



Hon. Bill de Blasio
Mayor of New York City

Hon. Margaret Chin
NYC Council Member

Hon. Carlina Rivera
NYC Council Member

Hon. Corey Johnson
NYC Council Speaker

Hon. Gale Brewer
Manhattan Borough President

Dear Mayor de Blasio, Council Members Chin and Rivera, Speaker Johnson, and BP Brewer,

Enclosed please find a Resolution approved by Downtown Independent Democrats General Membership on March 24, 2021:

Against the Comprehensive Long-Term Planning Bill (Intro 2186)

Speaker Johnson's Comprehensive Long-Term Planning Bill opens the door to developer takeover of the city's planning processes, displacement of existing residents, and co-option of community spaces for real-estate interests. Under this legislation, community voices are minimized and community input diminished. Community groups from Lower Manhattan and across the city have written an [open letter](#) against this long-term planning bill.

The solution to planning friction is to include more community control over the planning process, not remove community participation and feedback. Change comes from bottom-up organizing and community participation in local decision-making, not top-down impositions.

Consequently, DID asks that you VOTE NO on Intro 2186.

Sincerely,

Richard Corman
President, Downtown Independent Democrats

Enclosure

cc: Hon. Jumaane Williams, NYC Public Advocate
Hon. Scott Stringer, NYC Comptroller
Hon. Chuck Schumer, U.S. Senator
Hon. Kirsten Gillibrand, U.S. Senator
Hon. Carolyn Maloney, U.S. Representative
Hon. Jerrold L. Nadler, U.S. Representative
Hon. Nydia Velázquez, U.S. Representative
Hon. Andrew Cuomo, NYS Governor

Hon. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, NYS Sen. Leader
Hon. Carl Heastie, NYS Assembly Speaker
Hon. Brad Hoylman, NY State Senator
Hon. Brian Kavanagh, NY State Senator
Hon. Harvey Epstein, NY State Assembly
Hon. Deborah J. Glick, NY State Assembly
Hon. Yuh-Line Niou, NY State Assembly
Tammy Meltzer, Chair, Manhattan Community Board 1
Carter Booth, Chair, Manhattan Community Board 2
Alysha Lewis-Coleman, Chair, Manhattan Community 3



Against the Comprehensive Long-Term Planning Bill (Intro 2186)

Approved March 24, 2021

Whereas:

1. In December 2020, Speaker Johnson unveiled legislation to create a Master “comprehensive long-term plan” for land-use decisions in New York.¹
 - a. Community groups from Lower Manhattan and across the city, under the banner of City Wide People's Land Use Alliance, have written an open letter against this long-term planning bill.^{2,3}
 - b. DID has been consistently opposed to top-down development processes, favoring instead increased community participation in city planning.⁴
2. The recent testimony by the Municipal Art Society in opposition to this bill captures much of DID's perspective:
 - a. “The current planning process lacks transparency and does not adequately engage communities.... [P]ublic engagement in the City Environmental Quality Review (CEQR) and the Uniform Land Review Procedure (ULURP) processes is largely ineffective because the community enters the conversation too late...”
 - b. Equitable and comprehensive community-based planning in land use policy is a laudable goal and would be an improvement to our current process.
 - c. “However, as proposed, the framework leaves major land use decisions firmly in the hands of the Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability (OLTPS).... [A] successful comprehensive plan... must balance bottom-up and top-down planning through meaningful, ongoing community engagement...”
 - d. “As written, Intro 2186 would reinforce the current structural imbalance in the City's planning process.”

¹ Intro 2186-2020, Requiring a comprehensive long-term plan, New York City Council, December 17, 2020, retrieved February 18, 2021, <https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=4735629&GUID=BAACDD2D-290D-4F35-B0F7-578E4458498A>

² Letter in Opposition to Intro 2186, City Wide People's Land Use Alliance, February 8, 2021, retrieved February 19, 2021, <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1tqnR5idwZWhcJnqy2Rx3hTtncLf17JCBtMDr-LixSV0/edit>

³ City Wide People's Land Use Alliance, February 18, 2021, retrieved February 19, 2021, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WJqu8OYuwog_2pLfZ_t6VktT-8BRBCQHGOkP3ZYJd1M/edit

⁴ DID Resolutions, retrieved February 19, 2021, <https://www.didnyc.org/resolutions>

⁵ [Testimony from the Municipal Art Society of New York to the City Council Committee on Governmental Operations on Int. 2186-2020](#)



3. The Master Plan as written creates a top-down administrative hierarchy that does nothing to increase neighborhood power or democratize land use, it merely empowers Mayoral appointees to make sweeping land use decisions in neighborhoods citywide.
4. **Top-Down Administrative Structure:** The Mayor's Office, Borough President and City Council appoint a Long-Term Planning Steering Committee (LTPSC).
 - a. LTPSC appoints the Borough Steering Committee (BSC) for each borough.
 - b. The Mayor appoints a "Director" for the Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning (OLTP).
5. **Top-Down Process Eliminates Community Participation:**
 - a. After one public hearing, the Mayor's appointed Director would create three rezoning plans for each community board district, including the imposition of housing targets to increase density.
 - b. There are no hearing requirements at the Community Boards, which must choose one of the three plans.
 - c. There are no hearing requirements for the Borough President, who must choose one of the three plans.
 - d. There are no hearing requirements for the LTPSC, which must also choose one of the three plans.
 - e. Their choices are then given to the City Council, and after only one hearing the Council should choose one single plan.
 - f. If the City Council does not choose any of the plans, then the Mayor's Director is empowered to choose a plan.
 - g. Local Council Member deference is eliminated.
 - h. Each Community District Plan is then incorporated into a citywide comprehensive plan, i.e. the Master Plan.
6. **Once the Master Plan is in place:**
 - a. During the ULURP process, the Department of City Planning certifies a development plan if it "aligns" with the Master Plan.
 - b. A development plan that "aligns" with the Master Plan is assured approval.
 - c. For projects in "alignment" with the Master Plan, no environmental review is required.

Therefore Downtown Independent Democrats resolves to:

1. Oppose Intro 2186 as written;
2. Increase community participation in the City's comprehensive long-term planning processes, and assure that community engagement is a meaningful and ongoing part of the planning process and land use decisions.



3. Work toward bottom-up community plans for equitable distribution of housing for all New Yorkers, and work toward resolving long-term planning and sustainability issues associated with open space, brownfields, transportation, water quality and infrastructure, air quality, energy, and climate change.



Grassroots Action Plan

Action 1. Send email to electeds

To: Chin, Rivera, Johnson

Cc: de Blasio, Brewer

Bcc: info@didnyc.org, debbiestoller@gmail.com, mmaugenest@gmail.com

Dear Council Members Chin and Rivera and Speaker Johnson,

I am a resident of Lower Manhattan and a member of the Downtown Independent Democrats, and I am writing in opposition of the Comprehensive Long-Term Planning Bill (Intro 2186).

This bill will impose a top-down planning process, and opens the door to developer takeover of the city's planning processes, displacement of existing residents, and co-option of community spaces for real-estate interests. Under this legislation, community voices are minimized and community input diminished.

We urge you to VOTE NO on Intro 2186, and instead pursue a community-based zoning planning framework.

Thank you

Action 2. Send written testimony

Submit written testimony AGAINST the Comprehensive Long-Term Planning Bill by Friday at noon.

<https://council.nyc.gov/testify/>