Testimony of Joaquin Brito Jr.

Board Member

UPROSE

Brooklyn Borough President - Industry City Rezoning Public Hearing

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4201 4th Avenue
Brooklyn, New York

Good evening everyone, I’m Joaquin Brito, Board Member of UPROSE. Brooklyn’s oldest Latino community-based organization and a national grassroots leader in the climate justice movement. I first got involved with UPROSE as a youth member 15 years ago, and today, I’m here to testify against the Industry City (IC) rezoning as it stands since it is of no value to Sunset Park’s community.

Having grown up in Bay Ridge and Sunset Park, it’s very evident to me how the neighborhood has changed over time. Since Jamestown Properties acquired Industry City, developed its rezoning plan, and launched its aggressive branding strategy Sunset Park has seen a decline in affordability. Not only for housing, but for industrial manufacturing space as well. Today, the Industry City rezoning threatens to further displace existing industrial businesses and forever change the manufacturing character of the Sunset Park waterfront. Although we hear that displacement and gentrification is a far stretch, we’ve literally seen real estate listings citing Industry City as an amenity and opportunity for real estate investors to bank on the increased demand for housing once Jamestown’s plans for Industry City are developed.

Siempre en Lucha, y Siempre por Nuestra Gente.

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Community Benefit Agreements (CBA) are a heavily exploited tool that has left communities throughout the city in the backburner. Developers use misinformation and the lack of community expertise to cut deals with organizations in order to facilitate bottom line goals. This time a CBA is not going to cut it, Sunset Park has the Green Resilient Industrial District (GRID) --a viable rezoning alternative meant to protect industrial manufacturing uses and leverage the jobs of the future to make sure that existing residents can earn a living wage and afford to live in Sunset Park. It pains me to see community organizations and stakeholders who currently receive funds from Industry City lead an effort to negotiate a CBA. They have conflicts of interest, are providing misinformation, and are turning their backs on our working class and immigrant community.

A CBA will not protect the waterfront’s industrial manufacturing uses or leverage the climate economy. If this rezoning goes through, it will continue to and permanently cripple the city’s ability to sustain its infrastructure. We need Sunset Park, the city’s largest Significant Maritime & Industrial Area (SMIA) to lead New York and the region into a renewable economy. As a forward looking elected official, I urge you to publicly back the community-led GRID and demand that Industry City amend their application to incorporate Subarea C.

For more information, please refer to UPROSE’s full-length written testimony and visit our website at www.uprose.org/the-grid.

Siempre en Lucha, y Siempre por Nuestra Gente.
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