

From: [Ann Tuomey](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Cc: [Ann Tuomey](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] No to proposed River North project in St. George Staten Island- Testimony against proposal
Date: Monday, September 27, 2021 9:19:55 AM
Importance: High

Dear Council Members:

I plead with you - do not approve the completely disproportionately large buildings for the proposed River North project in St. George.

These giant glass pens will strain infrastructure.

A precedent cannot be set for enormous towers to plop down and overtake this historic district.

We already have a number of misbegotten development projects but there is an opportunity to correct it by maintaining the integrity of scale.

This project flouts environmental concerns with its size and hardscape. Please do not hold the doors open for another flam-flam deal.

Allow the neighborhood to welcome new residents with a project that reflects St. George, not these over-populated, light-stealing, bird-killing, high-rise bastions on a hardscape pedestal.

Do not set precedent with this bad proposal.

- The buildings are too high and house too many people without accommodating sewage and other infrastructure concerns.
- The extreme height robs the light and envelops the neighborhood in shadow/darkness for blocks.
- The hardscape adds to harbor pollution and its glass towers will kill a multitude of birds.

I stand with you in voting against the proposal.

Thank you for your time and service.

All my. Best, -Ann

Ann Tuomey


Staten Island, NY

PS. I also have prevailing safety concerns as this is a non-union project.

From: [Benjamin Donsky](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony regarding River North project
Date: Friday, September 24, 2021 10:06:12 AM

Council Members,

My name is Ben Donsky; I am an urban planner but I am writing to you today as a Staten Island resident concerned with both long-term housing affordability and protecting our environment, I am strongly in favor of the River North proposal.

While some Staten Islanders like to think that our relative geographical isolation translates to being insulated from the city's larger economy, it's simply not the case. It is increasingly difficult for young families like mine to afford to live here. Families are priced out of apartments with multiple bedrooms because roommates with two incomes and no kids can afford to pay more. The problem on the North Shore is particularly acute because it's the part of the island most impacted by rising rents in Manhattan and Brooklyn. While this project wouldn't solve our housing shortage by itself, it is part of a much larger solution not only for the borough but for the entire city.

We also need to relieve pressure to develop wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas in Staten Island, and concentrating residential density near major public transit facilities, like River North does, will help begin to correct the unsustainable course we are on.

I'm the owner of a two-unit house within walking distance of a Staten Island Railroad stop. The second unit is a one-bedroom apartment. While increasing the number of transit-accessible one-bedroom apartments is contrary to my immediate personal financial interests, I'd like my kids to be able to afford to live nearby when they become adults, and I recognize the importance of projects like this for the greater community.

Sincerely,

Ben Donsky



Staten Island, NY 10309

From: [Claudia Toback](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] River North (Liverty Towers) comments
Date: Sunday, September 26, 2021 5:00:14 PM

Greetings,

Staten Island is not suitable for R7-3 zoning and the River North proposed development.

As a resident of St. George, the neighborhood for the proposed River North development, I am in complete opposition for this project to go forward.

Infrastructure:

According to the NYC DEP website, Port Richmond Sewage Treatment Plant capacity is rated at 60 MGD, presently serving about 200,000 residents. What will happen to its ability to treat sewage when the Bay Street Corridor projects and River North project go online?

Richmond Terrace congestion problems during peak hours will increase dramatically. The MTA's years-long investigation into developing a North Shore transportation system to replace the shuttered North Shore rail line (1953) has not come to fruition.

Neighborhood schools do not have enough space to absorb students who reside in the planned developments for Bay Street Corridor and River North.

Historical Prospective of North Shore Developments

Lighthouse Point - stalled

The Wheel - forever stalled

Empire Outlets - many unoccupied store space even after opening about three years ago.

(<https://www.politico.com/states/new-york/albany/story/2016/02/state-pours-subsidies-into-staten-island-outlet-mall-031292>)

Do members of the City Council Land Use Committee care about what most Staten Island residents think about this and other developments that will forever change the character of their home borough?

Thank you for considering these comments when deliberating River North.

Yours truly,
Claudia Toback
St. George Resident
917-921-9485

September 24, 2021

RE: River North / LU 0842, 0843, 0844

Testimony for Public Speaker Debra Givens

GOOD AFTERNOON CHAIR MOYA, COUNCIL MEMBER DEBI ROSE, AND COUNCIL MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES.

MY NAME IS DEBRA GIVENS AND I AM HERE TO OPPOSE THE PROJECT.

I AM A FORMER STATEN ISLANDER, BORN AND RAISED AND EDUCATED ON STATEN ISLAND, AND I AM HERE TODAY SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF ALL THE STATEN ISLANDERS WHO ARE MISSING THIS OPPORTUNITY TO TESTIFY DUE TO SHORT NOTICE, AS THIS APPLICATION IS BEING PUSHED THROUGH THE APPROVAL PROCESS WITH SOME LEVEL OF EXPEDIENCY UNHEARD OF.

As City Planning Commissioner Cerullo pointed out during the last two CPC meetings on this matter, the emphasis has been on the height of the buildings, a major concern and it should be, but this has been to the exclusion of discussing other objectionable aspects of a project this large. Many were identified in the Final EIS.

My objections/concerns divided into two categories:

A. LACK OF TRANSPARENCY IN THE FORM OF

1. The lack of true community engagement by the Applicant

There was lack of community, community board, and neighborhood engagement **Where were the sitdowns, workshops, public meetings and “feel good” sessions inviting the community into the project?** They met with a few local non-profits and social service organization but ignored the whole neighborhood. This was not an inclusive process. If you attended the Environmental Scoping Meeting you’d know that there was no public, just local businesses and REBNY looking forward to the influx of young professionals from somewhere else who would indulge moving to Staten Island to take advantage of a high speed ferry to Manhattan.

-more-

RE: River North / LU 0842, 0843, 0844

2. the lack of scrutiny

This application is skating through the approval process ahead of Comprehensive Planning considerations and the Racial Equity Analysis that is so desired by the City Council since it was first introduced in 2019 with an eye on future applications. A project of this size should be reviewed through the new critical lenses, as it will be completed well into the future, and will not fit the criteria for future projects under Comprehensive Planning with a racial equity lens.

3. **the lack of disclosure of the housing specifics:** - no floor plans; no housing unit designs; no breakdown on the number of apartments by household size and income; nor was there an As- of-Right scenario provided in renderings or drawings as requested by the City Planning Commission.

These are not good signs.

B. The Text Amendment to Appendix F - MIHA

The applicant proposes to develop the Project Site #1 with three buildings, and ONE of the Many text amendments is for MIHA to be designated for the entire rezoning area that includes the Project Site, **yet one of the three buildings will not contain Mandatory Inclusionary Housing units.** In addition, **most of the affordable units will fall under MIH Option 2. We really need MIH Option 1** because the AMI for Staten Island is very high, outpacing NYC as a whole, according to the FEIS on page 2-7. Artists, musicians, home health aides and others like myself who work for the city and make way less than \$65,000 (which is the affordable housing income for a household of 1) will not be eligible to apply for any of this new housing.

If my memory serves me correctly from previous presentations by the Applicant Team, Building 2 is proposed to have market rate apartments only and, oddly, no parking will be located in or outside this building.

-more-

That means the bulk of the affordable housing is proposed for Building 1, with the remainder split between Building 3, and on Project Site 2, Building 4, which is not under the control of this Applicant but will still fall under the new zoning changes being requested in this application. I found this noteworthy and would question the strategy behind exempting a residential structure in the Project Area from the MIHA Text Amendment....

Please ask the Applicant how many affordable units are proposed for each building. You'll find that up to 30 units are proposed at Project Site #2 which Applicant does not control. But let's be realistic – their goal isn't affordable housing; the goal is the 500+ market rate units facing a body of water to be filled by very high incomes, as well as all the commercial and retail space that they don't quite know how to fill this early in the process.

I oppose this application and urge you to at least lay it over and investigate the devil in the details. At best, vote no, and ask them to go back and develop a real collaborative plan for Staten Islanders at that site.

Thank you - That concludes my testimony.

Sincerely,

Debra Givens



September 24, 2021

Dear Members of the Zoning and Franchises Subcommittee,

My name is Elizabeth Morgan and I am speaking today in support of River North.

In my role at the Central Family Life Center, I am the Director of the YouthBuild IMPACT program, which provides youth ages 17-24 with an opportunity to earn their high school equivalency diploma, construction skills, leadership “soft skills,” and offers other social services.

River North presents the North Shore with a unique opportunity for 225 units of newly constructed, income-based, affordable housing, an approximately 7,800 square foot public plaza, and significant visual and safety improvements to the street front and sidewalk along Richmond Terrace and Stuyvesant Place, all developed in an equitable manner.

Additionally, River North will achieve this equity in part through its partnership with YouthBuild IMPACT. YouthBuild IMPACT has begun working with River North project partner, Building Skills New York, to place Staten Islanders in construction jobs, including those created by this project. When River North is approved, I look forward to continuing our work with Building Skills New York and the project team to harness the economic and career opportunities that River North will create for young people on the North Shore.

Moreover, located near multiple means of public transportation, including the Ferry Terminal, River North will be well positioned to draw visitors to our community, where they can support the numerous businesses, restaurants, and cultural institutions that the Island has to offer.

I am urging you to vote to support River North. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Morgan
Director
YouthBuild IMPACT
Central Family Life Center



From: [Helen Northmore](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] River North ULURP Nos. 210289 ZMR, N210290 ZRR, 210291 ZSR
Date: Monday, September 27, 2021 2:00:08 AM

Sunday, September 26, 2021

To: The New York City Council Land Use Committee, Sub-Committee on Zoning and Franchises

Re: *River North* (formerly *Liberty Towers*)
CEQR No. 20DCP140R
ULURP Nos. 210289 ZMR, N210290 ZRR, 210291 ZSR
SEQRA Classification: Unlisted

Proposed to be Built on
170 - 208 Richmond Terrace &
8 - 26 Stuyvesant Place Staten Island, NY 10301

Dear City Council Members Moya, Rivera, Ayala, Grodenchik, Levin, Reynoso, and Borelli,

I am writing to ask each of you to vote, "No" on all of the above zoning text changes, zoning map amendments, and special permits requested by the applicant. As you are probably aware, the applicant, Richmond SI Owner, LLC, is a company of Madison Realty Capital.

Madison Realty Capital is seeking to remove many lots, even ones it does not own, from the "*Special Hillside Preservation District*". It is also seeking to gut the sound contextual principles of the "*Special St. George District*".

Madison Realty Capital was well aware of the zoning protections in place on Zoning Block 13 on Richmond Terrace, when it purchased the property at the end of 2018. It had owned an apartment building on the same block since 2012.

Please consider the information I am providing below, before making your vote.

Thank you for your work for the people of New York City.

Sincerely,
Helen Northmore

RIVER NORTH IS WRONG BECAUSE IT

- **DECREASES ALREADY LESS THAN ADEQUATE OPEN SPACE**
- **FURTHER REDUCES AIR QUALITY**

- **CREATES HARMFUL NOISE**
- **INCREASES PROBLEMS FOR MASS TRANSIT**
- **INCREASES TRAFFIC CONGESTION**
- **POSES A HEALTH HAZARD FROM A POTENTIALLY HARMFUL SUBSTANCE**
- **FLIES IN THE FACE OF THE DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLE.**

The *River North* Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) of August 20, 2021 is at:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/planning/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers-river-north.page>

Additional public comments can be read in:

- The August 20, 2021 *River North* Final Environmental Impact Statement: Appendix
G: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/appendg-feis.pdf>
- The 3 May 2021 *River North* Final Scope of the Work, Appendix
A: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/river-north-final-scope-work.pdf>

A DESCRIPTION OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD AROUND THE RIVER NORTH SITE

The *River North* Final Environmental Impact Statement, Chapter 2, describes the Staten Island area around the *River North* site. The following are quotes from Chapter 2 at -

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/02-feis.pdf>

- “The 2014 – 2018 ACS indicates the Study Area has a population of 12,377 persons.”
- “The Study Area has 3,740 rental DUs (dwelling units), approximately three quarters of which have protected, rent-regulated status.”
- “Despite the lack of new rental options in St. George, the Study Area’s existing rental housing stock and, most notably, its protected rental housing stock, has been preserved.”
- “The median household income is \$46,124 in the Study Area, \$79,710 in the borough of Staten Island, and \$60,769 in New York City.”
- “**Over one-third of the households in the Study Area earn less than \$25,000 annually, while another 22 percent earn \$100,000 or more annually.** . .The relatively high proportion of lower income households in the Study Area is partly due to the presence of NYCHA housing and other publicly-assisted rental DUs.”
- “**Both the project-generated affordable and market-rate DUs (dwelling units) would likely introduce a population that has a higher average household income than existing Study Area residents. By increasing the Study Area’s rental housing inventory by approximately 18 percent, the Proposed Actions may potentially lead to some demographic shifts.**”
- “The CEQR methodologies and the most current CHAS data indicate that there are approximately 1,684 low-income residents in the Study Area living in unprotected rental housing, and therefore subject to potential indirect residential displacement.”

Approval of the requested zoning changes, with their increased allowable density will inflate property values, without lifting a single hammer. Inflated land values flow into increasing rents for retailers, who must charge increasing prices to local consumers or move shop. The commercial space on Block 13 has remained vacant the entire time it was owned by Madison Realty Capital. It’s windows are still shrouded by paper. That’s over 8 years.

RIVER NORTH HAS A VARIETY OF NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS for CURRENT AREA RESIDENTS’ WELL-BEING

- **OPEN SPACE.** “Open space is scarce compared to the rest of Staten Island, particularly in St. George. . .” *NorthShore 2030, Improving and Reconnecting the North Shore’s Unique and Historic Assets*, NYC EDC & NYCPlanning, December 2011, p. 6. https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/plans-studies/north-shore/north_shore2030.pdf

1,800 people will be added to an open-space deprived neighborhood.

The *River North* Open Space #1, roughly 142 feet by 54 feet, serves as the entry way for the 327 apartments and 675 potential residents of Building #1, as well as the workers and users of the ground floor commercial space.

Passing the zoning text and map changes requested by Madison Realty Capital would increase the current FAR of 2.43 to 6.0 for *River North*.

The introduction of **2,030 dwelling units** and **5,052 people** is *already* anticipated in the *Special St. George District*, the *Bay Street Corridor*, and the *Special Stapleton Waterfront District*. The numbers are in the *River North* FEIS, Appendix C Reasonable Worst Case Scenario, C-3, Appendix E – Table 1 Residential and Open-Space No Build within the Study Areas. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/appendc-feis.pdf>

If no zoning changes are approved, according to the FEIS, the resulting building on Site B would have a residential FAR of 2.43. It would be 12-stories, and 166 feet tall. It would have 122, 665 gross residential square footage with **167 dwelling units** and be built along 200 feet of Richmond Terrace. In the *River North* FEIS, Appendix C, Reasonable Worst Case Scenario. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/appendc-feis.pdf>.

It would result in less of an increase in the Open Space deficit that already exists in the area.

With the zoning changes, according to the *River North* FEIS, Building #3, on the same site B, will have a maximum FAR of 6.0 and 127, 027 gross residential square footage. It will have **136 dwelling units**, on frontage of a similar width, i.e., approximately 200 feet along Richmond Terrace. The height is predicted to be 157', but with R7-3 zoning and no *Special Hillside Preservation District* constraints, an 18-story building covering more of the lot can be built, as-of-right. For a comparison see:

Appendix A, Architectural Drawings, 5th image. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/appenda-feis.pdf>

And FEIS, Appendix C, Reasonable Worst Case Scenario. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/appendc-feis.pdf>

Additionally, with the approval of the zoning changes requested by Madison Realty Capital, *River North* would include an **additional** 25 story tall building, with **295 dwelling units** and hundreds more people squeezed next to Building #3, on the same site B, and an **additional** 26 story tall building now permitted on Site A with **327 dwelling units** and hundreds more people. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/01-feis.pdf>

On top of everything else, the *River North* FEIS refers to Development Site #2, sometimes referred to as Building #4. All three lots of this site were bought in the final months of 2020 and in January, 2021 by Economic Development Opportunity Zone Fund I, LLC. They are included in Madison Realty Capital's request for zoning changes. Building #4 would be next to *River North* Building #3. It is left out of all the illustrations. The requested zoning changes would also allow Development Site #2 to construct an 18-story building, with a FAR of 6.0, **100 more apartments** and hundreds more people.

· **AIR QUALITY.** Because a "Four-way Stop" was installed, the *River North* FEIS removed the corner of Hamilton Avenue and St. Mark's Place, that was noted to have unacceptable air quality in the DEIS: "Emissions of PM2.5 over annual and 24-hour periods would exceed both National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and CEQR de minimis criteria due to a deteriorating traffic conditions [sic] at the intersection of St. Marks Place and Hamilton Avenue."

However, research has shown that a "Four-way Stop" does NOT mitigate the poor air quality. It aggravates it. Local residents, as well as the Curtis H.S students and staff, who use the MTA S52 bus stop at Hamilton Avenue and St. Marks Place, wait at that corner for a bus. Will that be in air quality that is further reduced by *River North*?

The All-Way Stop Control has been shown **NOT to mitigate** traffic congestion either. W. Martin Bretherton, Jr. P.E. "reviewed over seventy technical papers concerning all-way stops (or multi-way stops) and their successes and failures as traffic control devices in residential areas. . . These problems include . . . traffic noise, automobile pollution . . . Multi-way stop signs have high operating costs based on vehicle operating costs, vehicular travel times, fuel consumption and **increased vehicle emissions**. . . Bretherton, W.M., Jr., "Multi-way Stops: The Research Shows the MUTCD is Correct!" In *ITE Annual Meeting Compendium*, 1999, TRB, National Research Council, Washington, D.C., 1999." p. 2. <https://www.eastgr.org/DocumentCenter/View/2006/Multi-way-Stops-The-Research-Shows-the-MUTCD-is-Correct-W-Martin-Bretherton-Jr-PE?bidId=>

Adults in the St. George/Stapleton area already suffer from higher rates of asthma hospitalization than the city as a whole." As stated in: NYC Department of Health Environment & Health Data Portal <https://a816-dohbesp.nyc.gov/IndicatorPublic/Report/ServerSideReport.aspx?reportid=78&geotypeid=3&geoentityid=502&boroughid=5>

"With a population that is 62 percent minority and 19.3 percent at or below the poverty level—compared to 24.2 percent and 11.9 percent, respectively, for Staten Island overall—the North Shore meets New York State's definition of a *Potential Environmental Justice Area* (PEJA). Studies conducted in 2015 by the *Pew Research Center* have shown that in urban areas, people who are lower-income, black or Hispanic, or immigrants are much more likely than non-Hispanic white adults to use public transportation on a regular basis." As stated in: *Staten Island North Shore Bus Rapid*

Transit: Draft Scoping Document, September, 2019, p. 16. <https://new.mta.info/document/10486>

· **NOISE.** The brunt of the adverse noise impact will be endured by people living in housing surrounding the proposed *River North* construction site. See the *River North* FEIS, Appendix F, Table F-1 with a list of the construction machinery and the months it will be used.
<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/appendf-feis.pdf>

Noise related to construction includes noise from: concrete mixers, pile drivers, bulldozers, cranes, jackhammers, backhoes, hammer drills, forklifts, haul trucks, etc. These will be used to construct oversized buildings on undersized lots. Consequently, construction will take place over a longer period of time.

Research has shown that loud noise has an adverse effect on child development: “The reviewed studies document harmful effects of noise on children’s learning. Children are much more impaired than adults by noise in tasks involving speech perception and listening comprehension. Non-auditory tasks such as short-term memory, reading and writing are also impaired by noise.” Klatte, Maria; Bergstroem, Kirstin; and Lachmann, Thomas, “Does noise affect learning? A short review on noise effects on cognitive performance in children” *Frontiers in Psychology*, August 30, 2013. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2013.00578/full>

Construction noise will make the Mitchell Lama Castleton Park Apartment playgrounds hazardous or inaccessible to young children for months.

· **TRANSIT.** The City policy is to channel population increases into areas that are close to mass transit. This is certainly a sensible idea in areas that have multiple transportation opportunities, such as subways lines with bus transfers, connecting quickly to multiple boroughs. However, Staten Island has no subway link to any other borough. The bus route from St. George to one other borough, goes to Bay Ridge in Brooklyn (and the R line) and ends there. It requires 2 bus lines and takes about an hour. The link to Manhattan is by boat which runs once every half hour for most of the day. The new, New York City (Fast) Ferry from St. George also runs every half hour, and between the hours of 6:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. It has 2 stops on the Hudson River in Manhattan: Vesey Street and W. 39th St. On Staten Island, the only rail service, the Staten Island Railway, runs to Tottenville as infrequently as every half hour during much of the day.

70% of North Shore transit riders go to work by bus. 22 MTA Bus routes face daily delays due to traffic.

The *River North Draft Environmental Impact Statement* doesn’t discuss it, but a 2019 MTA report gives a contrary picture of the area’s “rich” transit situation:

“Because ferry and rail service are accessed via the St. George (Ferry) Terminal, most North Shore residents must travel east-west by bus to reach these services. Approximately two-thirds of transfers on the four primary local bus routes (S40, S44, S46, S48) occur at the St. George (Ferry) Terminal. North Shore residents who travel to off-island employment destinations via the Staten Island Ferry are affected by the long travel times and on-time performance issues of existing bus routes, which increase the difficulty of consistently making timely ferry connections.

Overall, roughly 30 percent of all S40 trips (eastbound and westbound) are late throughout the day.” As stated in: *Staten Island North Shore*

Bus Rapid Transit: Draft Scoping Document, September, 2019, p. 17. <https://new.mta.info/document/10486>.

The S40 travels on Richmond Terrace and has stops at Nicholas Street and Stuyvesant Place on either side of the proposed *River North* zoning map changes.

The *River North* project will be fronted by Richmond Terrace. Richmond Terrace in St. George widens from one lane of traffic in each direction to two lanes in each direction, but only for the 7 blocks between Jersey Street and the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. Currently, the widest street in the neighborhood, Richmond Terrace, in addition to local traffic, must accommodate fire trucks, police vehicles, ambulances, MTA S44, S94, S40, and S90 buses, school buses, bicycles, commuter automobile traffic to the *Staten Island Ferry Terminal/St. George*, commercial traffic, and the vehicles of the people who work in, or have business in, the public buildings, such as, pre-schools, the College of Staten Island/St. George, the NYC Health Department, the landmarked Staten Island Borough Hall, the NYS State Court, the landmarked Surrogates’ Court, the landmarked Family Court, the landmarked 120th Police Precinct, etc. Because of the essential vehicles gathered at the landmarked 120th Police Precinct house, traffic on Richmond Terrace towards the *Staten Island Ferry Terminal/St. George* frequently narrows to one lane in front of the 120th Precinct house. As reported by: Kashiwagi, Sydney, “Debi Rose renews calls to move 120 Precinct to Stapleton to make way for Bus Rapid Transit, but NYPD has no plans to leave,” *Staten Island Advance*, December 12, 2019.

· **TRAFFIC.** All transportation on the North Shore of Staten Island is already significantly delayed because of traffic congestion. The quality of the bus service on Staten Island is directly impacted by ever-increasing traffic congestion. According to a report by the NYC Comptroller, “**no Staten Island bus route had an on-time performance better than 77%.**” As stated in: Stringer, Scott, NYC Comptroller, “Bus Route Profiles 2017, An Addendum to The Other Transit Crisis, How to Improve the NYC Bus System.” https://comptroller.nyc.gov/wp-content/uploads/documents/Bus_Route_Profiles_2017.pdf

At busy times of the day, the intersection of Wall Street and Richmond Terrace, already rates in various traffic studies the lowest possible grade, an “F” level of service, as do the intersections of Richmond Terrace and Jersey Street, Richmond Terrace and Westervelt Avenue, Victory Blvd. and Bay Street, and Hamilton Avenue and St. Marks Place at

which the MTA S52 bus has a stop.

The large and long construction project, that will be allowed if the zoning is changed, would put construction vehicles on the surrounding roads between 6 a.m. and 3 p.m. Trucks would use Richmond Terrace, Stuyvesant Place, and Hamilton Avenue.

Research has shown that *River North's* proposed mitigation for traffic congestion will not work. Traffic signal timing does not help when the roads are already too congested. As one study reports, "Recently, regional traffic signal synchronization has become one of the main research directions in the field of urban traffic signal control, and some regional traffic signal control systems have been developed, such as TRANSYT, SCATS, and SCOOT. Unfortunately, when applied in the saturated (high-density grid road network) HGRN, the performance of these systems has not been satisfactory. When the network is saturated, there is no extra time and space to optimize the traffic signals. Therefore, the regional signal control systems cannot optimize the signal control parameters at the intersections, and the control systems may operate as fixed-timed control systems. In this situation, the traffic system is more fragile and prone to traffic congestion." Xiaojian Hu, Jian Lu, Wei Wang, Ye Zhirui, "Traffic Signal Synchronization in the Saturated High-Density Grid Road Network", Computational Intelligence and Neuroscience, vol. 2015, Article ID 532960, 11 pages, 2015.

<https://doi.org/10.1155/2015/532960>

Additionally, the timing of the *River North* traffic studies is open to question. Staten Islanders have some of the longest commutes in the city. Weekday traffic measured between 8 am and 9 am and 4:30-5:30 misses much of the commuter traffic to and from the Ferry by bus and car, as well as traffic travelling off island. It takes more than an hour from St. George to get to mid-town Manhattan by public transportation once aboard the ferry. The same is true of the return trip.

Why is the neighborhood pedestrian street traffic measured between 4 and 5 p.m.? The Municipal Offices, and businesses, close at 5 and pedestrians exiting the ferry from peak work hours in Manhattan would not have reached St. George yet. See *River North* FEIS Appendix E <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/appende-feis.pdf>

· **PUBLIC POLICY.** *River North* guts the safeguards of the *Special Hillside Protection District*. It destroys the design elements and lower density elements of the *Special St. George District*.

While it is true that much of the *Special Hillside District* is comprised of smaller residential parcels, **it was large developments that spurred the Planning Commission's establishment of the *Special Hillside Preservation District*.** A review of the CPC's rationale shows that, in 1987 the City Planning Commission also had multi-story residential high-rise buildings and larger vacant lots in view when it established the *Special Hillside Preservation District*. Additionally, the City Planning Commission **deliberately mapped into it what is today the *River North* site**, which is down a steep slope from the *Castleton Park Apartments* built in the mid-1970's.

The Commission's rationale for the establishment of the *Special Hillside Preservation District* can be read online and includes: "Of the approximately 1,900 acres in the District, about 200 acres (11%) are vacant. The majority of vacant lots are small to medium infill lots but **there are some large tracts of vacant land.** . . Within the last several years, new developments have emerged on the steep slopes. Although they have met existing zoning controls, most have been insensitive to the environmental features specific to hillside development. Developers have designed their sites without regard for the topography of the hillsides and used expedient rather than environmentally appropriate design and construction practices. In order to address these problems, a *Special Hillside Preservation District* was created to augment the *City's Zoning Resolution's* regulations by providing specific controls for hillside development within this district." Sylvia Deutsch, Chairperson, The City Planning Commission, Calendar No.53, June 3, 1987 N870002ZR. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/about/cpc/870002.pdf>

The NYC Planning Commission purposely included the *River North* site in the *Special Hillside Preservation District*.

The *River North* Site History - "By 1889, the first available Sanborn map shows the site was developed with 8 small residences, at the northern and southern portions. By 1917, several additional residences were constructed on the southern portions. By the late-1930's, one of the residences on the southern portion was demolished and replaced with a garage. Between the mid-1960's and late- 1970s, each of the residences and the garage were demolished, except for the northernmost residence. The last remaining residence was demolished circa 2005, The foundations at the northern portion were constructed in 2006." FEIS Appendix D-2 EBC Environmental Site Assessment August 2018

The *Castleton Park Apartments* sit atop a flat site of the *St. Marks Hotel* seen on an 1874 map in the NY Public Library Collection. <https://nypl.getarchive.net/media/part-of-new-brighton-town-of-castleton-f1b685?zoom=true>

Following the *St. Marks Hotel*. *The Hotel Castleton* was built on the site. A Postcard is in the NY Public Library Digital Collection: <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-cb31-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>

The *Castleton Park Apartments* were constructed on the hotels' level site and predate the *Special Hillside Preservation District*. **With almost half the dwelling units and twice the acreage of the proposed *River North* project**, it is 200% less dense - it's definitely worth viewing the *Google Map* satellite image of the site.

Zoning Block 13 was deliberately NOT included in the *Special St. George District*, established in 2008. Among the

changes that Madison Realty Capital is requesting for the entire *Special St. George District*, are to add just 4 words, "**Special St. George District**", to the Zoning Resolution to read as follows, "R7-3 and R9-1 Districts may be mapped only as specified in this paragraph. Such districts may be mapped **within the waterfront area** and in the #Special Mixed Use Districts#. In addition, R7- 3 Districts may be mapped in the #Special Long Island City Mixed Use District# **and #Special St. George District#**, R9-1 Districts may be mapped in #Mandatory Inclusionary Housing areas#."

Contrary to all stated NYC public policies such as *NorthShore 2030*, this flies in the face of community input, including the majority of Staten Island's City and State elected officials, who have overwhelmingly rejected the *River North Project* and the zoning changes.

· **A POTENTIAL HAZARD FOR THE CASTLETON PARK APARTMENTS SEWER LINES.**

The sewer lines for the Mitchell-Lama program, *Castleton Park Apartments*, run downhill to Richmond Terrace, under an undeveloped part of Block 13, Lot 8. Lot 8 bisects the *River North* site between Building#1 and Building #2. An 18-inch stormwater pipe and a 12-inch sanitary sewer pipe are under the surface. Madison Realty Capital does not own this property, but bases much of its construction plans on use of the property.

In its May 2021 *River North Draft Environmental Impact Statement*, Richmond SI Owner, LLC stated a use of the "panhandle" as part of a staging area for the multi-year *River North* construction project: "For Buildings 2 and 3, construction materials would be staged between Building 2 and Building 3, and on the Castleton panhandle." *River North Draft Environmental Impact Statement*, May 3, 2021, Construction, p. 11-13; Chapter 1, Project Description, p. 1-4; Alternatives, p. 12-2. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/01-deis.pdf>

The deep excavation and construction over many months will involve heavy machinery: "bar benders, compactors, compressors, front end loaders, dozers, pumps (concrete), impact pile drivers, gradalls, vibratory concrete mixers, and generators. During this construction stage, construction vehicles would include dump trucks, flatbed trucks, pickup trucks, and concrete mix and pump trucks. These trucks would assist the excavation and foundation process through the removal of excavated soil and demolished materials." In Richmond SI Owner, LLC, *River North Draft Environmental Impact Statement*, May, 2021. Chapter 11 Construction, p. 11-12. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/11-deis.pdf>

The information about deep excavation near, and the movement of heavy equipment across the "panhandle" and over the sewer pipes below the unpaved earth, arouses concern for the integrity of the vital sewer system for the *Castleton Park Apartments*.

Has the question of the permissibility and viability of the sale of this lot to Madison Realty Capital been explored and answered?

The New York City Housing Development Corporation is financially involved in the *Castleton Park Apartment* floating bonds for its mortgages. Whether or not the stipulations of these financial instruments allow the removal of a part of its Block 13, Lot 8, that contains the *Castleton Park Apartments* "utility-right-of-way" for its 12-inch sanitary and 18-inch stormwater sewer lines is unanswered:

"June 9th, 2015 - The Board of Directors of the New York City Housing Development Corporation (HDC) authorized the inaugural issuance of Sustainable Neighborhood Bonds, a new category of social investment bonds and the "first for affordable housing in the United States. The Board also approved \$953 million in "financing, including the issuance of \$842 million in bonds to fund the new construction and preservation of 7,178 units of affordable housing in 27 developments across the five boroughs. . .

"Preservation projects approved include Castleton Park, a Mitchell-Lama development in the St. George section of Staten Island. **A total of \$76 million will finance senior and subordinate permanent mortgage loans** for the rehabilitation and preservation of this development, which includes 454 units that will be affordable to households at or below 80% AMI. Proceeds from the loans will fund the rehabilitation of the two buildings to correct deteriorating conditions in these aging properties, while ensuring that the developments remain in the Mitchell-Lama program for the term of the new mortgage." Press Release: "HDC Board Approves Inaugural Issuance of Sustainable Neighborhood Bonds In Addition to Financing For 27 Affordable Developments Across All Five Boroughs", NYC HDC, June 9, 2015. <https://www.nychdc.com/newsroom/hdc-board-approves-inaugural-issuance-sustainable-neighborhood-bonds-addition-financing-27>

· **A POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD**

Any adverse effects of the *River North* project concerning Naturally Occurring Asbestos, or NOA, could be lessened or possibly avoided entirely by building within the current R-6 *Special Hillside Preservation District* zoning.

Although it is a potentially anxiety provoking fact, Staten Island is the only borough of NYC and one of the few sites in all of NYS in which Serpentine is found. It wouldn't be a problem in most of the *Special Hillside Preservation District* because Naturally Occurring Asbestos, or NOA frequently occurs below the grade level. It is so abundant in the Serpentine that it was once mined on Staten Island. https://mrdata.usgs.gov/asbestos/show-asbestos.php?rec_id=615

"In 1858, the H.W. Johns Manufacturing Company began mining low-quality chrysotile asbestos from the serpentinite body on Staten Island for the local manufacture of fire-resistant shingles. The H.W. Johns Manufacturing Company merged with the Manville Covering Company. The new company, Johns-Manville became a world leader in asbestos mining and asbestos-related manufacturing. "Powell, Wayne G., "Asbestos in NYC: It's Not Just in the Buildings" https://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/geology/powell/core_asbestos/geology/nyc_asbestos/asbestos_in_nyc.htm

Just because Naturally Occurring Asbestos or NOA is absent from a technical manual, doesn't mean it can't be trouble if ignored.

Neither the FEIS nor the Brownfield Cleanup Program require that this most unusual situation, NOA, be addressed. That doesn't mean that it should be ignored.

The *River North* Final Environmental Statement, Appendix D "Hazardous Materials" only includes the following reference to Naturally Occurring Asbestos:

"The following is a summary of the results of the previous investigations. . . A *Geotechnical Investigation Report*, dated April 7, 2008, was prepared by SESI for the Site. . . Bedrock at the Site was detected at depths ranging from 17 to 45 ft-bg. Bedrock underlying the Site was identified as Serpentinite rock, which is known to contain naturally occurring asbestiform minerals." Appendix D, D-3, Phase II Environmental Site Investigation Report. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/appendd-feis.pdf>

But the full 2008 *Geotechnical Investigation Report*, that is included with Madison Realty Capital's 2021 *River North Brownfield Cleanup Application* has a more thorough assessment of the situation.

"Weathered rock and **Serpentinite bedrock was encountered between approximately 17 feet and 45 feet below grade** . . . The rock is medium to fine grained, greenish gray Serpentinite. The condition and RQD (rock quality designation) and therefore the quality of the rock, varied across the site. Cores were collected in borings SB-1, SB-2, SB-5, and SB-7." [pp. 3-4]

"As stated above, **bedrock underlying the site has been identified as Serpentinite rock**. Serpentinite is known to contain naturally occurring asbestiform minerals, to which occupational exposure is regulated by OSHA.

"**Asbestos becomes hazardous when it is physically disturbed and released into the air as a potential airborne contaminant**. Physical disturbance of naturally occurring asbestos minerals can be generated by natural weathering and erosion of steep serpentinite rock slopes or **by excavation, drilling, blasting, chipping, or crushing of asbestos containing rock**.

"**To confirm the presence of asbestos in the rock at the site, laboratory analyses on rock samples should be performed by a certified asbestos laboratory following applicable USEP A methodologies**. If the rock is found to contain asbestos, special handling procedures should be developed in a written site specific Health and Safety Plan, and/or Material Handling Plan." April 7, 2008 SESI Consulting Engineers GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION REPORT for Liberty Towers – Site A and Site B Richmond Terrace, Staten Island, Richmond County New York, Prepared for Truisci SUK Design Group, 254 West 31st Street, New York, NY 10001. April 7, 2008. pp. 3-9. <https://www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/C243045/Application.BCP.C243045.2008-04-07.Geotechnical%20Investigation%20Report.pdf>

The soil boring sites done by SESI, which found Serpentinite, are identified on the map dated March 4, 2008, as being very close to or on the sites for the proposed River North Buildings 1 & 2. See: Section Figures. SESI Consulting Engineers GEOTECHNICAL INVESTIGATION REPORT for Liberty Towers – Site A and Site B Richmond Terrace, Staten Island, Richmond County New York, Prepared for Truisci SUK Design Group, 254 West 31st Street, New York, NY 10001. April 7, 2008. <https://www.dec.ny.gov/data/DecDocs/C243045/Application.BCP.C243045.2008-04-07.Geotechnical%20Investigation%20Report.pdf>

If naturally occurring asbestos is not disturbed and asbestos fibers are not released into the air, then it will not pose a health risk. . . "Naturally Occurring Asbestos", United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region. October, 2008, R5-RG-147. https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd551461.pdf

However due to the overly large buildings that would be permitted by the requested zoning changes, the excavation will be extensive. "The cellar beneath the two buildings in the northern portion of the Site will extend to an elevation of ten feet above the 1988 North American Vertical Datum (NAVD 88) and will require excavation between 30 and 60 ft-bg [below grade], due to the varying topography across the Site. The cellar beneath the building in the southern portion of the Site will extend to an elevation of 30 feet above the NAVD 88 and will require excavation between 15 and 50 ft-bg, due to the varying topography across the Site. The entirety of the cellar in the northern portion of the Site and a portion of the cellar in the southern portion of the Site will extend into bedrock." Appendix D, D-3, Phase II Environmental Site Investigation Report. <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/appendd-feis.pdf>

The current *Special Hillside Preservation District*, R-6 limits the size of buildings and the area that would be disrupted. If the zoning stays as is, much or all of the health hazards to the surrounding community and the workers on the site could be avoided.

· **Alternative Facts.** The applicant's representative has written, "The bottom line is that development of Site A and Site B, whether on an as-of-right basis or pursuant to the authorization, neither produces an economic return that can support the cost of purchasing and developing them . . ."

However, Madison Realty Capital made a profit on the same block in 2018. On the same block with the same R6, *Special Hillside Preservation District* zoning, Madison Realty Capital, River North's developer, sold an 11-story apartment building for \$20 million in 2018. Madison Realty Capital had purchased *The View* at 224 Richmond Terrace, Block 13, Lot 60 for \$8.5 million from Leib Poretz following foreclosure. In the same year, 2018 Madison Realty Capital bought sites for *River North*, for roughly \$20 million.

According to a newspaper report, "Manhattan-based Madison Realty Capital paid \$8.4 million for the debt on The View and received the title to the building at 224 Richmond Terr. in St. George after "lengthy litigation" in the foreclosure proceedings. . .

"[Poretz] ran into higher costs than expected and then he ran into a tough market,' said Zegen, speaking both to The View and Poretz as a whole. 'We're coming in at a much lower basis and I just think the time is right.'

"Zegen said The View, which may be renamed, is mostly complete with the 40 one- and two-bedroom apartments needing appliance packages and minor touch-ups after sitting vacant since 2009." Slepian, Stephanie, "Loan on Staten Island Property Once Owned by Leib Poretz Purchased for \$8.4 Million," *Staten Island Advance*, July 17, 2012. https://www.siive.com/northshore/2012/07/st_george_poretz_property_sold0712.html

The applicant's representative has also written that the site has "remained undeveloped for the past generation through the interaction of difficult site conditions and a restrictive zoning regime."

Response: Since 2005 the site has remained undeveloped not because of "a restrictive zoning regime" but because of the financial difficulties of the previous developer during the housing bubble and subsequent credit crunch. The previous owner of the current *River North* project site, Leib Poretz who had also owned The View, was involved in multi-year litigation. It ended in 2017. https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCOURTS-nyed-1_17-cv-00667/USCOURTS-nyed-1_17-cv-00667-0

The applicant's representative has used the word "blighted" to describe the *River North Site*. 2018 photos of the shrub covered site, which is still as it appears today, can be seen in the *River North* FEIS Appendix D-2 EBC report:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/planning/download/pdf/applicants/env-review/liberty-towers/appendd-feis.pdf>

· **On Street Parking.** Over 70% of households in Staten Island Community District #1, which includes St. George, own at least one car. Source: *Staten Island North Shore Bus Rapid Transit: Draft Scoping Document*, September, 2019, p.16. <https://new.mta.info/document/10486>

The demand for automobile ownership, and thus for parking, in this area which is the result of the dearth sufficient and efficient public transportation to other parts of the Island, to public open space for activities such as baseball, and soccer, to convenient, affordable essential retail establishments, such as supermarkets, and to medical facilities. Staten Island is also the only borough without a *Bike Share* Program as an alternative and affordable means of transportation.

The nearest supermarket to the proposed site is 3/4 of a mile away at the corner of Bay Street and Victory Blvd. The pedestrian route to and from the supermarket is down and up hilly terrain, with or without a shopping cart in all types of weather.

The bus route from the *River North* site to the one local supermarket requires either taking 2 buses with a transfer at the ferry terminal, or walking to and from the ferry terminal and using a bus along Bay Street.

The *River North* assumes that during construction, most *River North* construction workers on the site will prefer to pay to park their personal vehicles in garages while working. It assumes that most neighborhood residents would prefer to pay for parking garages. Additionally, the *River North* project will not provide enough residential parking space for its own tenants. The shortfall is expected to be supplemented by paid parking garages in St. George. In reality, on-street free parking for the existing neighborhood residents will be reduced by the new residents' demand for free parking. This will increase the strain on the household budget.

CONCLUSION

Madison Realty Capital knew the Zoning Resolution requirements full well when it bought its lots on Zoning Block 13 on Richmond Terrace at the end of 2018 and consolidated them into three. It is a successful enterprise with savvy partners. Never mind its ventures in the other boroughs, it had already had six years of property ownership on the same Block. Would it have purchased the property without factoring in all possible financial calculations, including the scenario in which no zoning changes are made? Why would they have bought it otherwise?

There is no need to approve these zoning changes that are of dubious benefit to anyone but the developer, but will bring harmful results for the people in the surrounding, and outlying communities.

We all want considerate and genuine "affordable housing" for our families, our neighbors and our fellow New Yorkers.



September 24, 2021

Dear Members of the Zoning and Franchises Subcommittee,

My name is Icisis Cruz and I am a 20-year-old NYCHA resident who has lived in Staten Island for 6 years.

I support the River North project and would very much like to see it move forward. It will bring housing and jobs to the community, and I would love to have the opportunity to move into my own apartment and into one of these beautiful new homes - that are affordable as well!

Over the past year, I am proud to say that I was able to achieve my high school equivalency through YouthBuild IMPACT. As a graduate from the class of 2021 I am grateful for the many new opportunities that have opened up for me.

After achieving my diploma, I went on to receive my Community Health Worker certification. Today, with my high school diploma and health certificate, I am fortunate to be interning with Northwell Health. The pandemic has been hard, but it has also made it clear how important the health industry is and I am honored to be part of that world now.

Over the past year and a half as I have been able to turn my life around, I have also seen my dreams develop. River North is an opportunity for young adults like myself to pursue their dreams, where they can afford to live, and be part of a growing community in Staten Island. Although I followed a health career in YouthBuild, my peers are in the construction tract and are looking forward to working alongside architects, contractors and be offered job opportunities. This has never happened on the North shore for youth like me.

I hope you will support this project and give young Staten Islanders the opportunity to stay in their home borough, while still having all the access, resources, and jobs needed to succeed.

Thank you, I am urging you to vote to support River North. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Icisis Cruz', written over a light blue circular stamp.



From: Ian@Tabolt.me
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] River North Support
Date: Thursday, September 23, 2021 5:14:55 PM

Hello,

I live in Community Board 1 on Staten Island. I strongly support this kind of transit-oriented and mixed use development for our borough. It'll help revitalize the area while also providing affordable housing and minimal car traffic. With all the exciting new development in that area - the NYC ferry, the new baseball team, the Empire Outlets, and whatever ends up at the wheel site - the only thing missing is customers and the new residents will play a critical role in ensuring those projects succeed. I really hope this gets built at the proposed height and becomes an iconic part of Staten Island's North Shore.

Thank you!

Ian Tabolt

From: [Mx. Daniels](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] River North Towers- Pro Testimony
Date: Friday, September 24, 2021 3:49:51 PM

To whom it may concern,

I'm a constituent on the north shore, and active on local politics as an organizer and teaching artist for several democratic parties elections. As much as there may be resistance to have parts of the North Shore harbor to be esplanade, the reality is, the more development in the area, improves the quality of life, garners tourists, and even economic investments to a borough that has been long forgotten. I'm only in favor of the River North Towers, if 30-40% of the units are affordable housing for those with various incomes as well as providing reasonable space for non-profits in the region to deal with the epidemic of homelessness, methadone/opioid addiction and food insecurity. I hope to see affordable fresh markets, stores, and entertainment venues to be of benefit to both residents in the area, as well as the New Yorkers and tourists in the region, to put Staten Island on the map as a borough worthy to visit for all!

P.S. If these reasonable accommodations aren't made, I would cast doubt, but still would like to see the proceeding of construction in my district.

Thank You,

Mx. Je'Jae Cleo Daniels

Pronouns: They/Them
([What are Gender Pronouns?](#))

Artist + Writer + Media Maker

www.behance.net/mxenigma

From: [JUSTIN GREENE](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] St George
Date: Thursday, September 23, 2021 1:47:10 PM

I'm in favor of the proposed development of River north development,think it would be a great addition to a area that needs new life and people and affordable housing.The lots now are dirty with weeds,litter and makes area look filthy

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Jan Koehler](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Liberty Towers, River North
Date: Thursday, September 23, 2021 9:56:19 PM

City Council Members,
Debi Rose,

I have lived in St. George Staten Island for more than 40 of the last 50 years. We have a spatular (mismanaged) waterfront. In 2016 I bought an apartment with a panoramic view from the Verrazzano Narrows Bridge to Lower Manhattan. My view was almost unobstructed. That has changed. Now, right in the middle of my view is a 20 story unfinished and empty hulk. It has been like that for about 3 years now. How do you think this abandoned high rise affects the value of my property, and why would a savvy investors invest in another new building 2 blocks away from an abandoned high-rise?

In the many years that I have lived in this neighborhood, I have met many new neighbors from other parts of the city. They leave. Why, There are no urban amenities here.

Why would someone invest in this project with all the ongoing failures,

- The hulk outside my windows failed,
- The Garage failed,
- The ballpark failed
- The wheel failed
- The new outdoor mall, the escalators don't work if it rains.

Is it some kind of high end money laundering?

Rather than give a list of the amenities/infrastructure that does NOT exist here, I will tell you what would serve the neighborhood,
A real supermarket.

I am,
Jan Koehler
[REDACTED]
Staten Island, NY 10301
[REDACTED]

From: [Jan Koehler](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] There is still time to Stop River North
Date: Saturday, September 25, 2021 12:06:33 PM

First, I want to thank the subcommittee for listening to our concerns. I am a St. George resident since the early 70s and 5 years ago bought a beautiful apartment here. I don't think that I can say this better than Victoria Harding said it (copied below). She, Sally Jones and the other residents that we heard, have been active in our community for many years. We live surrounded by unfinished real estate projects and a mismanaged waterfront. I noted that the people who spoke in support of the project do not live here. Over the years I have noted that people from other boroughs are charmed by the neighborhood, move here but ultimately are disappointed and leave. This was pointed out by one of the speakers who said that Urby can't keep it's tenants.

We have no current need for 3 high rises stressing our already deficient infrastructure.

One more comment about our mismanaged waterfront. I believe that the waterfront from Fort Wadsworth to Snug Harbor should be part of the National Gateway Recreation Ares.

Greetings:

I am one of the many St. George residents and homeowners who are opposed to beginning any new construction project before the ones previously begun in our neighborhood have been finished.

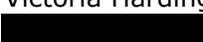
St. George is marred by many unfinished projects including a significant amount of unoccupied retail space along Richmond Terrace and unfinished park and harbor observation areas promised us around the new parking garage.

The city council should be concerned with promoting the completion of buildings and public areas associated with previous projects, not approving new ones. Builders feel free to leave as soon as they have gotten enough money out, leaving us with many bleak areas they leave unfinished.

This is reason enough to deny permission for future building. But the project is completely out of scale with the houses above it on Hamilton Avenue. Our built structures should have lower heights near the waterfront, affording good living and neighborhood conditions for as many people as possible.

I join my fellow St. Georgians in urging you to deny permission for River North. We need you to put yourselves in our position and encourage appropriate local development -- and first, completion of all unfinished projects.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Harding


Staten Island, NY 10301
Homeowner since 1996, resident since 1993

From: [Janet Vetter](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Proposed River North Development on Staten Island
Date: Saturday, September 25, 2021 5:28:39 PM

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. Forward suspect email to phish@cyber.nyc.gov as an attachment (Click the More button, then forward as attachment).

Due to work obligations, I was not able to attend Friday's meeting, but, as a 35-year resident of St. George, I write to strongly oppose the proposed River North development.

The development as currently designed is totally out of scale with the rest of the neighborhood. The shadow it would cast -- literally and figuratively -- would change the character of the area. In a neighborhood that has been crying out for years for desperately needed infrastructure improvements, River North would add to the current burden on aging and inadequate transportation, schools, etc., and removing the area from the Special Hillside Preservation District and Special St. George District would be an outrage and likely damage the value of nearby houses within the historic district.

This is not the sort of development the neighborhood needs, and the rosy promises of the developer as to what "might" be included are something long-term residents have seen dangled in front of us over and over. We remember when the garage meant to replace spaces lost to the never-built Wheel was not supposed to block our view of the water from Richmond Terrace, and when it was meant to have a public park on top. Instead all we have is less access to our waterfront and a fenced-off area where the remnants of the supports for the wheel sit. Recently built apartments in the area sit vacant, and the construction lights from the bankruptcy-stalled Lighthouse Point development have illuminated my bedroom nightly for years and seemingly may do so forever.

Finish what has been started, answer our years-long pleas for adequate infrastructure, give us back our waterfront, and then come talk to us about new development. But not now. Say no to River North.

Janet E. Vetter
33 Central Avenue #3E
Staten Island, NY 10301

Council Members,

My name is Joe Caccamo and I am speaking today in support of River North. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify about this important project.

The developers behind River North have a record of actually delivering on the proposals that they put forward. This proposal in particular includes investments into the North Shore community that are sorely needed. With approximately 225 units of affordable housing, ample public open space, and improved sidewalks and streetscape, River North will bolster the North Shore's status as a gateway to Staten Island and its many restaurants, retail, and cultural institutions.

Furthermore, I was pleased to hear about the partnerships that the River North team has formed as a part of this project. For instance, the River North team is working with Building Skills New York to ensure that Staten Islanders can access, and be trained for construction jobs before, during, and after the development of the River North project. I was even more pleased to hear that the River North team is working with community organizations and stakeholders that I know and trust to ensure that these opportunities reach the people of Staten Island.

Again, thank you for hearing my testimony today and I urge you to vote in favor of River North.

Joe Caccamo

City of New York

1 Edgewater Plaza, Suite 217 • Staten Island, New York 10305

Tel: 718-981-6900

Fax: 718-720-1342

Community Board No. 1

September 15, 2021

Hon. Debi Rose
130 Stuyvesant Place, 6th Floor
Staten Island, NY 10301

drose@council.nyc.gov

Dear Councilwoman Rose:

As you know Community Board #1 had preliminary discussions with the developer and hosted an extremely lengthy and comprehensive Public Hearing that was well attended and provided voluminous testimony.

Also, the Land Use Committee and full Board spent time prior to familiarize themselves with the proposal. After discussion and debate Community Board#1 near unanimously approved the following resolution:

WHEREAS this application seeks to rezone the proposed area from an R6/C2 District within the Special Hillside Preservation District to an R7-C3/C2-4 within the Special St. George District
WHEREAS this application is in the Special Hillside Preservation District which was designed to give oversight to building in steep slope; and,
WHEREAS the application seeks to obliterate the Special Hillside Preservation District in an area of the steepest slope in Community Board #1, and
WHEREAS it is unprecedented for any proposal to be removed from the Special Hillside Preservation District; and,
WHEREAS, the existing R6 District provides the greatest bulk and height of any district in SI, and,
WHEREAS, The Special St. George District provides parking and other development controls designed and adopted specifically for this area, and,
WHEREAS this development is asking for multiple authorizations and waivers all intended to maximize density and bulk in a district that can be developed without this extreme contorted level of relief, and,
WHEREAS this application has been extremely fast tracked through the Department of City Planning and will saddle new representatives and administration with a decision that should be left for them to debate, and,
BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED THAT: Community Board #1 opposes all the actions proposed by the application and strongly suggests they build within existing zoning controls so as not to completely disregard all previously crafted zoning.
Roll call vote taken of Land Use Committee vote passed 12-1-0 (1 ineligible).
Roll call vote taken, vote passed 28-1-0 (1 ineligible)

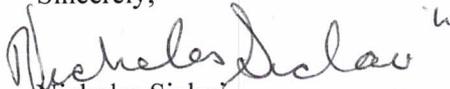
Pg. 2 of 2
CB#1 – River North

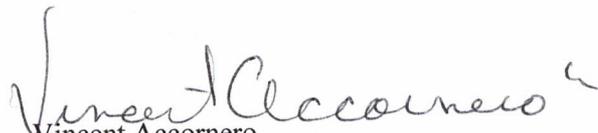
We are extremely disappointed that the City Planning Commission not including Commissioner Cerullo ignored our resolution and approved these applications.

We implore you to support our position and vote against these applications and lobby your colleagues to do the same.

As always thank you for your concern for and interest in our community.

Sincerely,


Nicholas Siclari
Chairman


Vincent Accornero
Land Use Chairman



NATIONAL LIGHTHOUSE MUSEUM

Preserving the legacy of our maritime sentinels

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Linda C. Dianto, MS

September 24, 2021

Dear New York City Council Members,

My name is Linda Dianto, and I am the Executive Director of the National Lighthouse Museum.

Our organization is dedicated to the full development of the National Lighthouse Museum on the site of the US Light House Service General Depot on Staten Island from 1864 to 1939. Partnering with government agencies, non-profits, corporations, foundations, and other organizations, we will work to promote and support historical, educational, cultural, recreational, and other

related activities at the site, while maintaining the navigational significance and maritime heritage of lighthouses throughout the world.

I am writing today to express my support for Madison Realty Capital's River North proposal. This proposed development will increase visitation and local

spending for the small businesses and cultural institutions in the neighborhood that have contributed to its charming and vibrant character for years.

The River North site is located steps away from several means of transportation to and around the borough, including the St. George Ferry Terminal, the Staten

Island Railroad, and a dozen bus lines. This makes the site prime for visitation from a wide swath of potential patrons. The additional residential units, retail, and 5,700 square foot public plaza and 7,800 square foot active open space in this proposal will add to the neighborhood's existing draw and create new means for street front activation.

It is for these reasons that I support Madison Realty Capital's River North proposal.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Linda C. Dianto

Executive Director

From: [Laurence Hazell](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re River North Project, North Shore Waterfront, Staten Island.
Date: Friday, September 24, 2021 12:04:28 PM

From: Laurence Hazell, [REDACTED], St. George, Staten Island, New York 10301

I have resided at the above address within the St. George New Brighton Historic District for over twenty years. In that time, I have noticed frequent and serious flooding on Richmond Terrace in the location of this proposed development and more recently in an area below the North Shore Esplanade adjacent to the now abandoned New York Wheel Development. This continues even after a much-needed resurfacing of Richmond Terrace. Additionally, sewage leaks occur at the foot of Nicholas Street on a fairly regular basis.

As a nearby resident to this proposed large project I would like to register my concern about the proposed development in the light of these flooding and leaks and respectfully ask that these are meaningfully and comprehensively addressed by the developers to the full satisfaction of the City Council. I am particularly concerned about sufficient utility capacity, especially as that relates to sewage and rainfall: this year having provided stark examples to City residents of their impact.

Currently the area is a corridor of abandoned or unused 'white elephant' projects including the New York Wheel and the Richmond County Ballpark. Although the pictorial renderings of the developers put their proposal in a very good light for the area, which currently suffers a sad degree of blight and neglect, I ask that the City Council consider the overall population impact of such a large development. A vibrant community is desired by all, but there are concerns that the size of this development could overwhelm our community, rather than contribute to it.

Sincerely yours,

Laurence P Hazell

From: [Lorie Honor](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Opposition to River North
Date: Saturday, September 25, 2021 2:12:33 PM

Dear Committee,

As a small business owner I am in favor of the growth of our downtown/waterfront area for commercial and recreational use, as a parent I would love housing that would encourage our young people to stay as well as draw all types of people to live here. As a homeowner I would love to have more pride of ownership in what I know to be a lovely neighborhood, but also one that needs amenities and aesthetics.

I ran a boutique wine shop on Bay Street that had a strong neighborhood following, and was a destination shop for people all over the island. St. George could have been a model for small business development and community growth, but was usurped by speculative development. I was forced to move my business and have seen myriad small businesses shuttered and a ghost town made of what should be a thriving waterfront commercial and community strip.

The gloom of the numerous unfinished projects has degraded the neighborhood and the current state of a neglected and congested "downtown" area makes it difficult to get behind yet another large-scale project that proposes to enhance the community. What the waterfront needs is attention and support to existing small businesses. Respect and regard to residents could better be shown by consistent investment in streetscapes, ways to improve traffic flow, decrease congestion and integrate the waterfront and community. Since leadership has been lacking in providing infrastructure and aesthetic vision to complete the projects that have already destabilized the neighborhood, I oppose another project that would continue the legacy of harm to St. George.

Lorie Honor
Owner, Honor Wines

Stapleton, SI 10304

--
Lorie Honor
owner, Honor Wines
www.HonorWines.com
@HonorWinesSI

mother, daughter, wife, teacher, friend
old-house lover, organic gardener
furniture re-arranger, binge tv watcher,
baby-whisperer , messy cook
Not a party operative

From: [Port Richmond Strong](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] River North
Date: Thursday, September 23, 2021 2:05:23 PM

Mary L. Bullock

I write as President of the Port Richmond/North Shore Alliance, devoted to quality of life in our communities.

We know when we are being groomed by predatory developers with two-bit incentives designed to distract us: a coffee truck for workers, cheap toys for kids, a public park smaller than many SOHO lofts, and most cruelly, EMPTY PROMISES to local nonprofits for their youth of jobs that, experience tells us, will NEVER happen. While they cut out our union workers and post outside profits, we will be dealing with the social and environmental consequences of THEIR vision of OUR community. The local stormwater runoff flooding is just the beginning.

We know genuine economic development when we see it – like Empire Outlets being part of the Tribeca Film Festival.

As to their so called “experts” brought in to dazzle us with testimony, note their words to describe the site: underused, vacant. I prefer open, natural. They declared, “421A is ‘just a tax abatement’.” Excuse me, tax abatements are public subsidies, no “just” about it. As to their repeated reference to Staten Island public transportation as a plus – does anyone see River North residents taking a bus to get groceries?

Granting the abusive number of exemptions they ask for would throw away years of work on Hillside zoning designed to preserve sense of place. They must think our diverse black, brown, and immigrant community is unable to defend ourselves as they sneak this in. Trying to ram this through on a truncated timeline confirms the grooming attempt. They admitted the exemptions would pad their profits.

Beware Mid-Island and South Shore, you’re next. In 2008, I created a website of the 22 stops on the MTA Staten Island Railway -- along a 14-mile string of small towns and whistle stops -- through our hilly typography. The ONLY CHAIN store visible from any of the platforms was the top of the MacDonald’s sign at Stapleton.

Our bucolic railway – our way of life - will be smothered by R-7 development if you establish this precedent.

Hasn’t Covid taught us the lethal potential of density? The healing power of exposure to even the smallest patch of the natural world? The desire for more personal living space?

We suffered and fought for over 50 years to undo what was allowed at Fresh Kills. Now we are fashioning its 2,200 acres into NYC’s largest park in over 100 years.

We choose to remain NYC’s greenest borough. Let the property stand as a natural area, an eternal echo of what Verrazzano and Hudson saw, a source of oxygen, and a tribute to Mother Earth.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary L. Bullock


Staten Island, NY 10301



[FaceBook](#)
portrichmondstrong.com
visitportrichmond.com

From: [Maryann Di Pilli](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] River North/ Liberty Towers
Date: Thursday, September 23, 2021 4:14:54 PM

Good Afternoon,

As a current resident to the community where the proposed River North /Liberty Towers , I strongly oppose the approval for the rezoning of the multi unit 750 complex, The infrastructure of the community can not accommodate the traffic and parking currently in the community. Curtis H.S , daily commuters to SI Ferry and the 120 Police Station struggle to get available spaces. As the current Brought President has stated he is not in agreement with the project. I hope the Zoning Board takes this into consideration when reviewing the application for approval. Thank you for including my concerns during the meeting.

Sincerely,
Maryann DiPilli

From: [Dale Smith](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RIVERNORTH TESTMONY
Date: Thursday, September 23, 2021 4:24:58 PM
Attachments: [Dale Smith.pdf](#)

Minister Dale Smith
Support Services Coordinator
Central Family Life Center
True To Life
Phone # 718-273-8414



September 23, 2021

Dear Members of the Zoning and Franchises Subcommittee,

Hello, Council Members. Thank you for having me today. My name is Reverend Dale Smith, and I am the Leadership Counselor at YouthBuild IMPACT, and a Reverend for the First Central Baptist Church. I am here today in support of the proposed River North project in Staten Island, and I urge you to support it as well.

As Leadership Counselor at YouthBuild IMPACT, I am responsible for supporting the program participants in their personal development. I work with local youth to set and achieve their academic and leadership development goals through structured activities, lessons, workshops, and events. We also provide ongoing counseling, support services, and guidance so they can achieve success.

At the heart of my work with local Staten Island youth, I am committed to supporting their development and growth into responsible residents in their community. But it is also important that every child's community supports him or her and has the resources necessary for them to succeed. Therefore, I support River North. Children and teenagers growing up in Staten Island should be able to grow up in stable homes - ones their parent or parents can afford. They should have community spaces and public open spaces where they can play, learn, and enjoy their neighborhood, breaking the cycle of poverty. Many of our community members, including students are homeless and this would provide them with affordable housing that is so desperately needed for them to have a brighter future.

The North Shore has grown tremendously in recent years. We welcome change but must be mindful that long-time residents don't get left behind, and River North provides inclusivity. Please help the North Shore grow in a sustainable way by meeting the needs of new and existing residents and ensuring that the youth of today have opportunities in the future.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dale Smith', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Reverend Dale Smith
Leadership Development Counselor, YouthBuild IMPACT
Central Family Life Center

NYC Council Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises

River North Liberty Towers Development

September 24, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Nikki Odlivak and I am the President/CEO of Community Agency for Senior Citizens, Inc, better known as "CASC". Also, I am a resident of the St George neighborhood on Staten Island for almost 40 years and have been working in St. George over 20 years.

CASC has been serving older adults, age 60 years and older as well as their caregivers, since a pilot project in 1974, and in 1985, as a fully independent non-profit. We are a social service agency, assisting seniors to remain as independent as possible, and thrive in their Staten Island community, by providing services, information and assistance as well as referrals to any services CASC may not provide directly. CASC's services include case management; entitlements and benefits information and assistance with applications; elder abuse prevention and intervention services, including safety planning, counseling, court advocacy; crime victims assistance; transportation; senior center services, including meals, health promotion, education, recreation and a place to socialize and feel a sense of belonging; and community education.

CASC Programs assist over 8,000 people annually and we expect that number to rise with the "baby-boomers" aging at an unprecedented rate; some advocates have called it a "tsunami" of aging older adults.

One of the most frequent questions CASC receives from senior callers and their families is how can we access affordable senior housing. Unfortunately, there is not good news on this subject. CASC assist with housing applications for local affordable housing, but wait lists are long (years) and the available apartments, at an affordable rate, are few.

I am here in support of River North Liberty Towers Development. It is long time overdue that our beautiful waterfront is developed into an exciting, thriving and welcoming north shore. We need the housing. We need housing for seniors who can no longer live in private homes. We need housing for seniors who are being asked to leave apartments in 2-4 families, because after 20,30 years of living there, the families are now selling these private dwellings or they can "get much more in rent" from new tenants. We need more housing for young adults, who are just starting their careers but cannot afford moving out of their parents' homes. We need more housing for young families, where it is safe, and a place to live and flourish.

I have heard/read the "cons" that some have pointed out, "it is too dense", "the infrastructure is not there to support this development", "traffic, sewers, schools, etc." These may be true, but does that stop all development? Isn't it up to government to insure the infrastructure is there to support the needs of our community? This community needs an influx of housing, small business will prosper and more will open. We have for way too long ignored one of the best resources we have on Staten Island, which could be a wonderful waterfront as many other NYC Boroughs have developed and many cities across this country have seen great economic benefits by developing waterfront property in a sustainable and responsible way.

From: [Richenda Kramer](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] River North:Liberty Towers
Date: Sunday, September 26, 2021 8:24:48 PM

My name is Richenda Kramer and I live near the Staten Island ferry. This development, which seems to be rushed through, is one I am opposed to for many reasons, but one that has not been mentioned is the effect on the climate. Tearing down a hillside which is covered with trees, the only greenery one sees from the ferry, to build seven glass and metal 23 storey buildings, which will be filled with more than a thousand people using destructive fossil fuels seems to be the height of climate irresponsibility. The trees and greenery in the artist's picture of North River will take at least ten years to be seen, and are a poor alternative to a wooded hillside.

The Bay Street Corridor project, which you approved, is already adding more than a thousand apartments, and the two apartment buildings close to the ferry have taken at least three years to rent their apartments.

There are four projects, approved by City Council: the parking lot and the hotel are incomplete and no work has been done for nearly a year, Empire Outlets, which has been open nearly two years and is still more than half empty, the Wheel which was cancelled. We lost the park which was promised over the original parking lot.

The only supermarket in the area (Western Beef) is slated for destruction for a residential tower in the Bay Street Corridor project. This is a 'food desert'.

Traffic on Richmond Terrace is often grid-locked already, and was really difficult during the Empire Outlets construction, which had an alternative access road. The problems will be permanent with River North with cars entering their three parking lots from narrow side roads on hills.

September 24, 2021

Dear members of the New York City Council Zoning & Franchises Subcommittee,

My name is Reverend Judy Brown and I am here today to speak in support of River North. In my role as a pastor at Bethel Community Church in Tompkinsville, as well as my role as executive director of African Refuge, it has been apparent to me for quite some time that Staten Island needs more housing. River North will deliver new housing to Staten Island, including approximately 225 units of affordable housing. For this reason, it is key that this project be approved.

River North will also be a win for Staten Island from a labor perspective. The developers of this project have always been open to discussing the types of jobs that their project will create. They have already committed to setting aside building service jobs for union workers and working with the nonprofit organization Building Skills New York to identify, train, and place local and minority workers into construction jobs. The River North developers and their partners at Building Skills New York have already kicked off the first of several community job opportunity meetings that they intend to hold, for the purpose of getting the word out about job opportunities.

It is also notable that River North presents an opportunity for investment in the North Shore's streetscape and public realm, through neighborhood additions such as a significant amount of public open space, as well as through an improved streetscape along Richmond Terrace and Hamilton Avenue.

It is for these reasons that I support River North. I hope the City Council joins me in supporting this project as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Reverend Judy Brown



September 24, 2021

Dear Members of the Zoning and Franchises Subcommittee,

Good afternoon, my name is Stephanie Echevarrieta, and I am here today in support of River North.

As the Program Assistant for YouthBuild IMPACT I am responsible for the management of the office as well as to help support the students and their community service efforts. Because I work closely with them, I see the ways in which stable opportunities and resources can help change their lives. Our students are provided with internships which build leadership, strengthen work ethics and provide opportunities for critical thinking. This is why we need thoughtful partners who bring new housing, jobs and community facilities to the area. This will allow our community to grow and flourish.

Our borough, although sometimes forgotten, is a community of ambitious, aspirational youths and hardworking New Yorkers. We deserve to have a River North. It will fill a serious housing gap providing apartments for those of varying income levels, including our youth and their families.

It will also help spur local businesses, which means new jobs for our students and neighbors. These are not little things - this is how we change a generation's future: by showing them there is a community that supports them.

I hope you will vote in favor as I truly think this project will be an opportunity to help hundreds of Staten Island youths and young adults.

Thank you

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stephanie Echevarrieta'.

Stephanie Echevarrieta
Program Assistant, YouthBuild IMPACT
Central Family Life Center



From: [Sally Jones](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises Hearing Written Testimony on 9/24/21
Date: Friday, September 24, 2021 4:09:58 PM

Dear Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises,

Here is my written testimony for the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises Hearing on 9/24/21, following my oral testimony.

Sally Jones

sallyfeatherstone@gmail.com

TESTIMONY OPPOSING RIVER NORTH, a project in St. George Staten Island in Councilmember Debi Roses's 49th Council District

My name is Sally Jones. I am a member of the St. George Civic Association, the Staten Island Democratic Association, on the board of the Unitarian Church of Staten Island, a founding member of Peace Action of Staten Island, as well as other civic groups.

I live at [REDACTED] up the street from the proposed project. I have lived in our 1910 home for 43 years, since August 1979, across the street from Curtis High School

I am opposed to the River North project for the following reasons:

- It's height and density is out of scale with the neighborhood of mostly one to four family homes and smaller scale apartment buildings.
- It violates hard fought-for zoning protections to protect the hillside and harbor views.
- It pushes the St. George waterfront into a high rise building syndrome.
- It will create few sustainable jobs.
- It comes on top of other in limbo or failed projects within one to three blocks of the project, including:
 - the never built WHEEL
 - the sparsely visited Empire Outlets
 - the huge, empty, unfinished, block-long GARAGE that blocks access to the waterfront and which is also ugly
 - an empty, minor league baseball stadium that is now overgrown and collecting garbage
 - an uncompleted hotel next to the ferry terminal where construction stopped due to bankruptcy.

My community's vision of the waterfront of St. George is for public access, recreation opportunities, green space, and maintaining the stunning harbor views for everyone. It should not be built up with high rises making a beautiful neighborhood into another Fort Lee look alike.

I urge this committee and the City Council to deny the zoning changes requested for this

project.

Thank you.

Sally Jones

pronouns: she/her/hers

sallyfeatherstone@gmail.com



From: [V.V. Harding](#)
To: [Land Use Testimony](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] OPPOSED: River North proposal for Hamilton Avenue and Stuyvesant Place
Date: Saturday, September 25, 2021 11:26:29 AM

Greetings:

I am one of the many St. George residents and homeowners who are opposed to beginning any new construction project before the ones previously begun in our neighborhood have been finished.

St. George is marred by many unfinished projects including a significant amount of unoccupied retail space along Richmond Terrace and unfinished park and harbor observation areas promised us around the new parking garage.

The city council should be concerned with promoting the completion of buildings and public areas associated with previous projects, not approving new ones. Builders feel free to leave as soon as they have gotten enough money out, leaving us with many bleak areas they leave unfinished.

This is reason enough to deny permission for future building. But the project is completely out of scale with the houses above it on Hamilton Avenue. Our built structures should have lower heights near the waterfront, affording good living and neighborhood conditions for as many people as possible.

I join my fellow St. Georgians in urging you to deny permission for River North. We need you to put yourselves in our position and encourage appropriate local development -- and first, completion of all unfinished projects.

Respectfully submitted,
Victoria Harding


Staten Island, NY 10301
Homeowner since 1996, resident since 1993