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Laborers, Community Groups Voice Concerns Over City Planning's SCOPE and Environmental Assessment for Jerome Avenue

Bronx, NY—On August 29th, The New York City Department of City Planning released the Jerome Avenue Scope and Environmental Assessment. The report purports to examine the impact of rezoning a 73-block area of the Bronx. Although the assessment attempted a comprehensive look, the needs of the community in relation to labor standards, affordability and anti-displacement were not addressed.

Without safety, local hire, apprenticeship, anti-displacement policy commitments, and affordability that reflects the current residents, New York City is turning its back on Bronxites and the workforce responsible for constructing the affordable housing that this community needs.

“As a Coalition, we are deeply disappointed by the City’s draft scope for Jerome Ave. The scope represents a massive change to the use of land on and around Jerome Ave from 167th to 184th street. It will facilitate the construction of more than 4,000 privately owned apartments, housing more than 12,000 people, with no mechanism to create affordable housing at levels that reflect the needs of local Bronx residents, no attempt to study the loss or creation of jobs or impact on the local community, no recognition that displacement is an important and critical issue that must be studied and a wholesale displacement of the largely Dominican auto industry. In short it is not a community plan but a political one, focused on numbers rather than people, needs and community. If passed, it will represent displacement and gentrification— a removal of the poor instead of an investment in the community. The plan is not acceptable to the Coalition and we will do all in our power to change it to conform to the platform developed by the Coalition, who spent more than a year engaging over 2,000 local residents to create policy recommendations to help the city do what it hasn’t done through rezonings in poor neighborhoods before— facilitate investment, development and growth for the local community instead of at their expense. —[The Bronx Coalition for A Community Vision](#)

For the Bronx Coalition for A Community Vision’s full response to the draft scope, click [here](#).

“It is disheartening that labor standards or workforce needs were not a part of the environmental assessment, or scoping report,” said Pat Purcell, Executive Director of Greater New York Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust. “The proposed construction of 3,250 affordable housing units under the rezoning will need a large workforce of highly skilled construction professionals, yet the current plans include no detail on exactly how many jobs this rezoning will create, the workforce the city plans to use, or any labor and safety standards that will be enforced.

Several rezonings are facing opposition and obstacles throughout the city. We look forward to a true partnership with the administration to reach our shared goals of ending income inequality by creating real affordable housing and career-track jobs for our most vulnerable New Yorkers.”

Community groups and labor advocates are echoing the call for a bold investment in the community, while creating thousands of local, long-term construction jobs.

"The people of the Bronx need housing we can afford, good-paying jobs and protection from displacement. The NWBCCC is disappointed that the City's scope does not include the real needs of the community. It's OUR Bronx and we intend to be a part of the plan for OUR community." -Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition Board Member Margaret Groarke.

“Bronxites must let the city hear and know that we are not going to be pushed out of our homes and communities without a fight, and that we will oppose any and all gentrification of the area that will mean the uprooting and displacement of most of the area’s current residents. We stand firm in our declaration that development of our communities must be primarily for and about those who live here now, and not only aimed at others whom the city hopes to attract to the neighborhoods being upzoned.” -Community Action for Safe Apartments Leader Fitzroy Christian.

“Including labor standards in the environmental assessment and scoping report would study the impact of using a local, diverse workforce in the construction that will follow the rezoning. We urge the city to work with its labor partners to make sure a Bronx workforce is used in the revitalization of its own community.”-100 Black Construction Workers President Barrie Smith.

"In the Bronx, our diverse houses of worship are tied together by our sacred duty to serve the entire community by feeding, clothing, and often, sheltering all people. When the affordable housing is not affordable to the majority of our people, when there is no clear plan to ensure that longstanding congregants are not harassed out of our neighborhood, and if the local businesses we support are no longer a part of our community ecosystem, then it is not in our interest to uphold the City's scope," said Venerable Dr. Emeka Nwigwe, Pastor, Anglican Church of the Pentecost Int'l. "We call on our legislators and the city to act decisively to enact anti-harassment measures that will keep our community intact and implement a scope that reflects the needs of the Bronx community living here now."-Anglican Church of the Pentecost Int'l is a congregational partner of Faith in New York.

“The proposed Jerome Avenue rezoning area is home to more than 200 auto related shops, which employ hundreds of people. It is one of the densest auto corridors in the city, with high concentrations of businesses in a small area that increases the area’s competitiveness. 88% of these businesses have been operating and providing jobs on the corridor for more than 15 years employing over 1,000 Dominican workers. 63% started their own business over 15 years ago and 93% of these auto shops have no plans to move within the next 10 years. We need the city to assess loss of jobs and the impact on the local economy, neighborhood, communities and families.”- Pedro Estévez of the United Auto Merchants Association.

“The proposed plan will have an enormous impact on the Bronx and city as a whole, and the formal review and approval process should not begin before a full environmental impact statement is done to include full social and economic impacts.”- Banana Kelly Community Improvement Association President Harold DeRienzo.

“We don’t want to leave, we just want to improve as businesses and owners, how can the city work with us? We would like to know how or what we can do to improve Jerome. And if in case we are moved, where would we be relocated? What is the plan for us? I would like to work with the community for the community.”- Miguel Jiménez owner of El Mundo Auto Repair.

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GNV LECET is a jointly managed trust fund of the Mason Tenders District Council and its 1500 signatory contractors. Our mission is to generate business opportunities for union contractors and job opportunities for LIUNA members.

The Bronx Coalition for a Community Vision consists of Community Action for Safe Apartments-New Settlement Apartments, Latino Pastoral Action Center, Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition, Mothers on the Move, United Auto Merchants Association, Faith In New York, Local 79, Plumbers Local No. 1, NYC District Council of Carpenters, Greater NY-LECET, 100 Black Construction Workers, New York State Iron Workers District Council, Insulators Local Number 12....list in formation.

The Coalition is supported by: The Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center, Pratt Center for Community Development, Hester Street Collaborative, The Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development, The Center for Urban Pedagogy, and the Real Affordability for All Coalition...list in formation.