:09 PM

1) Bringing in high-density high-rise development is not the best use of this unique space that belongs to all New Yorkers and is visited by people from 99% of NYC zip codes. New Yorkers have a serious need for the welcoming, open, expansive, parkland quality (even in areas with buildings) that Governors Island provides and really isn't available elsewhere in the city.

2) The main rationale for this intrusive project – financial self-sufficiency for Governors Island – is not justified. The Trust's own speculative projections (based on pre-covid conditions) state that financial self-sufficiency wouldn't be achieved until 2050. Meanwhile it'll cost taxpayers billions.

Also, as Manhattan Community Board 1 points out in their 12/22/21 resolution, the Trust has not provided enough information to evaluate the project. As a City Planning Commissioner said at the March 1st public review, this project is akin to the City giving the Trust a blank check for an unspecified project.

3) In the review of the rezoning plan, **any discussion regarding a climate research center is irrelevant, misleading, and should be termed off-topic. This is a proposal to upzone the south island, period.** There is nothing legally requiring that a climate center be the result. Mainly it serves as a potential "anchor tenant" in order to attract developers and sell the upzoning to the public. In fact, GI is already productive as a climate hub, thanks to the work of Earth Matter, GrowNYC, Billion Oyster Project, the Harbor School and others. Five City Planning Commissioners criticized the proposed development and noted that there is no Request For Proposals (RFP) in place to legally require that a climate center be built.

4) This is an awful rush and unfair to all New Yorkers, today and in the future. Land Use public hearings being held virtually due to COVID-19 are too difficult for authentic public participation and should be suspended. There is precedent for this: the ULURP process is currently halted in two Brooklyn rezonings, due to the Voice of Gowanus and MTOPP (Brooklyn Botanical Gardens area).

Sincerely,
Debbie Herdan RN
100 Ocean Pkwy, Brooklyn, NY 11218
djherdan@gmail.com
646-406-5182

From: [Deidre Hoguet](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Against the current Governors Island upzoning proposal
Date: Thursday, April 8, 2021 2:36:39 PM

I am writing to register my opposition to the current proposal to rezone Governor's Island. I am not opposed to all development, but am in favor of development that preserves the island as an open space (primarily open park land as much as possible) for residents of NYC to enjoy.

I am a resident of Brooklyn. I have been going to Governor's Island since it was opened to the public. My family and I live in an apartment building next to a highway with no outdoor space and are 7 blocks from a concrete playground and about 12 blocks for a larger green space. Needless to say, my family seeks out open and green spaces to enjoy on weekends and in the summer as much as possible. Governor's Island is one such space (a very special one) that is a ferry ride away, which opens up a beautiful enclave to many city residents who seek open air.

In addition to the open space, the surrounding watery landscape, and the historical aspects of the original Lenape land use and later military installations, we enjoy the current nonprofits there, tours of the Fort, the arts and music programs, and the environmental education. My son was lucky enough to spend two weeks at a summer camp on the island (in the "junkyard") and I convinced my company to spend a corporate volunteer day there building cages for the Billion Oyster project one summer. There is a complex network of cultural activity happening on the island.

I believe one key aspect of the appeal of the island, especially for families who live in congested, dangerous/high traffic areas (ie, most of NYC), is that Governor's Island has no vehicle traffic. For children in the city, being able to run freely without fear of rambling into traffic, this car-less island is a truly special place. For casual bicyclists, it is a safe area to ride together without fear of harm. Also to note, my family specifically always heads to the south end of the island BECAUSE it is less congested overall, even on this relatively open island.

"De-congestion" is what Governor's Island is all about for residents of New York City. Adding 8,000 jobs (as the proposal states) seems implausible without devoting a huge portion of space to commercial tenants and significantly congesting transit to and from the island. Creating a climate research station is laudable unless it is just a ruse to allow a huge chunk of the island to begin commercial development. As others have pointed out, there are many existing organizations doing work in this arena already on the island. Upzoning and CONGESTING the island will ruin what is special about it, all to bring more tourism to the tiny island. There are more than enough city residents clamoring to get on the ferry every season, standing in long lines wanting to experience the open space; and more than enough nonprofits doing important art and cultural work on the island.

Can the trust put a plan in to maintain the open space of the South island, perhaps just adding some public educational spaces (a la Harbor High School) and small businesses (ie, food stalls) rather than luxurifying it, attracting hotels and commercial tenants? Can the educational anchor tenant be the only tenant, not just a 30-year "anchor?" I am very against the proposal to extend the zone usage already allowed in the North Island, (hotels, retail, etc) to be spread over the whole island. It's not a large island. Does every last square inch need to be "developed?"

I have no business interests in the island. I am not part of any nonprofit. I am just a resident of NYC who enjoys going to Governor's island several times per year (and notice that same extreme enjoyment reflected on the faces of everyone else heading to the island on the ferry whenever I go). There aren't many accessible islands in NYC. In fact, the people of NYC have less access to waterfronts than is thinkable in such a water-bound city. I am in favor of preserving as much of the open space on the southern waterfront as possible.

Deidre Hoguet
Brooklyn, NY

From: [Dianne Lake](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Oppose Governors Island Rezoning
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 12:49:39 PM

I'm writing to express my opposition to the drastic rezoning of Governors Island. I understand the need for some funding stream to maintain the island, but open space is at a premium and this rezoning consumes nearly 1/3 of the island. Over the next decade there will be a number of waterfront resiliency projects that close the East River Greenway and much of the waterfront from 23rd Street around the Battery and up the West Side. Governors Island offers an alternative, especially for NYCHA and other lower-income residents who are now entitled to a free ferry ride as a mitigation for the resiliency construction all around them.

The island doesn't need to be built up; scale back your plans, preserve the open space, and most important, focus on making it accessible to all rather than yet another huge development project that doesn't serve people's needs.

Sincerely,
Dianne Lake
 , NYC 10009

From: [Donna Stein](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Opposing Governors Island Rezoning
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 3:45:38 PM

My name is Donna Stein, I am President of NYC Friends of Clearwater and Co-Producer of Eco-Logic, an environmental radio show on WBAI FM. I live in New York City.

I oppose **Application No. N 210126 ZRM** and **Application No. C 210127 ZMM (Governors Island Rezoning)**.

Governors Island is a treasure and is best to be preserved for the events that serve NYC citizens. We need to insure that our green open spaces remain to be enjoyed by the many. To privatize Governors Island would not only be costly but then serve only a limited number of people.

Please listen to the overwhelming majority of New Yorkers who want this rezoning proposal withdrawn. Listen to the wisdom of the Ramapough Lunaape Nation among so many other groups.

**Thank you,
Donna Stein**

--

Donna Stein
Hudson River Sloop Clearwater Board of Directors
NYC Friends of Clearwater - President 2021
Eco-Logic WBAI 99.5FM - Producer and Co-host
www.ecoradio.org

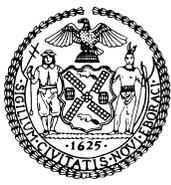
Clearwater is the last tall ship on the Hudson and the only floating environmental classroom for towns up and down the river. We need this majestic symbol of environmentalism so we can continue to do the important work of environmental education, cleaning up the river and forward Pete's legacy.

Please support Hudson River Sloop Clearwater!

Click on the sloop to donate or learn how to set up your own Ambassador Page:



photo credit to Dorice Arden



The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 1
Tammy Meltzer CHAIRPERSON | **Lucian Reynolds** DISTRICT MANAGER

New York City City Council
Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
Public Hearing on Governors Island ULURP Application
Testimony by Diana Switaj, Director of Planning & Land Use
April 5, 2021

Good morning. My name is Diana Switaj, Director of Planning and Land Use at Manhattan Community Board 1 (CB1). As CB1 Chairperson Meltzer outlined the major overarching issues related to this proposal, I will address some specific issues within the zoning and the DSSGEIS which CB1 has identified as problematic.

New York City does not have a comprehensive plan. The NYC Zoning Resolution serves to function as the City's comprehensive plan and it is relied upon to make development predictable. While the Trust's proposal provides maximum accessibility for development through the zoning, these wide parameters are problematic, make future development unpredictable, and provide numerous opportunities for potential exploitative development, especially considering that both use and bulk regulations can be further altered through CPC Authorizations. As CB1 Chairperson Meltzer has touched upon, there is much concern that plans will not actualize the way the Trust intends, and the already flexible proposed zoning could result in exploitative development contrary to the vision that many of us share.

A major concern of the proposal is the management and protection of "open spaces" and parkland. While the Open Space Subarea defined in the proposed zoning does not generate any zoning floor area, zoning still allows uses and structures not typically found in parks. Considered as "permitted obstructions" and exempt from any floor area or coverage restrictions, buildings and other structures up to 25 feet are allowed when they house permitted uses. Though the Trust has made amendments to scale back the currently proposed development allowances within the Open Space Subarea, the changes are modest and it is not enough to afford protection of what was originally intended as parkland. The zoning must redefine "Open Space Areas" and "Open Space Subareas" as "public parkland," including "open spaces" in the North Island to assure adequate protection and consistency with the Deed's "Parkland Restriction Terms".

The Reasonable Worst Case Development Scenario (RWCDS) is a critical aspect of the DSSGEIS and the community believes it is not fully accurate. The DSSGEIS assumes there is no development in the Open Space Subarea, which is not a reasonable assumption as the zoning proposal does in fact allow for significant potential development. All the potential activities in the Open Space Subarea associated with the allowable uses were ignored in the RWCDS and hence the impacts disclosed in the DSSGEIS are seriously understated. While the applicant's

changes thus far to the Open Space Subarea are meaningful, the RWCDs is still incomplete and inaccurate.

Finally, parking within the proposed zoning is still of concern. The Deed restriction identifies parking as a prohibited use except “for vehicles used in connection with the maintenance and operation of Governors Island of facilities thereat and the transportation of visitors to various locations throughout Governors Island.” The City Planning Commission has reduced the total parking between the two development zones from 300 to 200. This parking is optional, but would not be counted against the limitation of coverage or floor area. The proposal also allows the option of a CPC Certification to add more parking and loading areas. However, more troublesome is that the proposed zoning would also allow for accessory parking within the open space. While it is reasonable to assume that institutional and/or commercial facilities will require a limited amount of vehicle storage to satisfy logistical needs, we must think very carefully over how to ensure vehicular use is limited to these functions and not exploited. The generous allowance is contrary to Deed’s requirement and could create incentives to establish more ways for vehicular access to the island for non-essential purposes, create conflicts with park users and disrupt the unique car-free nature of the park as currently enjoyed. CB1 is also concerned that this parking provision will allow for many delivery trucks and/or distribution centers on the Island.

Please see the [full CB1 resolution adopted on December 22, 2020](#) for more information. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. We thank the Trust for working with CB1 and the community to address concerns raised thus far and we look forward to working together to achieve mutual goals for the Island.

From: [Bonita Franklin](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Application No. N 210126 ZRM (Governors Island Rezoning) and Application No. C 210127 ZMM (Governors Island Rezoning)
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 9:19:34 PM

To whom it may concern,

I am a downtown Manhattan resident since 1983 and started going to Governor's Island when the Coast Guard base was still there because there was a Girl Scout troop event at the base. Then I continued visiting when a co-worker, married to a Coast Guard member, invited me to her home. Since G.I. has been open to the general public I have visited many times, walking, biking, and arriving from both the Manhattan and Brooklyn ferries. I have taken Docent tours which have illuminated the history. I visited the Audabon center, many of the little houses, and one of my children even participated in a Porch Stomp. The place is remarkable, especially for NYC. Being there transports you to a New England Island refuge. I have always been struck by the immediate sense of spaciousness and openness one has on visiting G.I. This open space is sorely lacking in our wonderful city. Upzoning is a terrible idea, and leaving G.I. as a recreational site is the best use for people who need to "get away", but don't have the bucks to spend.

Do not approve this expensive and wrong headed plan.

Dr. Bonita Franklin

From: [Emily Glinick](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Please OPPOSE Rezoning of Governors Island
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 7:08:59 AM

To the New York City Council,

I am writing in opposition to the Governors Island rezoning issue.

Development and sustainability cannot really be used in the same sentence. The Trust for Governors Island are cleverly obscuring their true motives, which seem to be *financial* sustainability as opposed to environmental sustainability. This is a sneaky way to lull the public, and the council, into supporting their rezoning plans and making it seem in everyone's best interest. Their current plan is problematic on many levels, and you heard from many of these groups after the Trust's carefully curated panels of people testifying in support of their plans in the first half of the public comments section. Overwhelmingly the second half was in opposition.

Here are a few key points I'd like to share/reiterate:

1. Education requirements absolutely must be included *in perpetuity* on the island, as CM Chin stated. Otherwise there is a real danger of corporations coming in to occupy the island in the future.
2. A hotel on the island is absolutely NOT critical, in a city with literally thousands of hotels. CM Chin is correct that guests, educators, etc to the island can certainly leave the island for the evening and enjoy the rest of what NYC has to offer. A hotel is NOT an environmentally sustainable business, and would certainly harm the island in the long run.
3. Tall glass buildings present a real danger to migrating and local bird populations. The currently proposed building height maximums are still too tall to prevent thousands of bird deaths annually, and if any future buildings are to be constructed, it should be done with utmost care, with anti-bird glass and other materials/methods to avoid contributing to our NYC buildings' already horrendous impact on birds. Please review the oral and written testimony provided by Kathryn Heintz, Executive Director on the NYC Audubon, for more specific details on birds and future development/building impact.

Sincerely,

Emily Glinick, LMT, FRCms
Owner/Lead Therapist

--

Brooklyn Bodywork Collective
[365 Bridge St #4PRO](#)
[Brooklyn, NY 11201](#)
www.brooklynbodywork.com

From: [Eric Hagan](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island Rezoning proposal
Date: Thursday, April 8, 2021 10:41:23 AM

To whom it may concern,

I live in Astoria and I use Governors Island often. I do not support the current Trust for Governors Island Redevelopment Plan. After listening to the zoning hearing it is clear to me that there is an attempt to shoehorn in the new possibility for tall buildings on Governors Island without regard for the original character or public interest in the space. Even the city council meeting only presented the supposed 'climate center' and the focus on small additional park spaces without regard for what the actual commercial changes would entail. What good is a 365 destination if it mimics every other location in New York? People flock to Governor's Island particularly because there aren't the same trappings as elsewhere. This apparent 'lacking' is exactly the island's strength. How will the additional impact from transportation, sewage, trash, and construction help anyone except those benefiting from this additional real estate availability? Governors Island is a rare gem, and the proposal as outlined will destroy this unique location.

Thank you,
Eric Hagan
Astoria, NY

From: [Howard Brandstein](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governor's Island Rezoning testimony
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 4:30:39 PM

RE: **Application No. N 210126 ZRM- Governors Island Rezoning**
Application No. C 210127 ZMM- Governors Island Rezoning

I Howard Brandstein am presenting this written testimony in my position as Executive Director on behalf of Sixth Street Community Center, 638 East 6th East 6th Street, New York, NY 10009:

I urge the City Council to vote NO on the proposed rezoning applications for Governor's Island.

For the past 15 years (excepting 2020) Sixth Street Community Center has organized bicycle trips throughout the summer for young people enrolled in our summer youth program. The unique pastoral quality of Governor's Island should not be ruined or diminished by the proposed rezoning plan put forward by the Trust for Governor's Island (TGI) which will radically alter the Island's energy and character. Twenty-five story towers up to 250 feet in height are COMPLETELY INAPPROPRIATE for this place of serenity in our otherwise incredibly overbuilt city. Even buildings 125 feet in height are much too high, and any new construction should be built within the current zoning rules. Given the large surplus of existing commercial and hotel space in the city right now, there is absolutely no valid reason to be adding to this inventory.

The TGI proposed climate center is, in reality, a Trojan Horse for commercial overdevelopment that would otherwise receive little or no support. Their rezoning plan would EXACERBATE the climate crisis with years of construction and increased waste and greenhouse emissions. We need to fight the climate crisis by REDUCING emissions and EXPANDING green space.

A sensible plan for Governor's Island would renovate and repurpose the EXISTING STRUCTURES or remove them to create more green space. Such a plan should also support the great work of those groups on Governor's Island working for a sustainable planet.

Finally, I urge the City Council to consider, as a real alternative the TGI plan, the far more environmentally sensitive and sensible plan of the Metro Area Governor's Island Coalition (MAGIC) at <http://govislandcoalition.org/a-magic-plan>

Thank you.

Howard Brandstein
Executive Director
Sixth Street Community Center
638 East 6th Street
New York, NY 10009
212-677-1863
info@sixthstreetcenter.org
howard@sixthstreetcenter.org
www.sixthstreetcenter.org

From: [Harriet Hirshorn](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island rezoning proposal
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 5:50:26 PM

As a lifetime New Yorker I want to express my extreme disagreement with this rezoning and development plan.

I feel that the aggressive development in my city is absolutely excessive and needs to stop, period. I did not used to feel that way but the last twenty years of buildings springing up like weeds in every borough has to stop. Somehow people are displaced and green space disappears. This has to stop. Now more than ever.

Harriet Hirshorn
20 Clinton Street 3F
New York, NY 10002

917-400-0833

harriet6@me.com

Guidelines for Piers for Historic Vessels

Originally prepared by the North River Historic Ship Society, November 2011

Revised by the Historic Ships Coalition, December 2018

Piers designed for accommodating historic, educational, and cultural vessels, including visiting tall ships, need several elements included in their basic design. The table below summarizes these elements in order of importance. Although visiting ships will need less than ships berthed long-term, many of these items are necessary for public programming to be carried out. A well-designed pier can be used for other purposes, including community evacuation by water in case of an emergency.

The best recommendation is that the developer of a pier intended for vessels engage maritime experts, including engineers but also captains and vessel owners/operators, to ensure a functional design. The table below is a guide. New York's historic vessel community is available to assist with additional advice

Item	Description	Note
Pier Shape	Pier should have straight sides and ends so as to accommodate as many vessels as possible.	Curves, indentations and other odd shapes should be avoided. Piers should also be level. Piers that ramp up or change height should be avoided.
Pier Flexibility	Pier should be designed to dock a variety of vessels including large tall ships.	Many historic vessels are smaller, but some visiting vessels (such as <i>Eagle</i>) are very large.
Fendering	Pier should be surrounded by strong timber fendering or rubber fenders spaced 10 to 16 ft.	This allows the pier to absorb the forces of a vessel when tying up or moored.
Bollards	Cleats and bollards should be placed frequently around the perimeter of the pier.	This is a basic requirement. A combination of large bollards mixed with intermediate size cleats works best.
Safety	There should be an emergency access ladder and throw-able life rings at several intervals.	This is a life-saving requirement to assist the rescue of a person in the water.
Water Depth	There needs to be sufficient water depth to permit navigation.	The very best designed pier will be useless if the water is too shallow. Active vessel use helps maintain water depth. Dredging may be required for navigation.
Wake Protection	Wake reduction or protection must be provided where wakes are prevalent	As vessel traffic increases, especially for water-borne commuters and other waterfront users, wakes will continue to be a major problem.
Guardrail	If there must be a guardrail or fence, it should be set back several feet from the edge of the pier and inboard of any cleats/bollards.	This is to allow space for line handling, loading ramps and deliveries.
Gates	If there must be a guardrail, openings or gates must be frequent and/or of a flexible design to accommodate gangways.	Flexibility is key since vessel come in many sizes and have different loading needs. Best is sectional fencing where sections can be removed as needed.
Float	A portion of the pier should be equipped with a float and ramp.	This is for smaller vessels including many historic/educational schooners, work boats for larger vessels, as well as for water taxis.
Electricity & Water	Electric and water service should be available at frequent intervals. Electrical service should be a minimum of 110v with a variety of voltages and configurations.	Without shore power connections, vessels need to run onboard generators, potentially creating local pollution and noise. Water is a basic necessity.
Sewage	A means for a vessel to discharge sewage should be provided by providing a plumbing connection to the sewer system.	The Port of New York is a no discharge zone so offering a simple way for ships to discharge their sewage is important.
Vehicle access	There should be a way for vehicles to get close to vessels for normal service as well as for emergency situations.	Supplies need to be brought onboard for programming, maintenance and renovation. Vehicle access makes vessels more accessible for persons with disabilities and to remove ill or injured passengers and crew.
Telecommunications	Provisions for telephone and internet connections should be made for long-term vessels and are necessary for security systems.	Bandwidth of portable wifi is limited and cell phones are prone to interference and dropped signals.
Visitor Amenities	Public restrooms, water fountains, directional signage, a bulletin board or kiosk for posting vessel info.	These would supplement onboard facilities and assist visitors in taking advantage of vessel programs.



www.historicshipscoalition.org
historicshipscoalition@gmail.com

STATEMENT PREPARED FOR NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL LAND USE COMMITTEE HEARING
APRIL 5, 2021

ULURP Applications No. 210126ZRM and 210127ZMM, Governors Island Rezoning -South Island

The Historic Ships Coalition celebrates and supports historic and distinguished vessels in New York City's Harbor. Our Coalition brings together owners and operators of historic vessels, maritime museums, and other maritime heritage advocates in an alliance to address common concerns. We represent over 20 vessels berthed in New York City and others hoping to berth here some day.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the re-zoning of the South Island area on Governors Island.

Governors Island is more water-dependent than most islands of New York City with no bridge or tunnel connections. Maritime uses must be integrated into planning to allow for the delivery of supplies and visitors and for evacuation in emergencies. No significant development for new uses can succeed on the island without increased capacity for vessels to moor there to provide support. The planning of public space there should not treat maritime connections as something separate.

We are glad that reactivation of Yankee Pier has been considered and that a plaza with maritime uses in mind has been incorporated into the development proposal under consideration. We certainly support increased ferry capacity, however, planners must remember that ferry landings often require infrastructure that serves only front-loading ferries and cannot be used by other vessels. Planning only for ferry use may reduce capacity to host other vessels at the pier.

As new uses take hold, even more visitors will be attracted to Governors Island and more vessel capacity should be a high priority. The re-building of Tango Pier would provide even more opportunities for visitors to enjoy the water directly by creating more berths.

Piers should be properly equipped and as flexible as possible for all kinds of vessels to moor. Please see our *Guidelines for Piers for Historic Vessels* submitted herewith. Experienced mariners in our group stand ready to advise, if desired.

Educational and historic vessels can enhance and supplement the island's cultural assets, embodying the maritime heritage that is a legacy of Governors Island—as long as the infrastructure exists to support them. These vessels offer performances, exhibits, skills training, and provide an understanding of our dependence upon the marine environment. The proposed climate research center, should it materialize, can partner with educational and excursion vessels to provide programming on the water. Such vessels can supplement those in New York Harbor School's fleet to provide job and internship opportunities to students and graduates.

As Borough President Brewer has urged, pier improvements must be a commitment. We ask that you make that commitment by requiring that any development plan include improving this vital maritime infrastructure. It will only improve Governors Island and add to the visitor experience there. In our view, ships make the view.

From: [Jaime Kaiser](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: No rezoning of Governor's Island
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 12:29:01 AM

NYC Councilmembers,

Learning about the proposal to build high rises on Governor's Island is just about the most disappointing thing I've heard all week.

New York needs this space because it offers a respite from the chaos of city life. Other parks - - while beautiful in their own way -- just don't have the magic that Governor's Island has. And it's because every other park in New York is surrounded by skyscrapers, noisy cars, and pollution on all sides.

Governor's Island is the only place in New York City that hasn't been manicured until its fingers bleed. Let's leave the last scrap of city that has evaded the death grip of capitalism alone, yeah?

Sincerely,
Jaime

From: [Julia LoFaso](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Written Testimony in Opposition to the Governor's Island Rezoning
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 2:48:10 PM

New York City likes to think of itself as inherently magic, but it's only as magic as it allows itself to be. Governor's Island is magic, and we have it. That's what I think every time I'm there: how lucky are we that we still have it. A five-minute ferry ride to what feels like a bucolic fishing village is something to be thankful for, not something to destroy.

We've made so many mistakes in the past, have sabotaged our magic with urban renewal and rezoning, often undertaken for the misguided idea that we needed to do these things to make money. We need to learn from those mistakes. The South Bronx saw its magic choked with a billion exhaust-spewing highways. The old Penn Station was magic, and we all know what happened to that (no, I was not born yet when they tore it down, but I'm still mad about it). One-hundred-story tax-shelter towers that block the sun in Central Park whose billionaire owners abandoned them at the first sign of trouble (and, let's be honest, even before) are not magic. They are products of an impoverished imagination, a one-track money mind.

Governor's Island is magic. Governor's Island is a green escape, the innate value of which has been made incredibly clear over the past year, if it wasn't clear already. Humans need access to nature to be sane, to be humans. They do not need tall buildings on one of our last remaining swaths of green space. Governor's Island, as is, is an oasis. History will look down on anyone who succeeds in wrecking it.

Sincerely,
Julia LoFaso

From: [Jennifer McDermott](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony in opposition to Governor's Island rezoning proposals
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 3:57:06 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

I'm writing, as a resident of Lower Manhattan (and a constituent of CB1/Margaret Chin/Brian Kavanaugh/Yuh-Line Niou/Jerry Nadler), to express my opposition to the current rezoning proposal for Governor's Island and add my voice to those requesting that **Application No. N 210126 ZRM (Governors Island Rezoning)** and **Application No. C 210127 ZMM (Governors Island Rezoning)** be withdrawn from consideration. Others will argue the details and specifics to explain why these proposals would be destructive and inappropriate to the context on the island, and I support those arguments – development of any kind anywhere on the island needs to be minimal, discreet, and extremely carefully planned so as to maintain the natural state and feel of the island. None of which seems to be happening at the moment.

These rezoning proposals are being rushed through to clear an as yet unspecified but no less obvious path for developers to take over the island. The developer class as a whole seems to be engaged in land grabs all over the city under cover of the pandemic. They have public land specifically in their sights, thinking only of the profits they will make without consideration for the wider context in which communities and public land exist and interact. They must be stopped. There are many, many buildings on Governor's Island that can, and should, be developed in the sense of brought back to life and (re-)animated for public or even potentially private use. No one is arguing the island be preserved in amber. However, high-density new development of almost any height/kind would ruin the island and rob the city of an irreplaceable public asset... at a moment when the public need for it is growing.

Governor's Island is a unique feature of New York City. It is also unique in the world for the unbroken 360° views it offers of New York Harbor, including the Statue of Liberty and Lower Manhattan. It played an important role in the city's early history. It was once a community (complete with theatre, church, general store, etc., which are all still there). It is easily accessible from Manhattan and Brooklyn. And it has been welcoming the public in uniquely inclusive and increasingly creative ways for at least the past decade, from picnic areas to the Billion Oyster Project, bike paths to the recycling center, hilltop vistas to chairs dotted all over the island that are freely available to anyone. The recent incursions by the moneyed elite, in the form of exclusive (and expensive) glamping accommodations are weirdly at odds with the generally inclusive ethos that defines the island.

While it contains a campus of scenic and historic buildings (almost all of them empty) unique to New York City, the island has also become one of the few genuinely green lungs this city has – on a par with Central Park and Prospect Park, though I would argue even more precious for offering, in

addition to green space, sun, wind, sky, jaw-dropping vistas, and galvanizing proximity to the water, perspective on how the city exists in the context of the natural world and literal perspective on its position in the Harbor (all important for people to appreciate as the climate shifts). These things can be found nowhere else.

Even more central to its appeal is the relief offered by the island from the built environment. Governor's Island has space to breathe. Nowhere else in the city (and certainly not in Manhattan) can you spend a few minutes on a ferry and feel your perspective shift so totally – the pace slows as you step onto the island, the noise declines to more natural levels, the air clears, the sky opens up, and there is palpably enough space for everyone, regardless of income. These things – this kind of perspective and this equality of access – are important at any time; they can be sanity saving during a pandemic. This is not the moment to take them away by bringing the built city environment to Governor's Island and essentially privatizing much of the island, putting it off-limits to all but the elite.

We the People need this space to remain the preserve of both the public and nature, and we need it to remain accessible to everyone. I urge you to consider proposals to develop the island in this spirit, that will restore and re-deploy existing assets – the historic buildings – for public use in a coherent, creative way (as an arts complex, for example – the theatre has enormous potential), but Governor's Island must remain zoned to keep developers in check and preserve the island as a public asset in line with its current state. The city's mental health depends on it; there must be somewhere that is firmly off-limits to the destructive, corrosive, divisive influence of money.

Developers are acutely aware that rezoning the island will be the first step toward their eventual domination of it. Please do the right thing by all of us and nip this process in the bud right now.

Thank you.

Jennifer McDermott

From: [Jonathan Rubin](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: My Testimony
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 7:18:53 PM

I appreciate the work of the Trust in stewarding the GI Park opening thus far.

I have been to Governor's Island a number of times since 2010 attending MWA Water Festivals with aging senior citizen friend who has had a spectacular and memorable time attending these same events and who enjoyed the big green park of the South Part for its sunshine, trees and vast lawns.

I implore the Committee to reject the Real Estate development for Governor's Island in favor of Park Development that leaves the South Part as park only the main focus of the deed.

I am a fifty year member of the Sierra Club who has enjoyed the best of our nation's National parks as our national wealth.

I ran NYC Friends of Clearwater Inc. for two years.

I am a member of NYC Sierra Club Urban Sustainability Committee.

To reiterate the development of Governor's Island should be Park Development not Real Estate development.

First, I personally want the conditions concerning the height of Governor's Island as 4 stories compatible with the pre-existing Historic District buildings regenerated through adaptable reuse but NOT REZONED for hotels and dormitories of an Anchor Center as a proposed Climate Center not yet approved. Rezoning should therefore if even necessary be considered after a Center is approved as a logical basis for consideration of any needs of any superfluous hotels and dormitories especially at times when much commercial, hotel, residential and dormitory use is at an all time minimum now.

I reiterate the South Part of Governor's Island must remain park rather than dormitories and hotels largely vacant citywide currently.

The approval of a height rezoning of GI prior to a RFP approved for a Climate Center is illogical and inconsiderate of those who cherish park in NYC. The Climate Center or any Center considerably and necessarily must be approved prior to consideration of a rezoning that deprives city residents of one the best natural park spaces in NYC and was certainly trampling upon the LENAPE focus of this being a space for people as Lenape translates to English "The People".

More is not always better.

At a time when to reiterate dormitories and hotels are largely vacant enhancing the earth and preserving fleeting park space in NYC make sense as an objective of NYC residents.

To reiterate this park was first settled by the Lenape Native Americans where LENAPE means The People but the City people are not really part of the proposed rezoning especially when the Friends of Governor's Island largely consists of members of the real estate development community. The Friends of GI are only focused own hotels and dormitories for an unapproved Climate Center which is certainly not in keeping with the deed focused on park space not gentrification or up zoning allegedly people oriented.

The discussion of the Climate Center unapproved is illogical and an unsustainable lynchpin to add hotels and dormitories rather unnecessary when this park is a park development project not a real estate development project as it is park space with the opportunity to remain as beautiful open space for humans to enjoy nature, art, composting and recreational space.

The Trust has not released its fiscal model for public review.

The South Part of GI should an entire park expanse bounded only by harbor and the North Island Historic District. The rezoning and development establishes development zones of 6 and 27 acres of buildings respectively. New Yorkers deserve and desire to experience a waterside to waterside full park without the intrusion of this high rise development as a full expanse from the urbanization we daily experience.

The Sierra Club feels the process should be reversed The Trust and the City should first conduct an RFP with public input to identify the possible Climate Center feasible or another Anchor with RFP responses setting forth community needs. Then after selecting a park compatible Center the Trust can proceed with any zoning adjustments, if any are even needed.

The current rezoning proposal could, however transform a park project to a development allowing for development incompatible with an expansive park on the South Part of GI which is subject to view the South Part as park space and reject zoning which it would never allow in any of our City's other great parks.

The City must assure that the Governor's Island or any use on it does not overload the Red Hook Waste Treatment facility to where sewage and waste would be transferred. The rezoning allowable hotel and other uses would overwhelm the current Red Hook Waste Treatment facility for which no upgrade is presently planned. The waste water for the Gowanus flow to Red Hook were burdened with serious CSOs problems. There has been much developed in the area and currently there are discussions about contiguous are up zonings. Adding additional waste to the facility needs intensive study and there has been none,

These are among the reasons why the current Rezoning Proposal should be Rejected.

Jonathan Rubin

From: [John Schellhase](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: IN OPPOSITION to the proposed Governors Island rezoning
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 9:06:46 AM

Dear City Council Members:

1) The current rezoning proposal for Governors Island must be withdrawn.

Bringing in high-density high-rise development is not the best use of this unique space that belongs to all New Yorkers and is visited by people from 99% of NYC zip codes. New Yorkers have a serious need for the welcoming, open, expansive, parkland quality (even in areas with buildings) that Governors Island provides and really isn't available elsewhere in the city.

2) The main rationale for this intrusive project – financial self-sufficiency for Governors Island – is not justified. The Trust's own speculative projections (based on pre-covid conditions) state that financial self-sufficiency wouldn't be achieved until 2050. Meanwhile it'll cost taxpayers billions.

Also, as Manhattan Community Board 1 points out in their 12/22/21 resolution, the Trust has not provided enough information to evaluate the project. As a City Planning Commissioner said at the March 1st public review, this project is akin to the City giving the Trust a blank check for an unspecified project.

3) In the review of the rezoning plan, **any discussion regarding a climate research center is irrelevant, misleading, and should be termed off-topic. This is a proposal to upzone the south island, period.** There is nothing legally requiring that a climate center be the result. Mainly it serves as a potential "anchor tenant" in order to attract developers and sell the upzoning to the public. In fact, GI is already productive as a climate hub, thanks to the work of Earth Matter, GrowNYC, Billion Oyster Project, the Harbor School and others. Five City Planning Commissioners criticized the proposed development and noted that there is no Request For Proposals (RFP) in place to legally require that a climate center be built.

4) This is an awful rush and unfair to all New Yorkers, today and in the future. Land Use public hearings being held virtually due to COVID-19 are too difficult for authentic public participation and should be suspended. There is precedent for this: the ULURP process is currently halted in two Brooklyn rezonings, due to the Voice of Gowanus and MTOPP (Brooklyn Botanical Gardens area). [would it be effective to mention the names of the rezoning plans than the opposition? Gowanus Rezone and 960 Franklin Ave Rezoning Plan (across the street from the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens.)

5) "Open space" is not just pedestrian access, as TGI is selling it, but involves sky and the feeling of openness. The "increased open space" that TGI is presenting is "woven open space similar to Battery Park City." It's boxed in by 10 – 30 story buildings and non-public areas.

6) Any new building on Governors Island should be kept to a minimum and not exceed the four story height of buildings in the historic district or the 35-foot height limit in the current zoning.

Sincerely,

John Schellhase
johnschellhase@icloud.com

From: [John West](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Cc: [Jeffrey Kroessler](#); [Raju Mann](#)
Subject: Governors Island -- T2021-7381 and T2021-7382
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 10:47:49 AM

City Council,
7 Apr '21

The City Club recommends against approval of the proposed rezoning of Governors Island. Our position is set forth in each of the following three items, each of which is posted on our website -- <https://cityclubny.org/>

- A policy statement recommending that the island be completed with park and recreation uses rather than 4.3 million sq ft of development -
- <https://cityclubny.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CityClubStatementonGovernorsIslandcopy.pdf>
- An op-ed by Jeffrey Kroessler -- <https://cityclubny.org/a-trust-betrayed/>
- A video of the recent panel hosted by the City Club discussing the future of the island -- <https://cityclubny.org/events/>

Thank you for accepting this testimony.

John

Testimony of Karen Imas, VP of Programs, Waterfront Alliance

- **Application Number: N 210126 ZRM and C 210127 ZMM**
- **Project: Governors Island Special District**
- **City Council Hearing Date: 04/05/2021**
- **Borough: Manhattan**
- **Community District: 1**
- **In Favor (with recommendations)**



Governors Island is one of the pearls of New York Harbor, and its ongoing transformation into a public space has been critical for restoring New Yorkers' connection with their waterfront. Thousands of people have visited the Island in recent years for a growing slate of public programs, arts and cultural festivals, and other events.

The water's edge of Governors Island represents untapped potential while at the same time remains a landscape where the power of climate risk is undeniable. We commend the Trust for recent amendments that reduce height and bulk; widen the shore public walkway creating more open space; and the limits on particular uses. Waterfront Alliance is in favor of today's proposal (with certain additional recommendations that I'd like to highlight today).

We believe that this vision, with certain additional recommendations and considerations, is critical to advance the mission of the Island to be an extraordinary public place; to support expanded, year-round public access; and to create a path towards financial self-sufficiency.

Like any world class park or destination in new York City, it should be open 365 days/year. Covid-19 has shined a light on the need for more quality and affordable open space and Governors Island is a key part of that conversation.

I'd like to touch on a few categories that Waterfront Alliance sees as priority issues that should be emphasized in the process ahead.

With respect to the resilience and adaptation strategies for the proposed climate center on the East Parcel:

- With both Development Zones being located on the portion of the Island that was created with fill material, located within the 100-year floodplain, and facing sea level rise conditions of up to six feet by 2100, resiliency is a key consideration. In the Trust's previous presentations, the Design Flood Elevation varies between 13' and 15' across development zones. We would want to see elevation strategies up to 17' and 18'.

- These elevation levels are particularly important as dormitories are listed as a potential use. Introducing housing, even if temporary housing, into a complicated floodplain merits a more conservative approach for the design flood elevation and additional structural and nature-based resiliency features, as well as a comprehensive strategy for preparedness. This strategy is ideally informed by more advanced modeling, in conjunction with Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines strategies and Department of City Planning zoning requirements for the “base plane” used for the design flood elevation.
- We believe a more thorough strategy should be presented on how the climate center and potential dormitories can survive future storms. What are the infrastructure investments required to meet the needs of emergency preparedness? For example, increased density of people on the island in the event of a major storm requires a hard look at infrastructure and amenities. This includes evacuation infrastructure that allows for large numbers of people to move off the island quickly with their personal belongings, utility protections, food and intra-land transportation.
- Additionally, we encourage the Trust work with the Department of City Planning to adjust all planned development to take advantage Zoning for Coastal Flood Resiliency requirements.
- And we strongly encourage the project team to work with Waterfront Alliance through our Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines verification process to meet a commitment to resilience, public access and innovation at the water’s edge. In 2019, Manhattan Community Board 1 adopted a resolution encouraging all waterfront ULURP applicants to use WEDG Projects are encouraged to engage early in the process to inform designs.

With respect to the design for the perimeter around the South Island:

- We encourage greater use of natural shorelines in the design (referring to Category 3 and Appendix B in the WEDG manual), alongside esplanades and elevating structures. For example, we were encouraged to see the wetlands proposal for Picnic Point.
- These nature-based resiliency solutions may not only be more cost effective in the short- and long-term, but also demonstrate excellence in ecology and design that climate center seeks to advance, as well enhanced public open space and opportunities for educational programming.

- The edge design of Governors Island – both in terms of ecology and opportunities to physically touch the water – will affect the attractiveness of this site to a research institution focused on climate and resilience. Because there will be limits of what’s possible at the water’s edge, we recommend that the Trust with its engineering and design team evaluate and implement a varieties of edge design which will contribute to hands-on research and experiential learning that cannot be solely done in a lab.
- Allow development zone proposals to include water-based components such as a get-down touch point and recognize the benefits of these water-based connections in evaluation of RFP proposals.

With respect maritime activation, recreation and transportation at the water’s edge:

- We are encouraged that the Trust for Governors Island continues to cite the Waterfront Alliance’s *Maritime Activation Plan for Governors Island* as a resource for planning. The document includes a complete list of recommended direct and enhanced water access opportunities including human powered boating, a marina and boat lift.
- Currently, except for highly restricted access by advance request at Pier 101, there are no opportunities for visitors to touch the water at any other point in Governors Island’s 2.2-mile shoreline.
- We encourage the Trust to continue to pursue public waterfront access for the public to enjoy such as boating, historic ship docking, kayaking, floating swimming pools, environmental programming and research, and increased waterborne transportation.
- We are also encouraged to see a focus on increasing ferry passage and density to Yankee Pier, as recommended through the Maritime Activation Plan for Governors Island.
- As the Island works towards full-year operation and build-out of the development zones, ferry service will need to be expanded and refined. We recommend a strong focus on this infrastructure component in the solicitation. RFP respondents should understand current ferry capacity and future possibilities. Investment in both dock infrastructure and passenger amenities at Yankee Pier would need capital investment.
- Additionally, we strongly encourage greater integration of Governors Island into the NYC Ferry System so that access is truly accessible from Soundview to Staten Island.

With respect to the commercial ferry at Lima Pier:

- We recommend reconstructing Lima Pier for use as designated “service entrance” to the Island, such as receiving trucks and freight, and discharging trash.
- The Eastern Development Zone may benefit from proximity to freight services, as that might provide direct connections for deliveries and trash and eliminate the need for a middle carter. A shoreside strategy is needed for the movement of those goods.
- A marina or mooring field operation would be highly compatible alongside a pier for barges and freight.

With respect to the operations and focus of the proposed climate center on the East Parcel:

- The solicitation should seek to identify a strong anchor partner with credibility, financial stability and interdisciplinary expertise that would create a hub for a wide variety of coastal science disciplines.
- We urge consideration of an RFEI before RFP. The academic higher education sector has changed substantially with Covid-19 and may continue to look different in the future with more remote learning opportunities. We believe more information should be gathered about viable interest from academic and research partners and how this might affect the scale of a proposed climate center and economic viability.
- Additionally, we encourage the Trust to examine comparable existing Centers across the region such as the Science and Resilience Institute at Jamaica Bay (SRIJB) to understand where there may be opportunities for collaboration or gaps in climate research. We also encourage an evaluation of the challenges the SRIJB has faced as it is similar in nature and scope to the stated goals of this project.
- Beyond the confines of Governors Island, the proposed climate center has the potential to create a new BlueTech ecosystem for New York City by bringing parties together to encourage commercial innovation for technological research in the climate, ocean and maritime fields. BlueTech as an innovation cluster is growing in New England outpacing the New York metro area.
- Partnerships with public schools and community-based workforce development programs, including those already on the island such as the Harbor School, are an important underpinning for the success of this project. Waterfront Alliance would be interested in playing a role in the

future partnerships through offering our Estuary Explorers youth waterfront field labs.

About the Waterfront Alliance

The Waterfront Alliance is the region's preeminent organization working to revitalize, adapt, and effect resilience across its waterfronts. Through our Rise to Resilience coalition, we are advocating for urgent policy, governance, and financial changes to address our region's climate risks at the local, state and federal level. Through our WEDG® (Waterfront Edge Design Guidelines) program, we are shifting the market towards more resilient, sustainable, and accessible waterfront development. The WEDG standard goes beyond existing code in New York City, or elsewhere in the Country, to encourage considerations of sea level rise, changing precipitation patterns, heat, and other climate risks into standard practice for real estate and design industries.

From: kyla.raskin@live.law.cuny.edu
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Comment in regards to New York City Council Land Use Committee hearing (Monday, April 5th, 2021) re: Earth Matter
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 12:13:15 PM

Date: April 7, 2021

Re: Comment in regards to New York City Council Land Use Committee hearing (Monday, April 5th, 2021)

Letter in support of Earth Matter's inclusion

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

I write this comment as a compost-loving law student at the City University of New York, to express my interest in having 2 acres of land in the development zone designated for Earth Matter and reflected in The Trust's ULURP.

To reserve 2 of the 33 acres of the proposed Government Island development area for Earth Matter would be to reserve 2 acres for New Yorkers to engage with a truly green initiative. Providing this physical space directly supports the ethos of climate change mitigation, and provides a vibrant, interactive working model of waste reduction to benefit and inspire all New Yorkers. Working with the Earth Matter chickens and compost piles was such a novel, exciting experience in the city, and pushed me to begin home composting in Brooklyn. The Trust would be providing a mere 2 acres of contiguous land, but, moreover, would be providing a show case for working, experimental and aspirational composting models, the positive impact of which will continue be felt throughout the city. What I have learned from Earth Matter is so important to me, and I implore city council to allow other people access to this amazing space and programming.

Thank you very much for your work and your attention on this issue. Looking forward to spending warmer weather in the open space on the Island.

Kyla Raskin

From: [Loyan Beausoleil](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island written testimony
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 5:57:10 AM

Hello,

I am writing to oppose the current redevelopment plan for Governors Island.

While some aspects of the plan are promising such as converting the hospital to gym/pool space for the Harbor School, much of the design, especially out-of-scale high rise buildings, is detrimental to the unique character of the island.

There is no other place in NYC like Governors Island and it has proved a valuable respite and resource for families and neighbors, many who do not have the opportunity to travel and take vacations out of NYC. Taking any part of that away from the community in exchange of for profit development is unconscionable. While the climate center is a noble idea, if it comes to pass, this should not exceed the current four story height of the historic buildings or the height limit in current zoning regulations, especially considering future sea level rise.

Additionally, a forward thinking model takes into consideration the biodiversity of Governors Island. I have had the great fortune of conducting a bird survey during 2020 to demonstrate avian species richness. The entire island is important for local and migrating birds and the south of the island in particular, appears to be a migratory path. On October 25, 2020 large flocks of migrating birds were observed over the edge of the island along the sports field, Glampground and Castle Williams. These flocks of many 100's of birds occurred throughout the morning and included a flock of 278 American Robins and over 60 Northern Flickers. The bird flight was only slightly above the current height of existing buildings. How might taller buildings affect multiple migrating species?

There are already ample buildings on Governors Island that can be reused and repurposed, maintaining the history of the island without excessive new buildings.

I am hopeful that the current Governors Island redevelopment plan will be withdrawn and that a new plan, which considers people and biodiversity first will be redrafted.

With respect,
Loyan Beausoleil

Loyan Beausoleil
Bird Program Manager
Washington Square Park Eco Project

Your Bird Story Podcast:
Tune in every second Thursday to Your Bird Story: anchor.fm/yourbirdstory

From: [Laura Gagnon](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Say No to development on Governors Island
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 2:01:37 PM

In a city that is as densely populated as New York is, the open space at Governors Island is an asset that should be preserved for residents and visitors to enjoy. There is a glut of unused office space at this time; there is no justification for destroying the character of Governors Island for this development.

From: [Laura Goggin Photography](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island rezoning proposal
Date: Monday, April 5, 2021 7:34:44 PM

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to urge you to vote against the current proposal to rezone Governors Island.

I have attended the hearings leading up to this vote, listening to the proposal from the GI Trust, as well as testimony from members of the public. As it stands, the current proposal to develop the island is lacking in many details including financial and feasibility. I feel the idea of a climate center is being used to lure you and the public into voting for the rezoning without offering a comprehensive plan. There currently is no organization in place to fulfil the idea of a climate center, nor is there any guarantee that there will be one at all once rezoning is approved.

The construction of a tower on the island is most troubling and unnecessary. Many alternative ideas were offered by members of CBI and the public at previous meetings, but the Trust seems not to have considered any other option for generating revenue. The plan to construct a tower is purely speculative, with no tenant or commitment from any educational entity in place.

The Mayor touted GI as a "jewel" of NYC and I agree - it's a truly unique place where people can go to enjoy fresh air, open sky, nature and quiet, without ever leaving the city. It's a destination for tourists to experience history, nature and to enjoy the amazing views of Manhattan, Brooklyn and the harbor. To construct a tower would forever change and, in my opinion, ruin the natural experience of the island. There are existing buildings that can be used for development. I've personally documented over 160 bird species on the island, many of which can be found nowhere else in the city. The rezoning plan, as it stands, threatens many of those species, which rely on the island for food and respite during their spring and fall migrations. Endangering that habitat has consequences far beyond the shoreline of the island.

I understand GI needs to generate revenue, and I am not against development. But, after attending many presentations and hearings, it's clear there are more feasible alternatives which should be researched before making a final decision. This current plan is rushed and leaves too many unanswered questions. Please vote against this rezoning plan, and ask that the GI Trust provide one that does not entail constructing yet another high-rise that we don't need.

Sincerely,
Laura Goggin

NYC, 10003

From: dntndiva@aol.com
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: the future of Governors Island
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 9:45:15 AM

Dear Honorable Members of the NYC Council,

I have been in love with Governors Island since it first opened to the public more than a decade ago. I remember clearly that first visit...the island was opened for only several weekends during the summer...walking among the Yellow Houses, feeling as if I'd stepped back in time. It was truly magical, so much so that I never did wander to the south island.

Fast forward to four years ago when the Friends of Governors Island put out a call for volunteers to give guided history-oriented tours of the island. I couldn't volunteer fast enough and when I saw the beautiful landscaping that had recently opened, I encouraged my friends and neighbors to join me on my tours. To quote one neighbor who joined me, "I couldn't believe it. There was so much sky!" Between the beautiful, open sky and the vast expanses of grassy hills and fields,

Governors Island is truly an oasis and deserves to be maintained as such. I find the Trust's plans for buildings reaching as high as 300' abhorrent. Such construction will diminish the appeal of the island. I firmly believe the Trust needs to focus its attention on the restoration of the older buildings on the island. For example, the old hospital would make a wonderful "boutique hotel", small and intimate. The new day spa would be reached within seconds. Add a swimming pool nearby which the Harbor School desperately needs, and it could be an additional amenity. Liggett Hall is perfect for a graduate school, or collection of graduate schools. Restoration of the 4th floor gymnasium would be another plus, again something that the Harbor School desperately needs. I also found many of the suggestions provided by Metro Area Governors Island Coalition worthy of the Council's serious consideration.

Don't spoil what is now such an asset. I realize the Trust has been charged with the need to generate revenue to sustain operations. But their proposal is not the way to go.

Thank you.
Lynne Hayden-Findlay
10009

Lucy Koteen
138 Lafayette Av
Brooklyn, NY 11238
lucy.koteen@gmail.com
718-938-3935

Spoken testimony at the April 5th hearing:

My name is Lucy Koteen and I am an advocate for parks, natural open space, and the environment.

Lenape language for Watch Over This Land is: Kenahkitu yu hàki.

In 1637 the Dutch West India Company purchased, Paggank, Lenape Nut Island now known as Governors Island for “two ax heads, a string of beads, and a handful of nails.” The island was purchased for private use and real estate speculation.

Sound familiar?

The Trust repeats the assumption over and over again that the Island needs to be used by a large number of people throughout the year and it needs to be financially self-sustainable.

Neither is true.

The Corporation throws out the do-gooder idea that we should have a climate research center there but they have no institution in mind and no rationale that we need another climate research institution in New York or anywhere.

Instead of an EIS, there is a FSSGEIS, Final Second Supplemental Generic EIS, because specific impacts can not be known as there is no specific development.

The process is backwards.

Currently the island is in use 12 months a year for useful environmental functions and for the NY Harbor School. That is enough. *We do not need to colonise every drop of land; every open space.*

To understand what is going on in this proposed upzoning you must know who represents the Governors Island Friends Group-Some of the biggest developers in the City and the world. They have only one bottom line and it is not the needs of a healthier planet.

A partial list: Blackstone, Tishman Speyer, RAL, Amazon, Met Life Investments, Sidewalk Labs, AECOM (which is now AECOM Tishman, the largest receiver of contracts in the city. In 2019 they received \$1,087 billion in contracts.

A glaring conflict of interest in the Friends group is the inclusion of Tal Golom of Fried Frank Harris Shriver and Jacobson, a 500 member international law firm with a contract with the Trust that recently added \$100,000 to their pay. Why-to shepherd through the ULURP process. A ULURP process that has been judged to be illegal to hold during the pandemic by a Brooklyn judge.

This is a pre-pandemic plan. The city is currently filled with empty offices and apartments. We have no idea what the needs of the city will be post pandemic. Let's keep this open, green space for the current and future residents of the city, forever. Reject this proposal.

Additional testimony:

1. The proposal is a top down proposal. Any changes to GI should start with the community most involved with the island.
2. Any reconstruction done should be by adaptive reuse of existing buildings maintaining their historic qualities to the extent possible. The carbon footprint should not be expanded. The island should be used to offset the carbon footprint of the city.
3. The Trust refused to provide the financial model when requested by CB1 and the Brough President. What are they hiding. Lack of transparency should not be tolerated.
4. The deed for the island does not say it needs to be self financing. This is a public asset and the government is responsible for financing parks, libraries, schools and the like. It would be a terrible precedent to insist that a park needs to be self financing.
5. No one would say that Central Park had to develop high rises to be self financing.
6. A Brooklyn judge found that it is illegal to hold ULURP hearings remotely due to the pandemic. All ULURP proceedings should stop.
7. The Red Hook waste station is already overburdened and the area has great problems with CSOs. There needs to be a very extensive review on capacity before adding a great deal more waste water. The review would have to include all the new buildings done since the last review and all proposed buildings such as the 20,000 units for the Gowanus. It is hard to tell if that was done in 2011 or 2013 or more recently. Much of the information used by the Trust comes from the 2011 and the 2013 EIS.
8. The City Council should look into the role of the law firm Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver and Jacobson. They are also being used by those pushing the Gowanus rezoning and the Soh/Noho rezoning. Why is the Trust paying

a great deal of money to this law firm to usher the ULURP process? Why has a partner of the firm been allowed to sit on the Friends group? The ULURP process is supposed to be for the public to comment on a rezoning and should not be manipulated by a big expensive lawfirm.

9. Is there any prohibition for a member of the Friends group to submit an RFP for any development project on the island? There should be.
10. Rather than new buildings the trust should be looking to decrease the carbon footprint of the island not increase it with new buildings, more people and more transportation.
11. Any expansion that is done should be restrained to the existing environmental activities that exist in the NY Harbor School, the composting and the oyster project, and possibly more recreation. There is no need to invent new projects.
12. A hotel is 100% wrong for the island. The Trust talked about over 1,300 rooms which could be 2600 people using infrastructure. If you have a hotel then you need restaurants and entertainment. Why would anyone choose to stay there in the winter or bad weather. There are many hotels in the city begging for occupants that it would compete against. The only one who would benefit would be the developer who builds it and most like the developer would get tax subsidies so it would cost the city more money.
13. Who would pay. In order for this scheme to work there would have to be a large increase of ferries that are heavily subsidized by the taxpayers. The City would pay for new ferry terminals. Demolition and new pathways would be paid for by taxpayers. Developers would get tax incentives which taxpayers then make up with higher taxes.
14. Alicia Glen suggested that the City build a Gondola or extend the #1 train, or even build out the land to connect to the island. Who pays for that-the taxpayers!
15. Alicia Glen was brought in by Carl Weisbrod (previously of HR&A and Dept of City Plannin) soon after she left her job as the Deputy Mayor position. She had been the Chair of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation where she pushed through the two highrises in the park that were fought by the community and the community sued to prevent. She had no interest in what the community had to say at Board meetings.
16. There are current climate institutions. There is no evidence that a new one needs to be built. If there is something missing from a current institution then that could be added. It is not climate neutral to build new buildings. Every bit of material would have to be transported by ship.
<https://rainbow.ideo.columbia.edu/climateinstitutions.html>

17. There has been no research on the impact on the water quality and marine life if ferries are increased.
18. Governors Island is used by all city residents, not just one Community Board or one City Council member. It is also a big tourist center. Decision making belongs to all community boards and all city council members should weigh in. At the hearing yesterday there was not one question asked by any city council member other than Margaret Chin and the Chair of the committee, and then by the Borough President, Gale Brewer. This is disturbing.
19. The proposal lists that they would create space for a hotel with 1363 rooms and a dormitory with 1390 rooms. Very specific numbers that would mean close to 4000 people occupying those rooms. There would also be a lot of support staff for all those rooms. That is a lot of water, sewage, garbage to add to the island. All those people would need restaurants, entertainment and stores to support them. In addition, a research center, a conference center, offices and retail space. Basically a small city is planned. It is not believable that there would be no environmental impact. Details can be found here
<https://a002-ceqraccess.nyc.gov/Handlers/ProjectFile.ashx?file=MjAxMVwxMURNRTAwN01cZWlzXGZpbmFsX2Vpc1wxMURNRTAwN01fTm90aWNIX29mX0NvbXBsZXRpb25fRINTR0VJU18wMzA1MjAyMS5wZGY1&signature=e4dc5da1687a1709ed31acd1a0ecfd3bddd0230>
20. There is no guarantee that it will stop there.



April 5, 2021

Statement by The New York Landmarks Conservancy on the Proposed Rezoning of the South Side of Governors Island

ULURP No. 210126ZRM

The New York Landmarks Conservancy opposes the proposed zoning change that would allow 4.3 million square feet of new building bulk on two sites just south of the Governors Island Historic District.

The proposal before you today would allow buildings up to 250 feet high with an additional 40 feet of mechanical bulkhead on top of that. Buildings of this height and bulk bear no relation to the special history and sense of place of Governors Island. We also question how such huge buildings can be sustained on a small island with limited infrastructure and with only ferry connections to the rest of the city. To give an example of how big 4.3 million square feet is, One World Trade Center contains 3.4 million square feet, almost a million square feet less than what is being proposed for this small harbor island made largely of land fill.

The Conservancy is not opposed to new buildings on the south side but the proposed zoning would allow for extreme excesses in size and density. Twenty-five story buildings would be grossly out of scale with existing buildings on the Island.

The proposed scheme is driven by consideration of the supposed financial return of the sites with little thought given to the historic character or physical beauty of the Island, which welcomes over a million visitors a year. This is public land. It is a popular public park. Other important considerations apart from financial return must be considered when planning future development there.

The New York Landmarks Conservancy has a long history of involvement with Governor's Island. For decades we have worked with the Trust and its predecessor organization to push for the preservation of the historic buildings on the Island, most of which are vacant. There needs to be equal emphasis on finding new uses for these existing buildings.

In conclusion, the Landmarks Conservancy believes very strongly that Governors Island is a valuable public amenity for all New Yorkers and that its future development needs to be harmonious with the special physical and visual characteristics that define the Island and that attract millions of visitors. The proposed up-zoning would permit unsustainable and out of context development. We urge you to honor and protect this rare amenity for the City.

From: [FROGG.TAG](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island Rezoning N 210126 ZRM and C 210127 ZMM
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 5:21:27 PM

To: New York City Council

The following comments are submitted for your consideration in review of the NYC Application No. N 210126 ZRM and No. C 210127 ZMM (Governors Island Rezoning)

Existing framework:

In 2008 Governor's Island was dubbed "the un-Central Park" for its nonurban condition, as plans were set for a 90-acre nature preserve, a different kind of centerpiece of the city's waterfront development.

"Now, the city has a new idea: transforming one of its last big chunks of developable land [...] into a "living laboratory" for coping with the effects of climate change." — [The New York Times](#)

Let's be honest, New York City is already the biggest petri-dish of a "living laboratory" for studying the effects of climate change (especially given it is the third largest CO2 emitting city in the world). The current proposal for Governor's Island, promoted as a "living lab" climate research center, will obliterate the existing "un-Central Park" nature preserve, replacing it with new urban construction, generating new urban impositions on the land, air, and water, at the expense of all the living creatures of this city. Green-washing this proposal as a needed "living lab" climate research center, is both absurd and disingenuous.

To be real, nothing proposed in this plan can be built, nor operated, without generating a significant new carbon-footprint, adding new additional pollutants to the air, and new waste streams into our waterways. New Yorkers don't need this additional "living lab" to understand any of this.

Because we already live in a "living lab" available for climate research, we can look to existing studies that point out the importance of having accessible nature preserves for the environment and the health of the population living in a concrete urban city like New York in making important planning decisions. Because current studies have demonstrated that [a walk on a tree covered hillside provides more health benefits than a walk along a tree-lined city street](#), the city must consider these important priorities for the well being of city residents over the welfare of the developers proposing these alternatives. This city underserved its residents with open space, especially the kind of open space Governor's Island offers. As a matter of environmental justice and public health, the city needs the open space that Governor's Island provides to provide its residents with the opportunity that only a few places in this city provides, to have the chance to experience the [health benefits](#) that come from a walk along the tree lined hills of Governor's island, especially for all the city

residents who don't have use of a weekend home.

This proposed rezoning actions must not be allowed to go forward. Instead it is time that the city declare Governor's Island an Environmental Sanctuary. Such sanctuary status should come with a full commitment that there will be no additional CO2 footprint generated from this island, not from new construction, nor the daily running of any facilities on this island, including increase in CO2 footprint from 'green energy' systems. This sanctuary status must also come with policy that ensures all future activities, including any use of 'green energy' systems, an assurance they impose no environmental justice on others, both in this city and the greater world. Given that NYC is a 'global' city, the assessment on potential environmental justice issues, specifically those that are being imposed on other nations through mining for 'green energy' materials, must be considered in planning any new additional facilities on this island.

Please also consider the many suggestions by others like the group M.A.G.I.C that offer some 100% sustainable ideas for this island -- uses that can serve all the people of the city. But please, let's not develop yet another urban "living lab" petri dish of this island. Let's continue to assist this land in its capacity to function as the "un-Central Park" it was declared to be back in 2008, so that it can provide the environmental benefits which do not come from buildings and their paved areas as proposed in images promoting this rezoning.

We are at a crossroads with our environment, a crossroad created from past actions like that proposed for this island. The city planners must stop with their efforts to swap ideas of "build resiliency" with that of "sustainability". Now is the time for actual sustainable policy, policy that ensures there are no new impacts from construction and operation of new urban landscapes placing long-term demands of the earth, air and water- harming health and the environment, and policies that diminish the spaces like this island, set aside for the health of city residents.

Thank you for thoughtful consideration of our concerns,

Marlene Donnelly
Officer

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[FROGG.TAG Committee](#)

From: [Mafa Edwards](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governor's Island —Urban Park
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 2:31:39 PM

For those of us who stayed in NYC over the last year, going to Governor's Island was a wonderful respite from lockdown. Our parks are crowded with fellow New Yorkers trying to get some sunlight, exercise, and air. Governor's Island in contrast was open, breezy, no crowds, no fear.

Keep it open and green. Many of us do not have country houses and weekend retreats where we can get a fix of nature.

There are ample unused buildings in the city where housing can be developed and the infrastructure is already in place. Take a walk around Harlem and see the many vacant lots that are left undeveloped. Why spoil something so beautiful and open by making it equally crowded and requiring millions in funds for infrastructure?

Lower Manhattan has one of the lowest rates of open space for any part of the city. The City plans to build more housing in SoHo which is already crowded with shoppers and tourists.

Consider the quality of life for those of us who are committed to living here 24/7. Please keep Governor's Island green and open and accessible as a park for active recreation and loving nature for a populace who are starving for the same.

Sincerely,
Mafa Edwards

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Catherine Cheung](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Re: Maud Maron's Written Testimony RE the Governors Island Upzoning Proposal
Date: Thursday, April 8, 2021 12:41:21 PM

This is on behalf of Maud Maron. Let me know if anything is needed for the submission.

On Thu, Apr 8, 2021 at 12:36 PM Catherine Cheung <Catherine@maudmaron.nyc> wrote:

My name is Maud Maron and I am a resident of Lower Manhattan. I stand with my neighbors in opposing the proposal to redevelop 33 acres on Governors Island. Governors Island is an unique oasis for New Yorkers, especially downtown families, and is one of the few remaining places where our children can run free and enjoy open green land. Especially given the unacceptable lack of park space in lower Manhattan, Governors Island needs to be preserved at all costs.

Furthermore, the Trust For Governors Island's up-zoning proposal is deeply flawed. As the Metro Area Governors Island Coalition has pointed out, the plan's primary justification — financial self-sufficiency for the island — is not likely to be achieved for decades. Moreover, the current plan places little to no requirements for developers to preserve the environment or open space. The promised "climate research center" does not nearly compensate for the damage the proposed upzoning would cause, nor is it even legally required. Finally, this plan is an affront to local residents, whose voices cannot be properly heard via virtual public hearings.

Governors Island is a rare, but precious, green space and climate hub with a rich ecosystem and natural environment. Bulldozing it to build unregulated residential and commercial space would destroy a crucial haven in our city, deprive our children of a parkland, and harm the environment. I would cautiously support some development to enrich the experience of visitors to the island — greater athletic facilities, playgrounds, outdoor entertainment spaces, farm areas, etc. But the current rezoning proposal does not honor the public participation that must occur before a proposal of this scope is approved or the unique and special nature of Governors Island. The proposal must be withdrawn.

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From: [MARGARET MAUGENEST](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governor's Island
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 2:43:40 PM

I urge you to oppose the Trust For Governors Island (TGI) zoning proposal: it effectively privatizes 33 public acres and is just too big and too extreme. It is unnecessary and does more harm than good. Better alternatives exist that could generate revenue while doing less harm to the National Historic District and to the function of the island as a calm respite from the city.



**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**
Save the past. Enrich the future.

April 7, 2021

The New York City Council
Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
City Hall New York, NY 10007

Via email: landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov

RE: Application No. N 210126 ZRM (Governors Island Rezoning)
Application No. C 210127 ZMM (Governors Island Rezoning)

Dear City Council Members:

The National Trust for Historic Preservation¹ writes in opposition to the proposed rezoning of Governors Island in Manhattan, New York. We have evaluated the Trust for Governors Island's modestly reduced proposal to rezone the south island, and we remain deeply concerned that 4.275 million square feet of buildings reaching 20-25 stories in height will forever negatively impact one of New York City's great bucolic escapes.

The National Trust has a lengthy and deep connection to Governors Island. In 1998, the National Trust added the island to our 11 Most Endangered Historic Places list, only to see major progress in the years to come with its preservation and redevelopment as a vibrant New York City park and cultural hub. In fact, the National Trust highlighted Governors Island in 2017 as one of the most significant success stories to come out of our 11 Most Endangered Historic Places program.

The National Trust also served as a pass-through entity for the island's ownership. In 2003, the General Services Administration conveyed the northern part of the island, including Fort Jay and Castle Williams to the National Trust for \$1. Pursuant to the Antiquities Act, the National Trust then conveyed the land to the U.S. Department of the Interior for use as a national monument administered by the National Park Service. In addition, 150 acres went to the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation, formed jointly by the State and City of New York – now The Trust for Governors Island. That 2003 transaction also established a complex set of covenants, easements, and other restrictions that need to be carefully analyzed. All future development must be consistent with these restrictions.

¹ The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States is a private nonprofit organization chartered by Congress in 1949 to "facilitate public participation" in the preservation of our nation's heritage, and to further the historic preservation policy of the United States. See 54 U.S.C. § 312102(a). With more than one million members and supporters around the country, the National Trust works to protect significant historic sites and to advocate historic preservation as a fundamental value in programs and policies at all levels of government.



**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**

Save the past. Enrich the future.

Governors Island has become a great success and a treasured bucolic escape within New York City for more than 1 million visitors a year. The Trust for Governors Island is seeking this rezoning based on a rationale of wanting to generate more money through redevelopment on the south island in exchange for promises of year-round access, expanded arts and culture, and a climate change center. While we applaud those goals, the proposed rezoning is still far too vast and too dense, allowing for 4.275 million square feet of new building bulk on 33 acres, with towers reaching 20-25 stories in height. Development at this scale would simply overwhelm the island and its village-like setting of low-scale structures and open parkland.

Better alternatives exist that can generate revenue while doing less harm to the National Historic District and the island's irreplaceable and exceptional character as a calm respite just 8 minutes by ferry from the city. We also encourage the Trust for Governors Island to prioritize leasing the millions of square feet that already exist in the many historic structures that are largely vacant. Appropriate new construction is acceptable on the southern end of the island but this proposal is simply too massive. In addition, we are troubled by the fact that the high-density development concept behind this proposed rezoning would essentially privatize a substantial portion of the island. New development should be within the current height limit, and should be based on broad public input.

In conclusion, the National Trust urges the New York City Council Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises to reject this proposed rezoning that would forever alter this extraordinary public landscape.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Seri Worden".

Seri Worden
Senior Field Director
National Trust for Historic Preservation

cc:

Council Speaker Corey Johnson
SpeakerJohnson@council.nyc.gov

Land Use Chair Rafael Salamanca Jr.
salamanca@council.nyc.gov

Subcommittee Chair Francisco Moya
fmoya@council.nyc.gov

Council Member Margaret Chin
chin@council.nyc.gov

From: [O SS](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: I opposed re-zoning Gov. Island
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 12:15:33 PM

Hi there,

I am writing to voice my opposition to the re-zoning of Govenors' Island. I am a 10 year resident of NYC and I have been to Gov. Island a handful of times for events. I am grateful to have a place like this nearby where New Yorkers can gather and enjoy outdoor, open space. It is so rare! We have all appreciated it during this pandemic year especially, and it would be an environmental tragedy to develop on this oasis for New Yorkers. We need to preserve natural and communal spaces, to preserve our communities.

Please vote against re-zoning.

Thank you,

Olivia Snyder-Spak

From: [Roger Manning](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: NO to the Proposed up-zoning of Governors Island - Application No. N 210126 ZRM, Application No. C 210127 ZMM
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 3:15:10 PM

Regarding: Application No. N 210126 ZRM Application, No. C 210127 ZMM for Governors Island

hello City Council,

I'm Roger Manning, longtime lower Manhattan resident and Governors regular and co-founder of [Metro Area Governors Island Coalition \(M.A.G.I.C.\)](#) - a community group against this financially and ecologically irresponsible up-zoning proposal

1) Let's not make this the Penn Station of our times where a precious public jewel is greedily devoured and lost. **Let this not be the legacy of this City Council.**

2) The blizzard of details heaped on us by the Trust for Governors Island diverts from **the actual issue, which is: What is GI going to be?**

Will it be an irreplaceable one-of-a-kind green urban refuge that essentially functions as a park - even in areas with buildings with - and provides for the arts and environmental educational projects. Or another high-rise, high-density commercial urban district with boxed in value-added landscaping?

3) **Any discussion regarding a climate research center here is irrelevant. This is a proposal to upzone the south island, period.** As a City planning Commissioner points out, there's nothing legally requiring a climate center and the proposed blanket C4-1 zoning potentially subjects all areas in the south island to high-rise, high-density commercial development. Trust For Governors Island chair Alicia Glenn has referred to Governors Island as "a nice piece of real estate." Governors Island is already productive as a climate hub, thanks to the work of Earth Matter, GrowNYC, Billion Oyster Project, the Harbor School, NYC Audubon, Waterfront Alliance and others.

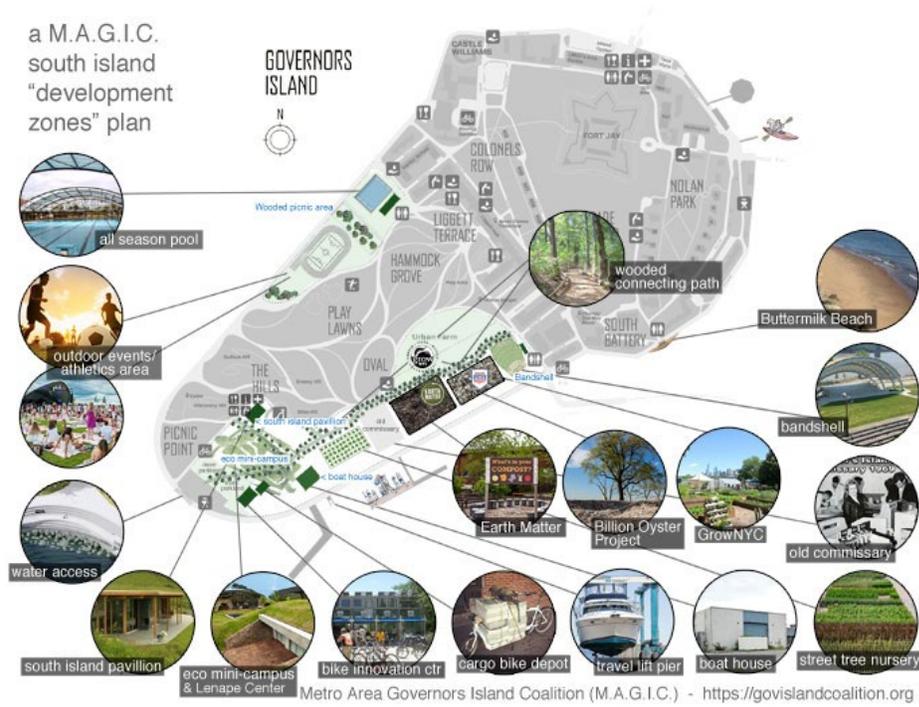
4) **The main rationales for the proposed upzoning - making Governors Island financially self-sufficient and accessible year round - aren't supported.** This upzoning won't pay for the Islands needs. If there's billions to subsidize this until the Trust's break-even date of 2050 It would be infinitely more cost efficient to by-pass the real estate industry middlemen and fund Governors Island directly using an revitalization approach such as the one outlined in M.A.G.I.C.'S Alternative South Island Visualization. (See it here: <https://govislandcoalition.org/a-magic-plan>) **And Year round access to what?** The backyard to a Hudson Yards 2.0? Hotels, offices and shopping? A university? That's not what people come to Governors Island for.

5) New Yorkers have a serious need for the welcoming, open, expansive, parkland quality that Governors Island provides for visitors from 99% of NYC zip codes. The "Increased Open space" the trust is claiming is not real "Open space." and **any new building on Governors Island should be kept to a minimum and not exceed the four story height of buildings in the historic district or the 35-foot height limit in the current zoning.**

6) This take-it-or-leave-it, single option upzoning application was sprung on the public just

last September. It is being rushed through during a pandemic while The same URLUP process is currently halted by court order for 2 applications in Brooklyn.

The [M.A.G.I.C. Alternative South Island Visualization](#)



Thank you for listening,
Roger Manning
co-founder
Metro Area Governors Island Coalition (M.A.G.I.C.)
<https://govislandcoalition.org>

From: [Rebecca Perrin](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Opposing Governors Island Rezoning
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 9:43:12 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

I deeply oppose further building on Governors Island. I have been a NYC resident since 1972 and I live on the Lower East Side. I know that having open green space is critical and precious in NYC, and many events have been held on the Island that really could not have happened elsewhere.

Please keep this green space open for the people of NYC and all the creative projects that have, can, and will be held there. Governors Island is a resource for everyone in New York City. Please preserve the greenspace there is now and reject rezoning to allow more building.

Warmest regards,
Rebecca Perrin

From: [Rachel Youens](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: rezoning proposal on Governor's Island
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 1:04:37 PM

Dear City Council,

The last thing we need on Governor's Island are high rises. The island should be set aside for the MAGIC proposal, for spaces that are wooded, for recreational areas a nursery, bike lanes, and water front accessibility.

Immediately and importantly, Earth Matter, the two acre composting site should be allowed to continue its operations. The city should also begin to plan for incorporating composting into its city agencies, such as Sanitation and Parks as permanent subdivisions with a budget and a workforce of its own. We cannot afford to put 1/3 of our garbage into landfill that produces methane and costs tax dollars in an unsustainable way.

Thank you,

Rachel P Youens
Brooklyn, NY

From: [Sally Arteseros](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 2:32:17 PM

Dear City Council,

Please do not go ahead with rezoning Governors Island. Please keep it as close to its present state as possible, for New Yorkers who are hungry for nature, to enjoy. We do not want to see hotels, more apartment buildings, more office space, more cement, on Governors Island.

Thank you, Sally Arteseros, 2 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011

From: [Susan Kirby](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Opposition to Proposed Governors Island Rezoning
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 8:16:16 PM

Zoning application numbers: **Application No. N 210126 ZRM (Governors Island Rezoning)** and **Application No. C 210127 ZMM (Governors Island Rezoning)**

To even suggest that the proposed rezoning of Governors Island is in the public interest is to insult every thinking New Yorker. Governors Island should be a public park and recreation area, without commercial development and without profiteers benefitting while the public loses out.

This proposed rezoning defies everything that Governors Island was supposed to be. It was turned over to the city and state so that it could be maintained, without development, as a public island. To continue to erode the public spaces and to destroy the history that Governors Island represents should be criminal, not a proposal for rezoning.

I have been to Governors Island many, many times, and have appreciated the birds, flowers, natural habitat, recreational areas, and the opportunity to walk in peace on a beautiful island. The proposed rezoning will destroy the island, and I imagine I will cease going there if these applications are approved.

To expect Governors Island to "pay for itself" is to deny the purpose of public land. Since when have our parks and public spaces been required to turn a profit? Since when can real estate developers steal our public spaces for their personal profit? To have this expectation of public lands to deny the original purpose of parks and public lands.

For any elected official to vote for this proposal is a betrayal of the public trust and the voters who elected them.

Say no to this proposal.

Susan Kirby
Upper West Side, Manhattan

P.S. I am aware that most "public hearings" are actually show hearings, as if the public really has a say in what has already been decided. I have attended enough Community Board hearings and Parks Department hearings to understand that these hearings are a requisite inconvenience for the decision-makers, since the decision has already been made. But on the off chance that you actually care what the public thinks (which I doubt), please vote no on these requests.

Cynicism reigns in New York now, and politicians should be aware that voters do have long memories. At least this one does. I just wish someone would look at what money has gone into whose pockets for this project to even be considered.

Susan Kirby
AEA/SAG-AFTRA
917-750-2766

www.pmsaga.com

Reels: <https://youtu.be/7I9vrGsBGHw>

<http://youtu.be/uUzsNBkuQfE>

From: [sami shub](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors Island
Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 5:32:25 AM

Please DO NOT consent to build the large scale development being currently proposed for Governors Island. Sami Shub

From: [sarah singer zaborowski](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: opposition to the proposed Governors Island rezoning
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 10:13:45 PM

Application No. N 210126 ZRM (Governors Island Rezoning) and Application No. C 210127 ZMM (Governors Island Rezoning) should be withdrawn.

I am so disappointed that these applications are even being submitted. I grew up visiting "pen pals", the kids of parents in the Coast Guard, stationed on Governor's Island. Although for my elementary school class it was only a ferry ride away, it seemed like a world away from our hectic school playground located next to the bridge in Chinatown, when we saw all their open space.

As an adult I continue to marvel at it's open beauty and immensely appreciate being able to get away from it all, visit farming, art exhibits in this vast parkland like island.

My one year old child has yet to visit the island and I hope that when she does she'll be able to enjoy the same relaxed feeling with the wide open skies and the idea that we have left all the tall buildings and bustle of the city behind for the day.

The proposals listed above will kill that enjoyment. Please ensure that the current height restrictions continue so that we may keep our view of the sky. Allow the vast open spaces to prevail without additional buildings crowding our movement. There are no indications within the proposals that anything benefiting the public in the ways I mention above will be heightened. There are no clauses that ensure a "climate center" will definitely be built. This is key because this will allow upzoning, which is NOT appropriate for Governor's Island.

These applications should not move forward.

Sincerely,
Sarah Zaborowski
10009 resident



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www.nyc.sierraclub.org

Regarding C210127 ZMM - an amendment of the Zoning Map
N210126 ZRM – expanding the Special Governors Island District

Testimony of the Sierra Club NYC Group

Thank you Council Members Salamanca, Moya and Chin for this hearing.

The Sierra Club is America's oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization. It is a volunteer-led, entity of the national organization with 15,000 members in NYC. This is its testimony.

We recognize that the opening of Governors Island to the public is making vital park space available to New Yorkers, who desperately need it. No doubt, Governors Island presents our generation with the opportunity of creating a Central Park in the harbor, a unique space in a one-of-kind setting . Let's not squander this opportunity!

The Governors Island deed does not require that the Island or its park be financially self-sustaining . The Sierra Club calls on the City Council to reject that requirement. This would set a terrible precedent for current and future parks. So far, the City has contributed to the park from general revenue, and this should continue.

The Trust has not released its fiscal model for public review. Manhattan Community Board 1 requested the fiscal model used to generate the proposed development on the two parcels. The Council ought not to approve a plan without full transparency and public scrutiny.

South Island should be an entire park expanse bounded only by the harbor and the adjoining North Island Historic District. The rezoning proposal, however, establishes two South Island development zones of 6 and 27 acres of buildings respectively where planned high rises will be sited. New Yorkers deserve and desire to experience a waterside-to- waterside full park without the intrusion of this high rise development, as a full escape from the urbanization we daily experience elsewhere.

The Island's current 120 height limit should not be changed. Twenty something story buildings hotels and other structures will take up needed parkland, obliterate the escape from a high density urban environment and take away from enjoyment that could be available.

The plan neither identifies the anchor facility nor sets forth particular parameters or criteria. The process should be reversed with the City seeking proposals and then proceeding with any zoning adjustments. The proponents purport to base their rezoning and its allowable hotel, dormitory, and other uses on a Climate Research facility as an anchor use without identifying how they arrived at this conclusion. This gives rise to the possibility that the City could wind up with a rezoning with its non-park uses, without an anchor, and suspicion that this is the intent.

The Sierra Club feels that the process should be reversed. The Trust and the City should first conduct an RFP process – with public input -- to identify the best possible climate research facility or another anchor, with RFP responses setting forth any ancillary needs. Then after selecting a park compatible anchor, the Trust can proceed with any zoning adjustments, if any are needed.

The Sierra Club could support a Governors Island home for a top-quality, institute or facility if the anchor facility were located in the North Island Historic District and abutting area where there are suitable empty buildings. If the choice were a facility making a meaningful contribution to the betterment of the human condition through the advancement of research, discovery, knowledge, or creativity, it certainly could consist of a Climate Research Center, as the Trust has proposed. However, at this point, the RFP should allow for proposals in other areas of science, technology, the arts or peace and diplomacy. As outlined above it should center on the North Island Historic District. The Sierra Club recognizes the advantages of the unique, campus like setting in the North Island, in isolation from but in immediate proximity to the metropolis, to locating a serious meaningful research, academic, or arts facility there. The facility should entail adaptive re-use of historic buildings as the Trust proposal calls for.

The Sierra Club supports the necessary expansion of the Urban Assembly Harbor School and many of the great ideas proposed by Working Waterfront Alliance, MAGIC and others for park-related and compatible harbor oriented uses for South Island.

The City must assure that the Island or any uses on it do not overload the Red Hook Wastewater Treatment Plant where Governors Island sewage would be transferred. The Red Hook plant during heavy rain already regularly overflows with raw sewage into the Gowanus Canal due to over-development next to the Canal. To make matters worse the Gowanus area is undergoing an up-zoning process that anticipates many more residential developments.

According to the Final Second Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement or FSSGEIS, the environmental review was mostly undertaken in 2011 and 2012. It is a Generic and not a specific EIS as it does not refer to any specific developments and much has changed environmentally in the past 9 years. It now makes sense for the City to analyze how Governors Island relates to post pandemic needs before attempting any rezoning.

From: [Thomas H Collins](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony: Oppose Rezoning of South Governors Island
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 1:44:23 PM

Dear Council members,

I am a graduate student studying architectural and urban history. I write to ask that you **oppose** the proposed rezoning of Governors Island.

As you know, Governors Island is a remarkable public resource whose popularity has exploded in recent years. The rezoning would essentially privatize a large swath of the southern portion of the island in order to generate revenue to fund the operations of the island. However, the operational cost for keeping Governors Island open six months of the year (\$20.4 million, 80% of which is funded by the city) is miniscule compared to its public benefit. The notion that the Island must be "financially self-sustaining" is not axiomatic. Parks are not revenue streams. They exist to serve the public.

The rezoning is being justified to create a new climate center, although no tenant has been announced and construction of multiple new buildings, hotels, and dormitories requires considerable carbon output. If the city is serious about building a climate center on the island, a more sustainable alternative would be reusing Liggett Hall. It appears the entirety of its 380,000 square feet are [currently available](#).

Instead of constructing 30-story buildings in the rezoning area of Governors Island, the area could be transformed into a nature preserve similar to the Ramble in Central Park. Such a use would help with carbon sequestration. The Biden Administration has set an ambitious goal to conserve 30% of US land by 2030 and New York City must do our part.

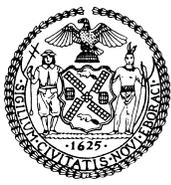
Governors Island serves as a city-wide destination for all New Yorkers. It is my hope that you will reject the half-baked proposal proffered by the Trust and ultimately reject the rezoning without conditions.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Thomas H. Collins

New York, NY 10023
t: 347.610.4251



The City of New York
Manhattan Community Board 1
Tammy Meltzer CHAIRPERSON | **Lucian Reynolds** DISTRICT MANAGER

New York City City Council
Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
Public Hearing on Governors Island ULURP Application
Testimony by Diana Switaj, Director of Planning & Land Use
April 5, 2021

Good morning. My name is Diana Switaj, Director of Planning and Land Use at Manhattan Community Board 1 (CB1). As CB1 Chairperson Meltzer outlined the major overarching issues related to this proposal, I will address some specific issues within the zoning and the DSSGEIS which CB1 has identified as problematic.

New York City does not have a comprehensive plan. The NYC Zoning Resolution serves to function as the City's comprehensive plan and it is relied upon to make development predictable. While the Trust's proposal provides maximum accessibility for development through the zoning, these wide parameters are problematic, make future development unpredictable, and provide numerous opportunities for potential exploitative development, especially considering that both use and bulk regulations can be further altered through CPC Authorizations. As CB1 Chairperson Meltzer has touched upon, there is much concern that plans will not actualize the way the Trust intends, and the already flexible proposed zoning could result in exploitative development contrary to the vision that many of us share.

A major concern of the proposal is the management and protection of "open spaces" and parkland. While the Open Space Subarea defined in the proposed zoning does not generate any zoning floor area, zoning still allows uses and structures not typically found in parks. Considered as "permitted obstructions" and exempt from any floor area or coverage restrictions, buildings and other structures up to 25 feet are allowed when they house permitted uses. Though the Trust has made amendments to scale back the currently proposed development allowances within the Open Space Subarea, the changes are modest and it is not enough to afford protection of what was originally intended as parkland. The zoning must redefine "Open Space Areas" and "Open Space Subareas" as "public parkland," including "open spaces" in the North Island to assure adequate protection and consistency with the Deed's "Parkland Restriction Terms".

The Reasonable Worst Case Development Scenario (RWCDS) is a critical aspect of the DSSGEIS and the community believes it is not fully accurate. The DSSGEIS assumes there is no development in the Open Space Subarea, which is not a reasonable assumption as the zoning proposal does in fact allow for significant potential development. All the potential activities in the Open Space Subarea associated with the allowable uses were ignored in the RWCDS and hence the impacts disclosed in the DSSGEIS are seriously understated. While the applicant's

changes thus far to the Open Space Subarea are meaningful, the RWCDs is still incomplete and inaccurate.

Finally, parking within the proposed zoning is still of concern. The Deed restriction identifies parking as a prohibited use except “for vehicles used in connection with the maintenance and operation of Governors Island of facilities thereat and the transportation of visitors to various locations throughout Governors Island.” The City Planning Commission has reduced the total parking between the two development zones from 300 to 200. This parking is optional, but would not be counted against the limitation of coverage or floor area. The proposal also allows the option of a CPC Certification to add more parking and loading areas. However, more troublesome is that the proposed zoning would also allow for accessory parking within the open space. While it is reasonable to assume that institutional and/or commercial facilities will require a limited amount of vehicle storage to satisfy logistical needs, we must think very carefully over how to ensure vehicular use is limited to these functions and not exploited. The generous allowance is contrary to Deed’s requirement and could create incentives to establish more ways for vehicular access to the island for non-essential purposes, create conflicts with park users and disrupt the unique car-free nature of the park as currently enjoyed. CB1 is also concerned that this parking provision will allow for many delivery trucks and/or distribution centers on the Island.

Please see the [full CB1 resolution adopted on December 22, 2020](#) for more information. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. We thank the Trust for working with CB1 and the community to address concerns raised thus far and we look forward to working together to achieve mutual goals for the Island.

From: [Kathryn Heintz](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Re: Governors Island: Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises April 5, 2021
Date: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 1:27:51 PM
Attachments: [NYCAudubon Testimony 040521.pdf](#)

My apologies. I am resending this document with our full testimony. Something odd happened with page 2 when I saved as a PDF to send yesterday. Several lines of text were repeated. I've removed the repeated lines and added spaces in the bullet points also on page 2. Nothing else is changed.

Kathryn Heintz

Kathryn Heintz
Pronouns: she/her/hers
Executive Director
New York City Audubon
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- Subscribe to our *eGret* online monthly news, sign up to be an Avian Advocate, follow us on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook to keep in touch.
- You are part of a caring NYC Audubon community. Please reach out to us if you find yourself isolated or in need.

NYC Audubon has a fresh new look!



On Mon, Apr 5, 2021 at 2:47 PM Kathryn Heintz <kheintz@nycaudubon.org> wrote:
Attached please find NYC Audubon's written testimony supplementing my oral testimony earlier today.

Thank you.

Kathryn Heintz
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- Birding during Covid-19: social distancing is not anti-social; it is imperative.
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- You are part of a caring NYC Audubon community. Please reach out to us if you find yourself isolated or in need.

NYC Audubon has a fresh new look!





New York City Council
 Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises
 Monday, April 5, 2021

Testimony Concerning the Governors Island Rezoning Request

Good afternoon, Councilmembers. I am Kathryn Heintz, Executive Director of New York City Audubon, a grassroots urban conservation organization representing 10,000 members and followers in the City of New York. I testify today in support of the proposed rezoning requested by the Trust for Governors Island.

I serve on the Trust's Community Advisory Council since 2016. We have operated a summer house in Nolan Park since 2017 (albeit without plumbing). Our interest is more than cultural. New York City Audubon's scientists have monitored nesting Common Terns on the island's piers since 2013, and our volunteers have collected bird census and breeding data since 2008. We now collect data year round. Some 217 bird species have so far been recorded in the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird database. Governors Island is a bona fide birding hotspot—and, more important, it is critical foraging, nesting, and stopover habitat for tens of thousands of North American migratory birds.

We are confident in the integrity of the Trust's leadership. From Leslie Koch to Michael Samuelian to Clare Newman, we have found proven partners in conservation and habitat creation who share our desire for a green and environmentally embracing urban space that is good for birds and people. This vision has led to Hammock Grove, The Hills, the grassy Play Lawn and restoration of the Parade Ground, all of which include native trees, shrubs, and tender plantings, and even bird nest boxes. This is a built and reclaimed bird paradise.

Growing and nurturing a thriving public and mixed use Governors Island is a mammoth task. The proposal before the commission is the result of 20 years of careful planning. As a longtime partner and follower of the Trust's progress, we have tremendous enthusiasm for the climate solutions theme—global warming threatens nearly all North American bird species. New York City Audubon supports the Trust's vision, and we are disappointed by the misinformation and alternative spin that is circulating about its intentions.

We agree with many comments expressed in testimony by colleagues and neighbors, some for and some against. We appreciate and share their passion for this island oasis. We too desire green jobs and equitable and just development and access. Frankly, we would gladly relocate our offices to Governors Island should comparable, affordable Class B office space become available. We can imagine a home for the environmental and cultural communities—especially those connected to the harbor in some way—and an incubator of environmental and cultural organizations operating out of the older buildings. For this to happen, the older buildings would need running water, heat, electric that supports business machines and air conditioning, reliable business-quality internet, up-to-date fire safety, a plan for regular mail and package delivery (even if from a ferry base on the mainland or at the dock), and ADA compliant entry/exit/floor-office access/restrooms. Upgrading the historic buildings to support even small grassroots nonprofit businesses like ours will take significant

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Kathryn Heintz
Executive Director

investment that can only happen if the island is allowed to become a thriving, self-sustaining mixed use environment.

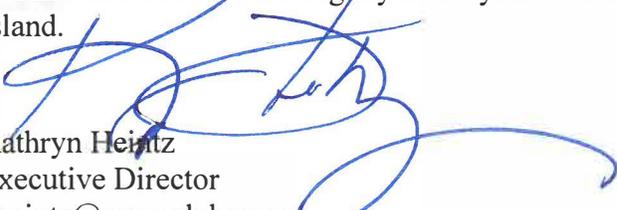
Again, NYC Audubon is an *urban* conservation organization and we *expect* that buildings will be part of our city for the foreseeable future. New building is an opportunity for better building. New building on Governors Island—literally on South Island’s landfill—has the potential to show the city, the state, our country and the world what a green future city embracing wildlife looks like.

New York City Audubon does not oppose sustainable development within the development zones that were established in the 2010 masterplan. Development of these zones was always part of the agreement and planning.

We do have concerns:

- We see no benefit to very tall buildings on Governors Island. Our concerns include shadow, density, and loss of pastoral character. We prefer an absolute limit no greater than 120 feet, with most buildings limited to 75 feet.
- We ask that any buildings above 75 feet incorporate Bird Friendly Building Design for their full height as otherwise required by Local Law 15.
- We ask that all buildings have habitat-quality green roofs, and we yearn for design that offers interconnecting intensive green roofs, where larger spaces are part of the park and accessible to the public from ground level (imagine in your mind’s eye buildings that appear to be under rolling hills).
- We ask that the development zones include habitat-quality landscape architecture with wetlands, grasslands, trees, and shorelines that provide ecosystem services to wildlife.
- We oppose unnecessary building illumination and would want any lighting plan to follow Dark Skies lighting standards—that is safety lighting that reduces skyglow and minimizes glare and blue light in the nighttime environment.
- We absolutely oppose the installation of artificial turf fields and stadium-style lighting.
- Lastly, we support Earth Matter in its efforts to continue its important work and to remain a prominent anchor partner in the island’s earth-embracing and climate-friendly community.

Thank you for your time and for hearing New York City Audubon’s requests and concerns on behalf of birds and birders who eagerly await year-round, affordable, welcoming access to Governors Island.



Kathryn Heintz
Executive Director
kheintz@nycaudubon.org
646.434.0423

Testimony by Wylie Goodman for City Council Land Use Committee Hearing:
ULURP for Governors Island
Monday, April 5, 2021 at 11:30 a.m.

My name is Wylie Goodman and I am the Chair of the Queens Solid Waste Advisory Board Organizing Committee and former board member and board president of Earth Matter. I support the Trust for Governors Island's plan to create a visionary Climate Study Center. However, I oppose the currently planned ULURP rezoning for the Island, which does not designate space for its long-time composting nonprofit partner, Earth Matter NY.

Since arriving on Governors Island in 2010, Earth Matter has been active in island life through projects that include the Compost Learning Center, Zero Waste Island, Soil Start Farm, and the Lavender Field. In fact, Earth Matter NY is located on Governors Island largely because it is an **ideal location** to model zero waste and closed-loop practices: the island is accessible only by ferry, making it easier to quantify materials coming on and off, and the Trust for Governors Island is able to oversee and regulate waste disposal.

Through their many projects, Earth Matter NY has attracted visitors and positive press for Governors Island. During the 2019 season, prior to COVID-19, the nonprofit hosted over 5,000 visitors; processed 600 tons of food scraps and GI landscape waste; and donated and distributed compost to Battery Park City, the Chinatown BID, and Grow NYC community gardens, as just a few examples. When DSNY shifted to emergency food delivery, Earth Matter NY grew and transported produce to food insecure residents in lower Manhattan.

Earth Matter NY has also helped the Trust for Governors Island (TGI) lower its operational costs and ensure the island is clean and green by delivering vendor and public education, outreach, and resources. In FY20, their Zero Waste Island Initiative lowered non-compostable waste to below 9% and, even with substantially fewer visitors, their staff captured over 78,000 lbs. of organic material, more than in 2019.

Securing space for Earth Matter NY is critical to its ability to support the Trust's mission to model climate-centric solutions for New York City. This is why I am requesting that the NYCC designate two acres of contiguous land in the Eastern Development Zone for Earth Matter NY's operations, which are unique and can only be satisfied in the zone where they are currently located.

To be clear, Earth Matter NY's presence accrues benefits not only to TGI, but to a diverse contingency of stakeholders far beyond the island's shores, among them – although rarely discussed -- an emerging green and MWBE workforce, who come to Earth Matter NY to study and learn compost operations and who have since gone on to secure well-paying jobs in this growing field as micro-haulers, consultants, and more.

Manhattan Borough President Brewer has recommended that Governors Island's zoning provide for Earth Matter NY's operations in perpetuity. The current ULURP language makes no such mention. At this critical juncture in the life of our City, I urge the NYCC Land Use Committee to think as visionaries by securing Earth Matter NY's place on Governors Island for the long-term to ensure a future New York City where no waste is wasted.

Dear Governors Island Trust,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in regards to the planned rezoning of Governors Island.

I would like to begin with a reminder that Governors Island presents us with a once in a lifetime opportunity to create something as timeless and unique as Central Park, an area that inspires guests from around the world. All without the need for a Hotel or theoretical Climate Center in the middle of it, nor less responsible for paying for it.

My 8 year old daughter Virginia, who summoned the courage to call and testify on the re-zoning Zoom call only after seeing my own desperate pleas and participation from a roadside smartphone call, forgot to mention one of her most poignant observations; she recently asked “Why would I want to go and visit Governors Island if it looks like -everywhere else- in my city?” A basic hidden gem that truly only comes out of the mouths of babes as the saying goes. Not quite a show stealer as her line “Why would the Governor want to destroy an Island named after him” that ended the Zoom meeting, (although her choice of describing the proposed plan as a “destroyer” is innocently powerful unto itself.)

This harsh young adorable critic is not going to be appeased by shiny glass towers that look like fashionable architecture stacking blocks as they block the pristine views of our city on the hill. The stunning view of Downtown Manhattan, already rife with shiny, vacancy ridden, testaments to our already proven ability to develop. No, she will be impressed by our ability to NOT touch something. To not appease those who think the only way towards economic or environmental stability is creating more short term construction jobs, back end deals for school pools, and closer to resort-like hotels and climate center siren calls for the jet setting alleged environmental warriors who we don't want to inconvenience with a ride back to our struggling hotels - already built, and awaiting them in our fine city.

No, Virginia wants open air. She wants a refuge. Not one imagined in her head, one she has -felt- already. She is fortunate to be born into a family that has made an effort to go camping and hiking as often as possible during her precious growing years (while she still wants any thing to do with her parents.) Most city kids have little soul rejuvenating references of wide open green spaces with the soft splash of natural water washing along its shores. For those who know this peace, it is an essential part of living. For those who we rob of it, it should be a source of outrage, but they will never know. And this allows us to let it happen, taking solace in the corrupted thought that we preserved percentage measured slices of it between new construction, and helped make the island “pay for itself.” A concept that is not even required of newly christened parkland from what I understand. Instead, the sustainability idea seems to be introduced by those who I have to wonder what their long term intentions are, and how they have become the “Trust” acting in the public's best interest.

As far as my personal vision for the island, I propose it encourages regular and frequent

healthy activity. I propose creating a loop of protected cycling paths for those who really want to come and put miles on their bikes and not dodge picture takers. Protecting the public and allowing the cyclists to do more than just tool around leisurely, as one should be able to do that as well. This might increase year round and non-peak hour usage of Governors Island and its often near empty ferries. Ferry service should remain free to NYC residents, but the lack of monetary charge should be extended to anyone with a bicycle (people are usually penalized on other ferries in NYC for bringing a bike, which is an abysmal idea.) The north end of the island is already laid out like a college campus, so repurposing of this developed real estate should be the number one priority for the next ten years before even a single new footprint of a building is considered. If this small band of people are presenting themselves as the island's "Trust," show us, the public, that you can earn this trust. Then, perhaps we can revisit the NEED for new structures. This is what we do in NYC: we reinvent, repurpose, recycle space as needed; we don't sprawl like London, LA, Boston, and everywhere else. Those cities could only dream of being gifted by the gods 172 acres of waterfront / island real estate. Let's not blow it.

If the current Board / Trust thinks shaving off a couple acres from their massive building proposals as "creating" or "saving" open space, then we should perhaps consider an entire new Trust. New blood. They have done much great work, but it is time to lay claim on whose island this is, and it is not the Trust's, it is not the developers; it is the future generations of this city who will be here long past our short lives. I will gladly run for the position, or take part in whatever the mysterious process is to become one of these mysterious representatives. I will also gladly step aside for someone more qualified and possessing greater vision if they arrive someday. We should be stewards not only to the land, but to the concept of high ideals guiding us in our short runs of public service.

It should go without saying, I don't believe there is any reason Governors Island has to become a profit center, any more than Central Park, public schools, or garbage collection needs to turn a profit to become "sustainable." These are essential services for which we pay dearly in tax and finite time spent working to create the taxed income that already provides the funding for a functioning city. We do not need to sacrifice an entire island of untouched, non-commercial, non-pier infested, historical space. Not in the name of profit. And a truly visionary group of people could figure out ways beyond the "build baby build" mentality on display in this current, hopefully completely scrapped, proposal. I am sorry, you have failed. It is time to move on, find a new plan.

We have the military to thank for the untouched beauty of the south side of the island. Let's follow their example and not develop every square inch. Or 50%, 25%, however you want to fudge / present the numbers. Because that is what I see in this proposal. Lots of disingenuous, hoodwinking, and masking of basic fact. Someone against the plan testified that there is a building already on the island with the "same square footage as the Empire State Building," a Governors Island structure which was once the "largest building in the country" (before the Pentagon was built) - and noted that this island property currently sits VACANT. Let us make a pledge to NOT BUILD A SINGLE NEW STRUCTURE until every square foot of unused existing construction has been

REPURPOSED and RECYCLED into innovative use.

THIS is the environmental thing to do. This requires the creativity and vision that New Yorkers and the architectural community in particular are quite capable of. This accomplishment will “Wow” those who witness our accomplishment. More than any generic 250(!) foot tall triple set of buildings or mirrored lego-set looking generic rectangles that impresses absolutely no-one, and is born out of the archaic idea that success is equated with bigger, newer, mass construction. Supposedly justified in its job creation - when often 50% of the money just goes right into the developers pockets as people with inside knowledge of these schemes will attest. We New Yorkers already have towers going up wherever there is a grassy lot and air rights in this city, and the construction job creation justification is NOT an excuse to give up such a unique opportunity for a refuge FROM the city. I have friends in the hotel industry who are still not working, another example why we do NOT need to put a hotel on the island. These Midtown hotels are already surrounded by empty office towers that may never be filled again. Buildings that will probably look to become housing as the need materializes, and certainly could become “climate centers” if this -concept- of a University or Corporate led / fronted Climate Center becomes an actual -need.- It currently appears to be nothing more than a tool for placating those who would make a fuss about the environment while blinding those who might otherwise have the obvious vision that we DO NOT NEED more structures on the Island.

I found the plan presented to be repugnant in general, but nothing more than the final image which presented a picture of those rolling green landscapes on the south side of the island. A pristine, seemingly untouched slice of nature with the Oz-like view of the downtown financial district on the horizon, ...the EXACT view those behind the plan want to “Destroy” to quote an 8 year old I know. If this is such a great plan presented with pride and vision, shouldn't one end the proposal with an image of the imagined glorious glass tower sitting on that field, blocking / altering the view as it most definitely will. Perhaps with a .GIF showing money flying out the windows successfully funding more ferries - since this is the only justification being offered to the public as to why we need to make Governors Island more “sustainable,” an Orwellian doublespeak substitute for profit.

I have news for anyone who may have forgotten. There are ALREADY ferries to Governors Island. These ferries already handle the peak tourist / resident traffic of the summer months just fine. I ride it all the time with enough room to ride around the decks on my bike in a circle if I cared. No one would even notice I suspect. If we need to increase frequency, for the ALREADY YEAR ROUND ferries, then so be it. But let's not pretend these ferries have EVER paid for themselves, aka been justified in capitalistic terms. Since the layman can easily conclude that there is not going to be any unpredictable increase in need / usage of ferries by tourists in the harsh cold winter months, it seems we are left to deduce for ourselves that we -need- to be building towers to attract more usage of the park in order to pay for infrastructure to handle these people and “jobs” that we -need- to attract. People who, apparently but your own argument, would not be coming here without developer honey traps being set. It's a brain twisting fallacy of logic that may briefly hoodwink a confused public and placate

the enablers of the developers, but really should make anyone who is proposing this archaic razing of pristine new waterfront escape for the public feel shame in their complicity.

In the spirit of keeping this brief, I will say that I know we can do better. We can create solutions that will leave the south side of Governors Island either untouched, or improved, as I will humbly admit with awe the recently built mountain and its stunning views, clearly is, an improvement brought by people with vision. Great work on that, and slide hill, and the winding paths, bringing in food trucks, collaborations with the art groups and environmentalists that have large tent housing and composting sites. Speaking of which, here's a great idea for visiting environmental center guests: stay in yurts, tents, sustainable tee-pees run by the surviving Ramapough Lenape Nation for a true taste of what living as one with nature really means. Ideas like these are what will save our city in times of rising tides. Not a year or two of construction jobs that look good on paper and encourages the sprawl that makes other cities anything but the fabled destination NYC is to the world. If staying in a yurt is too much to ask of the imagined AI Gore 2.0's you hope to attract to the island and imagined climate center, then fine, hop a ferry back to a SoHo or Midtown hotel and patronize our hurting restaurant industry.

I was married on Governors Island, my kids are being raised on trips to Governors Island, perhaps they will attend the Harbor School there, and swim in the fabled pool that seems to have baited the school and District One City Council people into supporting the destruction of the other side of the island, placated by give backs of land we already have and enjoy. I don't know the future, but I do plan to visit Governors Island until the day I die. I just hope someone will help me realize my vision to continue to enjoy it as an open space, not a deceptive Disney Imagineering maze of paths squeezed into a fraction of remaining open space and a hint of a courtyard in the shadow of giant ATM machine-like ugly and unnecessary buildings - masquerading as needed development, infrastructure and sustainability.

Thank you for your time,

Christopher J. Ryan
East Village, NYC. 10009

From: [SANFORD ELLOWITZ](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Governors island
Date: Thursday, April 8, 2021 8:37:19 PM

The plan to build that grotesque eyesore needs to be stopped. On one hand the city is planning to put 8 feet of landfill over east river park which is almost right next to governors island because of rising sea levels, butcher is putting some kind of ecology center at sea level. Will the rising waters miraculously part around governors island while inundating the rest of lower Manhattan? This is a once in forever opportunity to leave it intact.

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Online Testimony on Governors Island
Regina Cornwell

I oppose the current plans proposed by the Trust for Governors Island and approved by the City Planning Commission. The high-rise office and hotel plans would destroy this important public space for the residents of NYC. I wholly support the alternative plan of the Metro Area Governors Island Coalition (M.A.G.I.C.) which adds to the beauty of the island, while increasing its cultural, educational, recreational and environmental benefits at modest cost to the City for the people of the City.

My testimony is also personal. Several summers ago I volunteered with the NYC Chapter of Climate Reality Project to meet and greet people and to make a presentation dealing with the Climate Crisis in one of the houses on the Island. With my own eyes, I saw how children and adults enjoyed their time on the Island, as did I. It is such a gift for the City. No one wins if it is destroyed for needless commerce.

From: [Cory Chan](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Testimony on the Zoning Request
Date: Friday, April 9, 2021 11:43:17 AM

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Cory Chan, and I am a long time resident of the Chinatown writing to implore you to provide Earth Matter NY with the 2 acres of land necessary to sustain the important work they do. Please make certain that the proposed ULURP for Governors Island designates the necessary space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. We need more and not fewer programs of this kind to teach our children, and remind our adults, of the value of the earth. I respect and admire TGI's work and look forward to seeing it continue to thrive, especially in partnership with Earth Matter NY in their Zero Waste Island collaborations. Thank you for your attention to this testimony and the very important work you do of bringing open space to New Yorkers who greatly need and appreciate it.

Cory Chan, M.Ed
E: chancory@gmail.com
M: 646-247-8329
W: [Ms. Chan's Portfolio](#)

From: [Mevrian Thomas](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: Opposing Governors Island Rezoning
Date: Saturday, April 10, 2021 4:52:23 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Edith Kantrowitz, I am a Vice President of NYC Friends of Clearwater, and a lifelong resident of New York City.

I am writing to express my opposition to Application No. N 210126 ZRM and Application No. C 210127 ZMM (Governors Island Rezoning).

NYC needs open space that is available to all its citizens, especially in these times when we are encouraged to have activities outdoors for public health and safety reasons. Governors Island is a beautiful parkland resource that should be reserved for events that are open to all New Yorkers. Privatizing Governors Island would not only be costly, but it would limit the number of people who can use the island's facilities. This is not the direction our City should be going. Please listen to the overwhelming majority of New Yorkers who are asking to see this rezoning proposal withdrawn.

Thank you,

Edith Kantrowitz

Brooklyn, NY 11218
718-854-8545
reweaving@hotmail.com

From: [Shao Mei Zhang](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Cc: [Office of Correspondence Services](#)
Subject: Letter of support for Earth Matter
Date: Saturday, April 10, 2021 8:51:44 AM

Dear New York City Council Land Use Committee,

My name is Shao Mei Zhang, and I am a long-time resident of the Lower East Side writing to implore you to provide Earth Matter NY with the 2 acres of land necessary to sustain the important work they do. As a dweller of New York City, a city that never sleeps and is constantly bustling and chaotic, Governors Island, and Earth Matter has been my place to get away and be with nature and recharge. I have had the great privilege of joining my friend Mary who tended to Earth Matters chickens and worked on breaking down the compost. Earth Matter taught us all about composting and its benefits to our society. As a result of the fun and welcoming experience I have taken friends and family to visit Earth Matters over the years. Earth Matter has given my nieces their first experience with seeing livestock, the chickens and goats. There are so many simple pleasures provided by this organization and their love of what they do. They have taught so many of us to live life with greater consideration as to the role humans play in keeping it going and growing.

Please make certain that the proposed ULURP for Governors Island designates the necessary space for Earth Matter NY in the proposed redevelopment zone. We need more and not fewer programs of this kind to teach our children, and remind our adults, of the value of the earth.

I respect and admire TGI's work and look forward to seeing it continue to thrive, especially in partnership with Earth Matter NY in their Zero Waste Island collaborations.

Thank you for your attention to this testimony and the very important work you do of bringing open space to New Yorkers who greatly need and appreciate it.

Shao Mei Zhang

New York, New York 10002

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Shao Mei Zhang

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