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350.Org's Brooklyn Borough **Uniform Land Use Review Procedure** Testimony

Position: Unfavorable

In Support of UPROSE & the Community Developed GRID Plan for the Industry City Development & Rejection of the M2-4 Mixed Use Rezoning Application by Jamestown Properties

Introduction

Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to address this body remotely. My name is Tamara Toles O'Laughlin and I am the North America Director of [350.org](https://www.350.org), a global grassroots organization dedicated to the fast and just transition to 100% renewable energy, ending all fossil fuel projects, and divesting from fossil fuel companies.

I am submitting testimony today in opposition to M2-4 Mixed Use Rezoning Application by Jamestown Properties. As the largest global climate organization with over 150 local groups within the United States we **support of our movement partner UPROSE** and its efforts to **prevent the rezoning of Industry City to M2-4 mixed use.**

The matter before the Council today concerns a private developer-led rezoning that threatens to exacerbate issues of gentrification, loss of social cohesion, and climate vulnerability.

The rezoning proposed does a disservice to the local community, the city, and region in its fundamental inconsistency with the: Sunset Park BOA, the Waterfront Revitalization Plan, Climate Mobilization Act, Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act; in addition to dozens of climate plans, reports, and goals that aim to transform our extractive & destructive economy to an environmentally sustainable Just Transition economy.

Negative Environmental Impacts of the Industry City Development

Industry City's rezoning proposal is a 20th century plan which is not compatible to 21st century problems. From exacerbating rapid displacement and loss of well-paid working-class industrial jobs to ignoring the ever-intensifying impacts of climate change, the Industry City rezoning plan as proposed by Jamestown Properties is destructive because it rejects community needs and its climate resilience. The proposed rezoning is also inconsistent with existing community, city, and state plans that emphasize the immediate necessity to transition into a more climate resilient and sustainable future.

Sunset Park 197-A Plan Is Outdated and Lacks Climate Resilience Plans

The 197-A plan was approved 10 years ago and **does not include lessons learned from Superstorm Sandy** and predates the City's focus on Adaptation & Mitigation strategies. The current plan is outdated and needs to incorporate the realized and anticipated risks of climate change.

350.org supports UPROSE and its recommendation to create a CB7 interdisciplinary subcommittee to review the plan for consistency with new policies and make recommendations for its update.

Reject Plans for Technical High School and Adult Training Center

We stand with UPROSE in rejecting a proposed technical high school at Industry City. The overall majority of Sunset Park's industrial waterfront is in storm surge zones, floodplains, and are designated brownfields. New York City must protect all of its citizens and must not destroy the health of our youngest and most vulnerable citizens by placing a school in Industry City. It is long past time that the environmental impacts on health of BIPOC communities and thoughtful and holistic considerations be given to the siting and planning of youth educational institutions.

Review and Assess the Waterfront Revitalization Plan for Climate Risks

Before any rezoning proposal is approved, 350 joins UPROSE in requesting that all necessary plans that help determine appropriate developments be reviewed and adequately updated to reflect existing community issues and climate risks. These plans are the framework that guide and dictate the types and processes of development in Sunset Park that honors community and industry.

Holistic GRID Plan Integrates Climate Resilience & Just Transition

Green Resilient Industrial District (GRID)

Sunset Park has the opportunity to become New York City's first Green Resilient Industrial District (GRID) and be a national model for local grassroots planning and implementation of a Just Transition economy as called for by climate justice advocates and global environmental groups like 350.org

As a community-proposed alternative to Industry City's plan to rezone 1.5 million square feet of Sunset Park's M-3 zoned industrial waterfront into luxury big box retail, this GRID proposal is a bold, holistic and comprehensive vision that strategically plans for existing and anticipated climate impacts in Sunset Park, Brooklyn.

The plan is rooted in transforming the neighborhood and industrial waterfront to integrate climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience. The GRID also addresses the need to transition the economy from a linear one dependent on fossil fuels to a green industrial economy that trains local residents for renewable energy and climate jobs. The most important aspect of the GRID is that it reflects comprehensive and diverse community needs that prepares Sunset Park for the long-term impacts of climate change.

Gentrification developments like Industry City primarily focus on low paying office, retail, entertainment, and to limited scope, high tech uses which price out green industrial development and jeopardize the opportunity for New York City to take advantage of the green jobs generated from these initiatives.

The Industry City Innovation District and rezoning proposal will only perpetuate gentrification, loss of social cohesion, disparity, and climate risk of Sunset Park. Industry City's development does not fit into the Just Transition model as its existing campus and proposed expansion is rooted in the extractive economy that only prioritizes short-term profits and compromises all consideration for community, climate, or health.

GRID emphasizes the vital and critical role existing Sunset Park residents and maritime, industrial and manufacturing business must play for New York City to become a leader in a Just Transition to a green economy with widespread, equitable benefits.

350.org supports GRID as it is a community proposed, just transition and climate resilience plan which takes a holistic view to the lives and well-being of ALL Sunset Park residents.

M2-4 Rezoning Does Not Incorporate A Green Jobs Plan

Brooklyn residents without Bachelor's degrees can face bleak employment prospects in a high tech economy according to the [NYC Planning Department](#). Workers without a bachelor's degree represent half of NYC workers, but they face challenges where the greatest growth has been in high-skill professional and low-paying service jobs.

A large majority of workers in service sectors and occupations do not earn a living wage, particularly in personal care, healthcare support, food service, and retail. Almost half of the residents of Sunset Park lack a high school diploma-- which means they are likely to be stuck on the bottom rungs of economic mobility.

As currently proposed, the Industry City development includes plans for 2 hotels, and retail low-wage service jobs. The plan will lead to the loss of existing well-paid working-class industrial jobs, which would be difficult to recreate and replace for Sunset Park residents with minimal education and skills.

Borough President Adams has stated that "too many Brooklyn residents are currently unemployed or underemployed," and that it is his policy to "create more economic development that creates more employment opportunities" (*Brooklyn Borough President Recommendations for 273 Avenue U Rezoning -- 180164 XMK, 1801165 ZRK, 5/17/19, pg. 6*).

Furthermore, NYS just signed into law the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act which holds in part

" It is in the interest of the state to ensure labor harmony and promote efficient performance of work on climate change related work sites by requiring workers to be well-trained and adequately compensated." (*NYS Senate Bill S.6599 §9*)

It is not enough to have area residents work **on** buildings, they need permanent jobs with livable wages and benefits both **inside** and **outside** of those buildings, and those jobs should also comport with Borough President Adams' stated desires to advance climate resilience and related sustainable practices.

Unfortunately, the Industry City plan does not create the environmentally sustainable employment opportunities as contemplated by the new Climate Leadership law . This

zoning proposal falls woefully short of Borough, City and State plans in creating Green Jobs for area residents and is another reason to reject the rezoning application.

Conclusion

350.org is a global organization committed to preventing the destructive harms and existential threat represented by rapid climate change.

We can achieve some of the goals of adapting to the impacts of the climate crisis and mitigating the destructive forces unleashed by this phenomenon by committing ourselves to moving to a [Just Transition](#) economy anchored in environmentally sustainable labor, social, educational policies and plans.

350.org supports and advocates for the GRID plan developed by UPROSE and its community partners, which envisions a climate resilient community where its residents have good paying jobs in a green economy.

Most critically, 350.org urges the Borough President to vote "NO" for Industry City's rezoning application because:

- A. Industry City's proposal threatens the character of the Sunset Park community, and will exacerbate displacement and climate issues; and
- B. Industry City's proposal does not reflect community needs and is a short-sighted plan for private developer profit; and
- C. Industry City's proposal is not "innovative," and will benefit private developers at the expense of the Sunset Park community; and
- D. We need to keep our industrial waterfront industrial and utilize it to build for climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience.

I want to thank the committee and its members for hosting this hearing and allowing me to submit testimony on this critical matter.

Thank you for your consideration



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